

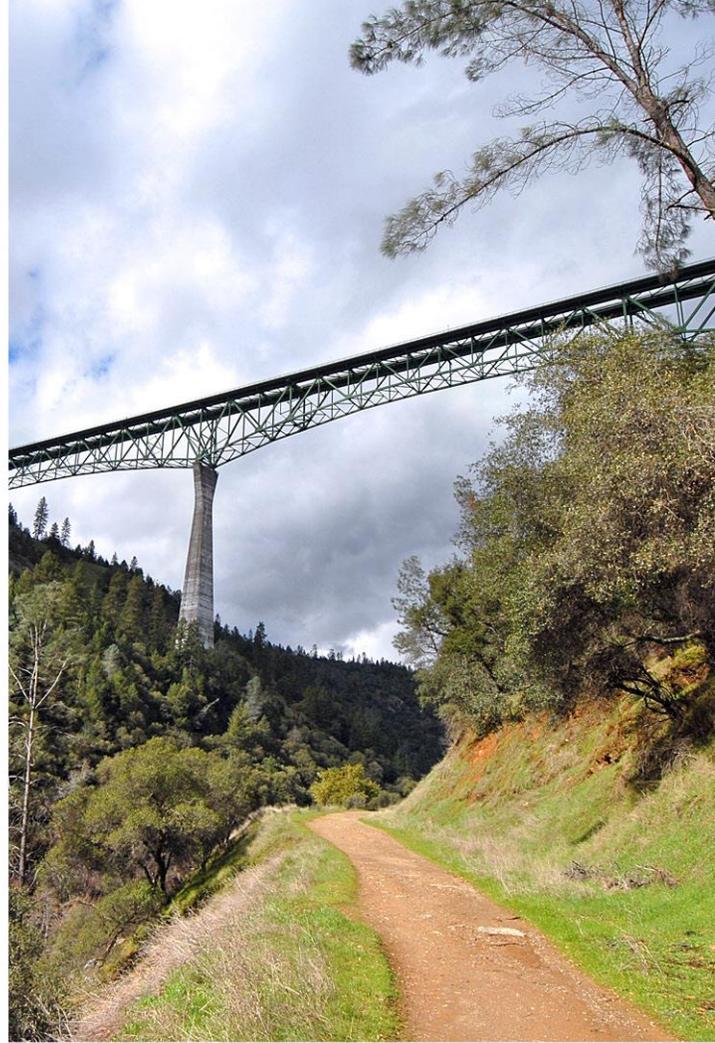
September 2021

Auburn State Recreation Area General Plan

AND

Auburn Project Lands Resource Management Plan

State Clearinghouse #2017112065



PREPARED FOR:

California State Parks
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630



Auburn State Recreation Area

General Plan

and

Auburn Project Lands

Resource Management Plan

Adopted: September 30, 2021



Prepared for:

California State Parks
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

and



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630

With assistance from:

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Department of Parks and Recreation
Strategic Planning and Recreation Services Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001



Resolution #16-2021
Adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
At its virtual meeting on September 30, 2021

**General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report
For Auburn State Recreation Area**

WHEREAS, the Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (“California State Parks”), has presented to this Commission, for approval, the Preliminary General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report (“Plan”) for Auburn State Recreation Area (“Park”), which are contained in the documents entitled, Auburn State Recreation Area Preliminary General Plan and Auburn Project Lands Draft Resource Management Plan; and Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Auburn State Recreation Area General Plan and Auburn Project Lands Resource Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Park consists of federal lands, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and managed in partnership with California State Parks through a Managing Partner Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation signed a Record of Decision approving the Auburn Project Lands Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, on August 21, 2020, finalizing the federal planning process; and

WHEREAS, the Park is a unique State Recreation Area with natural and cultural resources that will support increased recreation and interpretation opportunities such as boating, nature observation, trail activities, river access, overnight accommodations, events and regional recreation support facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Plan was developed through a collaborative public input and review process led by California State Parks; and

WHEREAS, the Plan is consistent with the California State Parks mission, classification, acquisition purposes and policies; and

WHEREAS, the general plan shall consist of elements that will evaluate and define the proposed land uses, facilities, concessions, operation of the unit, any environmental impacts, and the management of resources, and shall serve as a guide for the future development, management, and operation of the unit, as defined by PRC 5002.2(a); and

WHEREAS, the Plan will guide the development and management of Auburn State Recreation Area for public use and resource protection by establishing goals and

guidelines to assist in the daily and long-term management of the Park to ensure that natural and cultural resources are protected, while providing a variety of recreation activities and visitor experiences; and

WHEREAS, the Plan is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and includes the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), pursuant to Public Resource Code Section 5002.2 and the California Code of Regulations Section 15166 (CEQA Guidelines), providing discussion of the probable environmental impacts of future development and management actions, environmental protection features of the proposed Plan's goals and guidelines, and addressing all the requirements of an EIR; and

WHEREAS, the EIR functions as a "Program EIR" pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, covering general goals and guidelines of the Plan, and that the appropriate level of CEQA review will be conducted for each project relying on the Plan pursuant to use of the program EIR with later activities, as described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c); and

WHEREAS, the EIR finds that there is no potential for significant and unavoidable effects based on the Plan's adopted goals and guidelines; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Commission has reviewed and considered the information and analysis in the EIR prior to approving the Plan, and this Commission finds and certifies that the EIR reflects the independent judgement and analysis of this Commission and has been completed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act that each fact in support of the findings is true and is based on substantial evidence in the record; and be it

RESOLVED: The location and custodian of the Plan, EIR, and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings on which the Commission's decision is based is: State Park and Recreation Commission, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, California 94296-0001, Phone 916/653-0524, Facsimile 916/653-4458; and be it

RESOLVED: That California State Parks shall request CalFire to review and provide written comments on all management plans related to camping at Auburn State Recreation Area. California State Parks shall provide briefings to the State Park and Recreation Commission on CalFire's comments at a publicly noticed meeting, which shall include an opportunity for public comment; and be

RESOLVED: That the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby certifies the Environmental Impact Report prepared for Auburn State Recreation Area General Plan, dated June 2020; and be it

RESOLVED: That the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby approves the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Auburn State Recreation Area General Plan; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That a Notice of Determination will be filed with the Office of Planning and Research within five days of this approval.

Attest: This Resolution was duly adopted by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on September 30, 2021 at the Commission's duly-noticed virtual public meeting.

By: Stacy Beard Date: 9/30/2021

Assistant to the Commission
For Armando Quintero, Director
California State Parks
Secretary to the Commission

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

°F	degrees Fahrenheit
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APL	Auburn Project Lands
ARD	Auburn Area Recreation and Park District
ARWSS	American River Watershed Sanitary Survey 2013 Update
ASRA	Auburn State Recreation Area
ASRACK	ASRA Canyon Keepers
BLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	criteria air pollutants
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act of 1970
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	cubic feet per second
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CLR	Cultural Landscape Reports
CO	carbon monoxide
CSP	California State Parks
CWA	Clean Water Act
DOM	Department Operations Manual
ECA	Essential Connectivity Area
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIR/EIS	Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ENF	Eldorado National Forest
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FATRAC	Folsom-Auburn Trail Riders Action Coalition

FLSRA	Folsom Lake State Recreation Area
FMP	Fire Management Plan
GDPUD	Georgetown Divide Public Utility District
GIS	Geographic Information System
GP	General Plan
GP/RMP	General Plan and Resource Management Plan
HAP	hazardous air pollutants
I&E	Interpretation and Education
I-80	Interstate 80
IRMP	Interim Resource Management Plan
kV	kilovolt
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
LOS	Level of Service
MAU	Mounted Assistant Unit
MCV	Manual of California Vegetation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Managing Partner Agreement
MRZ	Mineral Resources Zone
msl	mean sea level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NID	Nevada Irrigation District
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OEHHA	California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OHMVR	Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation
OHV	off-highway vehicle
ORV	off-road vehicle
PARC	Protect American River Canyons
PCWA	Placer County Water Agency
PM ₁₀	respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less

PM _{2.5}	fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less
PRC	Public Resources Code
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway
RE	Recreation Emphasis
Reclamation	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
RES	Resource Management and Protection
RME	Resource Management Emphasis
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMS	resource management strategies
RTE	Rare, Threatened, and Endangered
RTMP	Road and Trail Management Plan
RWQCB	regional water quality control boards
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SR	State Route
SVRA	State Vehicle Recreation Area
TCR	tribal cultural resources
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TNF	Tahoe National Forest
Unit	Auburn-Folsom South Unit
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WPA	Work Projects Administration
WSTF	Western States Trail Foundation

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View of the No Hands Bridge over the North Fork of the American River



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

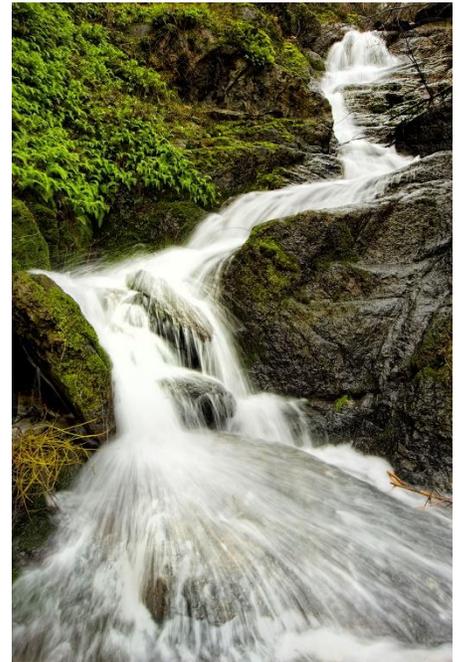
California State Parks (CSP) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared this joint General Plan (GP) and Resource Management Plan (RMP) to guide the long-term management of Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) and Auburn Project Lands (APL). In the 1960's and 70's, Reclamation acquired APL to support construction, operation, and maintenance of the Auburn Dam and Reservoir consistent with Public Law 89-161. ASRA was designated a State Recreation Area in 1979, covering nearly all of APL, except for 105 acres that are managed by other agencies. ASRA is managed by CSP consistent with a Managing Partner Agreement with Reclamation.

CSP prepared a GP for the management of Auburn Reservoir after construction of the dam (CSP 1979). A series of complications put construction of the dam on hold for an indefinite period. Reclamation prepared an Interim RMP in 1992, in coordination with CSP, that provided guidance for the management of the area until the dam was constructed (Reclamation 1992). This GP/RMP replaces the 1979 GP and the 1992 Interim RMP. It provides a long-term and comprehensive framework for the management of ASRA/APL in its current condition, consistent with the missions of CSP and Reclamation.

If in the future, funding for the Auburn Dam is authorized, and all required state and federal approvals for the Dam are obtained, the federally-authorized dam and reservoir could be constructed. In the event that construction is resumed, CSP and Reclamation would develop a new or revised GP/RMP to reflect a long-term and comprehensive recreation and resource management plan that includes the dam and reservoir.

The RMP covers all of APL, including areas outside of ASRA. However, the APL outside of ASRA would continue to be managed under agreements with other agencies and the specific management guidance in this plan apply only to ASRA and those portions of APL that are within ASRA.

This GP/RMP identifies goals and guidelines to achieve the purpose and vision for ASRA/APL. It includes management strategies and improvements to serve visitors while protecting natural and cultural resources.



Source: CSP

This GP/RMP identifies goals and guidelines to achieve the purpose and vision for ASRA/APL. It includes management strategies and improvements to serve visitors while protecting natural and cultural resources.

Agency Mission Statements

The missions of the CSP and Reclamation establish the context for the management of ASRA/APL:

California State Parks

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

Bureau of Reclamation

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

Declaration of Purpose

The purpose statement describes the unique role that ASRA/APL plays in meeting the CSP and Reclamation missions. The declaration of purpose for ASRA/APL is as follows:

Public Law 89-161 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate, and maintain the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, American River Division, Central Valley Project. The agency directed to build, operate, and maintain the Auburn-Folsom South Unit is the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The law authorized the acquisition of the Auburn Project Lands for construction of the Auburn Dam and Reservoir to provide for the purposes of water supply, hydropower generation, outdoor recreation, public use and enjoyment, and fish and wildlife enhancement. The law specified that non-federal public bodies may agree to administer lands for these purposes, with certain cost-sharing provisions. Reclamation has decided to manage the waters and lands through a Managing Partner Agreement with California State Parks.

The purpose of Auburn State Recreation Area is to preserve and make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the outstanding recreational, scenic, natural, and cultural values of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, Lake Clementine, the steep river canyons, and associated upland areas, while recognizing that Congress may determine that an Auburn Dam and Reservoir may be constructed at



Source: CSP

The purpose of ASRA/APL is to preserve and make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the outstanding recreational, scenic, natural, and cultural values of the park.

some time in the future. The area's rugged and varied terrain provides for a wide variety of water-related and upland, backcountry and close-in outdoor recreation with outstanding opportunities for appreciation of the recreation area and relaxation for visitors of all abilities. The area's natural values include riparian corridors, oak woodlands, conifer forests, chaparral and grasslands; habitat for sensitive species including ringtails, peregrine falcons, foothill yellow-legged frogs, yellow-breasted chat, willow flycatchers and Sierra Nevada red fox; and unique geologic formations. Cultural resources within the area include Native American sites; paleontological resources; and important historic sites and artifacts associated with ranching, mining, water conveyance and transportation.

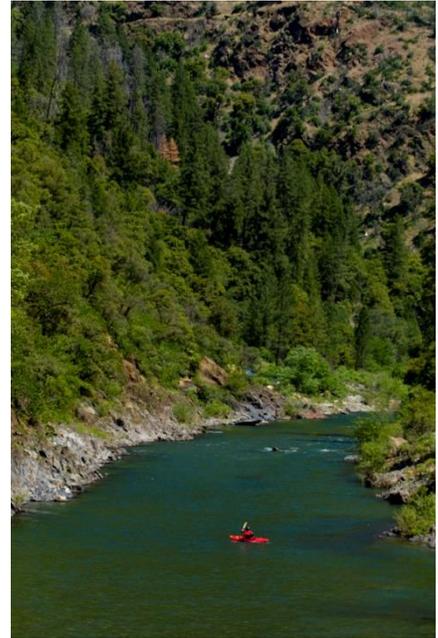
Vision Statement

The vision statement for ASRA/APL is a description of the area's character, appearance, and functions. The current vision statement for ASRA/APL is as follows:

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

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

The recreation area provides for the perpetuation of important natural and cultural resources. Habitats within the recreation area support populations of native aquatic and terrestrial species including special status plant and animals. The area provides wildlife corridors and sensitive riparian and oak woodland



Source: CSP

ASRA offers important recreational opportunities, natural and cultural resources, and educational and interpretive values. The plan seeks to maintain these values while providing for the management and stewardship of the nation's water resources.



Source: CSP

ASRA/APL is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills, northeast of Sacramento. It includes approximately 30,600 acres of public land and 40 linear miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River.

communities. The recreation area is within the traditional homeland of the Nisenan or Southern Maidu, and Native American sites abound. Historic resources are prevalent from the early 1800s, the Gold Rush, and more recent mining, timber harvesting, and transportation and dam-construction activities.

Educational and interpretive opportunities connect visitors to the area's cultural and natural history. Visitors also learn about the history and ongoing story of Auburn Dam and Reservoir, as well as the area's current role in water-resource management and as a venue for adventure and endurance sports.

Description of the Lands

ASRA/APL is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills, northeast of Sacramento. It includes approximately 30,600 acres of public land and 40 linear miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River. It is immediately east of the City of Auburn and straddles the boundary of El Dorado and Placer counties (see Figure I.1-1 in Chapter I, Introduction).

Several small unincorporated communities are located in the areas surrounding ASRA/APL, including Meadow Vista, Applegate, Colfax, Georgetown, Cool, Foresthill, Greenwood, and Pilot Hill. These communities are intermixed with rural forested land. The Tahoe National Forest encompasses areas northeast of ASRA/APL. Eldorado National Forest is located southeast of ASRA/APL.

The elevation within ASRA/APL ranges between a maximum elevation of approximately 3,100 feet mean sea level (msl) on the eastern side in the Foresthill area, and a minimum elevation of approximately 700 feet msl on its western end. The majority of ASRA/APL consists of mostly undeveloped forested canyons used for dispersed recreation as well as natural and cultural resource protection. The North Fork American River and Middle Fork American River canyons are the dominant topographic features in ASRA/APL. Other minor drainages create steep side canyons along the North and Middle Fork Canyons. Steep slopes dominate much of ASRA/APL. In the western portion of ASRA/APL near Knickerbocker Flat, the topography is more moderate and gradual slopes are present.

Current uses in ASRA/APL feature a wide variety of recreational activities: hiking, swimming, whitewater rafting and kayaking, motorized- and non-motorized lake boating, rock climbing, fishing, camping, beach play, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, mountain biking, and special events. ASRA/APL receives an estimated 1,000,000 visitors each year. The majority of visitors

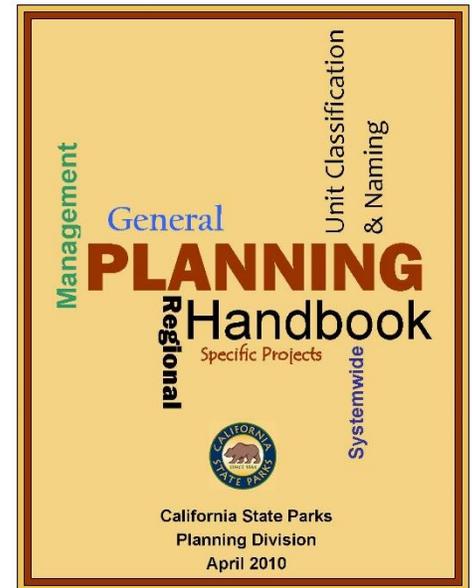
are from nearby communities in Placer, El Dorado, and Sacramento counties. Although peak visitation is in the summer, ASRA/APL is open to visitors year-round.

Purpose of the General Plan/Resource Management Plan

General plans are broad-based policy documents that provide management goals and guidelines, and identify facility improvements for a park unit. The guidelines define a unique framework, focused on this particular unit, for implementing CSP's mission of resource stewardship, visitor use, interpretation, and visitor services.

The GP defines the purpose, vision, and long-term goals and guidelines for park management for the next 20 years or more. Typically, a GP provides guidelines for future land management and for the facilities required to accommodate expected visitation. Because a GP is likely to be in effect for so long, it must be flexible enough to accommodate expected future changes, while clearly guiding decision-making consistent with the adopted park vision. Thus, the GP provides broad guidelines for future operation of the park but does not prescribe specific operational strategies that may need to be adjusted over time.

The purpose of Resource Management Plans, which serve as a basis for future resource decisions, is to incorporate into one document all the information pertinent to the future guidance of a management area, including for making informed decisions about competing uses of Reclamation's lands. The RMP can include an analysis of the resources of the area, identification of land use suitability and capability, land acquisition and disposal needs, determination and designation of land use zones, and development of management policies, objectives, responsibilities, guidelines, and plans. An RMP sets goals for the management area, establish desirable use levels, identify types of development and land uses, and, finally, determines how all of this will be accomplished. The RMP should be sufficiently detailed to direct future development, but it should be flexible enough to allow resolution of day-to-day problems.



Source: CSP

The CSP General Planning Handbook provides guidance on the purpose of a GP. The Reclamation Resource Management Plan Guidebook describes the purpose of an RMP.



Source: CSP

ASRA/APL has been divided into eleven management zones that reflect geographic areas with similar characteristics and management issues. The zone-specific management intent and goals and guidelines are provided in Chapter 4, The Plan.

Management Zones

ASRA/APL has been divided into 11 management zones that reflect geographic areas with similar existing conditions and issues. The management zones are further delineated into one or more activity nodes (i.e., smaller areas where specific actions or facilities would be located). The zone-specific management intent and goals and guidelines are provided in Chapter 4, The Plan. The management zones are shown on Figure 4.2-1 in Chapter 4 and include:

- ◆ Knickerbocker Management Zone,
- ◆ Auburn Interface Management Zone,
- ◆ Confluence Management Zone,
- ◆ Foresthill Divide Management Zone,
- ◆ Lake Clementine Management Zone,
- ◆ Mammoth Bar Management Zone,
- ◆ Lower Middle Fork Management Zone,
- ◆ Cherokee Bar/Ruck-a-Chucky Management Zone,
- ◆ Upper North Fork Management Zone,
- ◆ Mineral Bar Management Zone, and
- ◆ Upper Middle Fork Management Zone.

In addition to the management zone, approximately 105 acres of APL are not within ASRA and are managed by other agencies.

Land Use Designations

This GP/RMP assigns one of five land use designations to each activity node. The land use designations describe the intended type and intensity of use within each node. Descriptions of the following land use designations are provided in Chapter 4, The Plan:

- ◆ Administration,
- ◆ OHV – High,
- ◆ OHV – Medium,
- ◆ Recreation – High,
- ◆ Recreation – Medium, and
- ◆ Resources – Low Recreation.



Source: CSP

The management zones for ASRA/APL are delineated into one or more activity nodes (i.e., smaller areas where specific actions or facilities would be located). Each activity node is assigned one of five land use designations.

Public Involvement

An integrated CSP/Reclamation planning team conducted the ASRA/APL planning process. Members of the public, stakeholder groups, and other agencies provided input throughout the planning process. The planning team used a combination of agency and stakeholder workshops, questionnaires, a dedicated project webpage, an online engagement tool, and personal contacts to engage with the public and stakeholders. Additional details on

public involvement in the planning process are provided in Chapter 1, Introduction.

Issues and Opportunities

The planning team identified key issues and opportunities through outreach to the public, other agencies, stakeholder groups, and tribal groups and through internal scoping within the lead agencies. The GP/RMP includes goals and guidelines to address each issue. The issues and opportunities listed here include the areas of known controversy, including issues raised by agencies and the public, and environmental issues to be resolved.

Additional detail on each of the following issues and opportunities, as well as a summary of area-specific issues, is provided in Chapter 3, Issues and Analysis:

- ◆ Trail Management, Use, and Connectivity
- ◆ Providing Adequate Camping Opportunities
- ◆ Impact of Adjacent Lands on Visitor Experience
- ◆ Access for Visitors with Disabilities
- ◆ Wildfire Management
- ◆ Controlling Invasive Plants
- ◆ Adapting to Climate Change
- ◆ Potential for Facility Inundation
- ◆ Road Conditions and Access
- ◆ Managing River Recreation
- ◆ Recreational Mineral Collection
- ◆ Providing Adequate Public Information, Education, and Interpretation
- ◆ Nude Bathing and Beach Use
- ◆ Facilities for Camping and Picnicking
- ◆ Protecting Cultural Resources
- ◆ Protecting Scenic Views
- ◆ Parking Limitations and Congestion
- ◆ Preserving Special-Status Plants, Animals, and Sensitive Habitats

General Plan/Resource Management Plan and Alternatives

Four GP/RMP alternatives were developed and considered during the planning process: 1) a No-Action Alternative, 2) an Increased Recreation and Resource Management Alternative, 3) a Resource Management Emphasis (RME) Alternative, and 4) a Recreation Emphasis (RE) Alternative. Each alternative includes resource management actions to protect the natural and cultural resources of ASRA/APL as well as a range of visitor facilities and improvements that achieve ASRA/APL's purpose and vision. The alternatives were developed and evaluated through the public planning process described in Chapter 1, Introduction.



Source: Ascent Environmental

Hundreds of people participated in workshops and filled out questionnaires to help shape the alternatives.

The Increased Recreation and Resource Management Alternative was selected as the Proposed Action, and it is reflected in this plan.

Each of the alternatives would result in some differences in the types, amounts, and locations of facilities and land uses based on the established themes for each alternative. The primary theme of each alternative is as follows:

- ◆ **The No-Action Alternative** would retain current facilities and land uses according to current practices and as specified in the Interim Resource Management Plan.
- ◆ **The Proposed Action** anticipates and accommodates increases in regional recreation demand by enhancing existing facilities and providing additional recreational facilities and access. This alternative also increases resource protection and management. This is the Increased Recreation and Resource Management Alternative.
- ◆ **The RME Alternative** would provide increased resource protection and conservation as identified through comprehensive inventory, survey, or other mechanisms, such as NEPA and/or CEQA review. This alternative primarily assumes the current level of recreation use would continue.
- ◆ **The RE Alternative** would anticipate and accommodate demographically relevant and diverse increases in regional and statewide recreation demand. This alternative includes the greatest number of new, expanded, and renovated facilities; and the greatest increase in visitor programs. This alternative also increases resource protection and management to address this correspondingly higher level of use and demand.

Each of these alternatives is described in greater detail in Section 4.6, Alternatives to the GP/RMP, in Chapter 4.

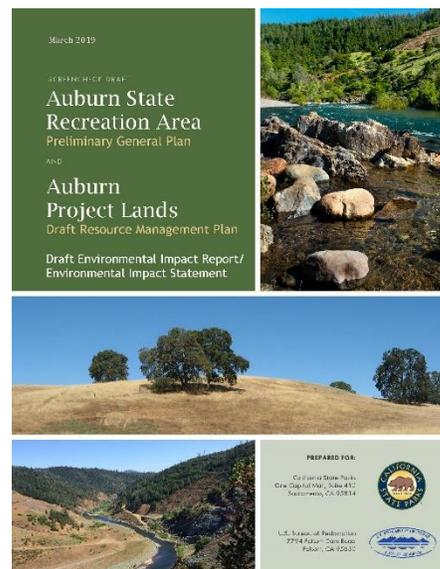
Environmental Analysis

CSP and the Reclamation are the lead agencies for the joint environmental document for the GP/RMP. The environmental document is a program-level environmental impact report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.) and a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) pursuant to the Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR Section 1500 et seq.) issued by the Council on

Environmental Quality and Reclamation's NEPA Handbook (Reclamation 2012).

The EIR/EIS provides a program-level evaluation of the potential for significant adverse environmental effects on air quality; biological resources; cultural and tribal cultural resources; mineral resources; geology and soils; greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, and energy; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; noise; public services and utilities; recreation; scenic resources; transportation; and wildfire.

Across most of these resource topics, implementation of the GP/RMP alternatives would result in a less-than-significant impact on the environment, because the goals and guidelines contained in Chapter 4, The Plan, the policies, directives, and standards in the Reclamation Manual, Department of Interior policies, Department Operations Manual policies (referenced in Chapter 4), the CSP Standard Project Requirements (Appendix A), and Departmental Notices (referenced in Chapter 4) in conjunction with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, would avoid or minimize adverse effects from implementation of the GP/RMP. The EIR/EIS includes Table ES-1, which identifies any unavoidable or significant impacts, for the purposes of CEQA, and adverse effects, for the purposes of NEPA, that would occur as a result of plan implementation.



Source: Ascent Environmental

The EIR/EIS analyzes the potential environmental effects of implementing the GP/RMP alternatives.

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Entrance to the Mountain Quarries Mine/Hawver Cave



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) and the Auburn Project Lands (APL) are located in the Sierra Nevada foothills in the heart of California's Gold Country approximately halfway between the Sacramento Valley and Lake Tahoe (Figure 1.1-1). ASRA includes approximately 30,600 acres of public land and almost 40 miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, which flow through steep river canyons in Placer and El Dorado Counties. The area attracts visitors from across California and, for certain resources (e.g., whitewater rivers), the United States. ASRA/APL contains many important outdoor recreational, natural, and cultural resources.

APL consists of those lands that make up the federal project known as the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, or more commonly known as the Auburn Dam and Auburn Reservoir lands. APL includes all of ASRA plus approximately 106 additional acres of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) land managed by other organizations through separate agreements, leases, or licenses.

ASRA is managed by California State Parks (CSP) through a Managing Partner Agreement (MPA) with Reclamation. The vast majority of land within ASRA/APL is owned and administered by Reclamation (see Figure 1.1-2). CSP owns 831 acres, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also own some of the land within ASRA/APL. USACE owns and manages the North Fork Dam at Lake Clementine.

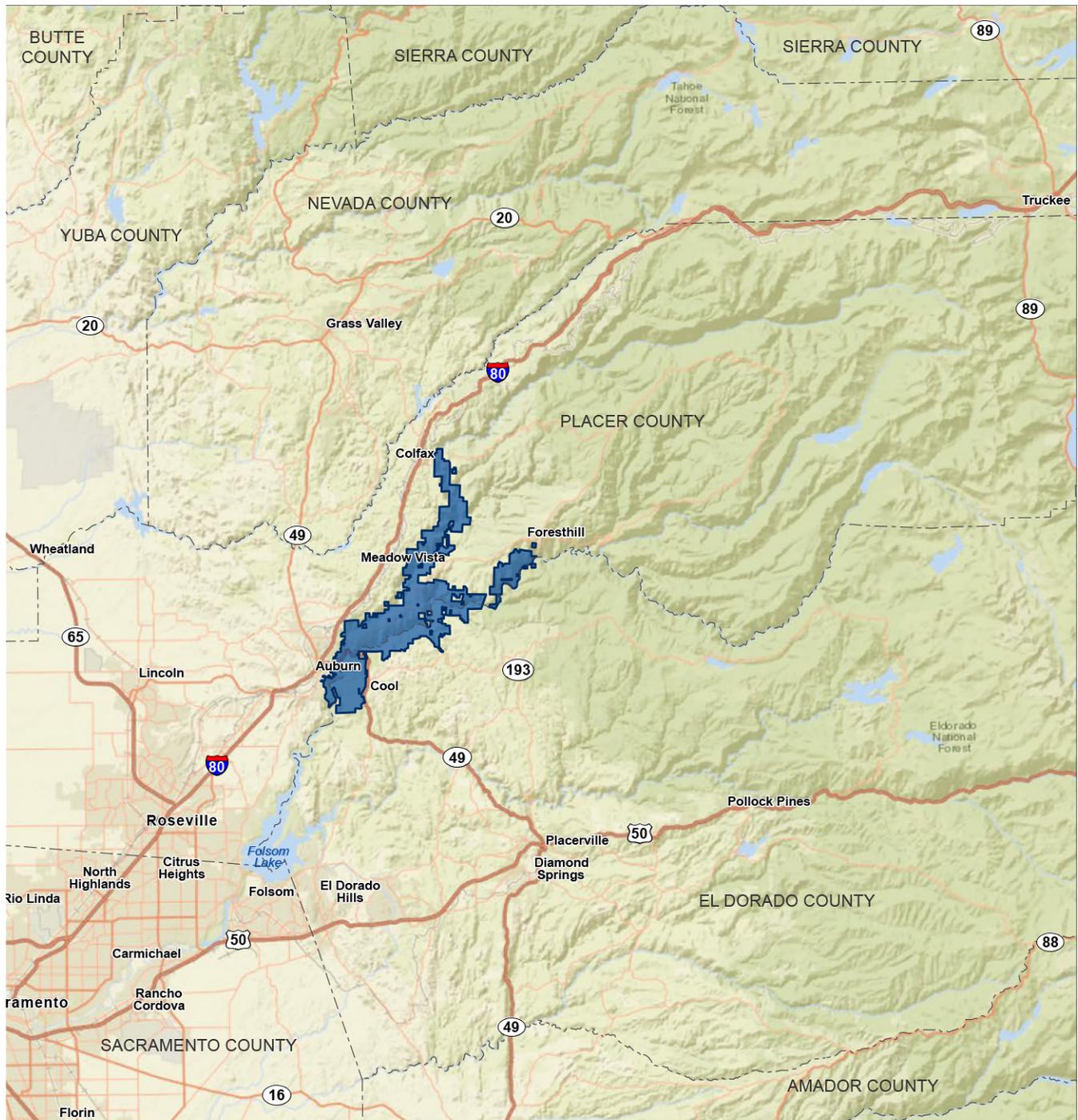
The GP/RMP covers all of the APL, but proposed changes would only occur within the ASRA portion of the APL. The management of other APL areas outside of the ASRA boundary is guided by other MPAs or agreements and changes in those parts of the APL would be covered by separate planning documents.

Visitors to ASRA/APL and the surrounding area are attracted to the region's rural setting, scenic and natural beauty, and outdoor recreational opportunities. ASRA/APL receives an estimated 1,000,000 visitors each year. It serves recreation needs of residents in local communities, such as Auburn, Cool, Foresthill, and Colfax, in addition to visitors from the Sacramento Region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties), San Francisco Bay Area, and beyond. As of 2015, over 2.4 million residents live in the Sacramento Region and, of these, over 550,000 people reside within El Dorado and Placer Counties.



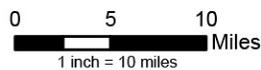
Source: Ascent Environmental

ASRA/APL is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills in the heart of California's Gold Country approximately halfway between the Sacramento Valley and Lake Tahoe. It includes approximately 30,600 acres of public land and almost 40 miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, which flow through steep river canyons.



 Auburn SRA/Auburn Project Lands

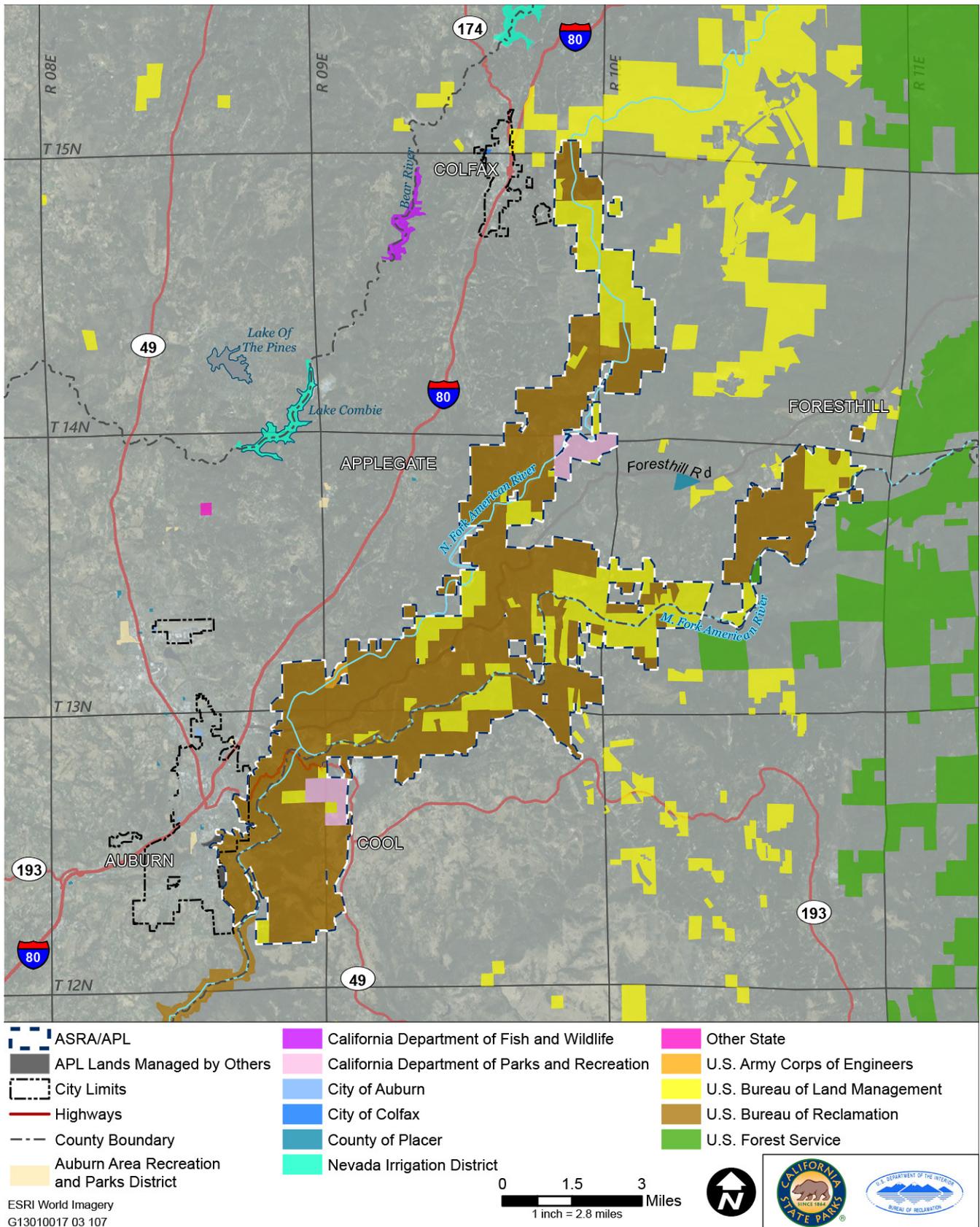
ESRI Basemap
G13010017 03 106



Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2017

Figure I.1-1

Regional Location



Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2016; downloaded from CPAD in 2015

Figure I.1-2

Land Ownership

1.2 Location and Regional Context



Source: Ascent Environmental

The North and Middle Forks of the American River provide a variety of water-related, upland, and backcountry outdoor recreation activities that are easily accessible for visitors of all abilities with outstanding opportunities for appreciation of the resources and for relaxation.

The boundaries of ASRA/APL generally follow the corridors of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, which create an elongated and “Y-shaped” boundary along the river canyons and adjacent ridges (Figure 1.1-2). ASRA/APL is located within El Dorado and Placer Counties, adjacent to the City of Auburn and a number of small communities, including Cool, Bowman, Meadow Vista, Applegate, Colfax, and Foresthill. The Tahoe National Forest encompasses land northeast of ASRA/APL and Eldorado National Forest is located to the southeast. In general, land uses adjacent to ASRA/APL consist of open space, public land, and rural residences.

Interstate 80 (I-80) and State Route (SR) 49 are the two main highways located near ASRA/APL. SR 49 cuts through the southwest portion of ASRA/APL. Additionally, SR 193 connects to SR 49 in Cool and provides access to portions of ASRA/APL along the south side of the Middle Fork.

Current uses of the lands reflect a wide variety of recreational activities that attract approximately one million visitors each year. The majority of ASRA/APL consists of mostly-undeveloped forested or scrub-vegetated canyons used for dispersed recreation or protected for natural and cultural resource values. Major dispersed recreational uses include hiking, swimming, whitewater rafting and kayaking, motorized- and non-motorized lake boating, rock climbing, fishing, camping, beach play, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle use, and mountain biking. Community park facilities serve urban populations of adjacent areas. A comprehensive summary of existing site characteristics is included in Chapter 2, Existing Conditions.

1.3 History and Purpose Acquired

In 1965, Public Law 89-161 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate and maintain the Auburn-Folsom South Unit (Unit), American River Division, Central Valley Project, under federal Reclamation laws. As a principal part of the Unit, the law authorized construction of Auburn Dam and Reservoir and the acquisition of lands for the Dam and Reservoir, and to provide for the purposes of water supply, hydropower generation, outdoor recreation, public use and enjoyment, and fish and wildlife enhancement. The law specified that non-federal public bodies may agree to administer lands for these purposes,

with certain cost-sharing provisions. Reclamation acquired lands to support construction, operation, and maintenance of the Auburn Dam and Reservoir consistent with Public Law 89-161. In 1979, ASRA was designated a State Recreation Area by the State Parks and Recreation Commission, and CSP prepared a General Plan for the management of Auburn Reservoir after construction of the dam (CSP 1979).

A series of complications, including concerns about seismic safety, put construction of the dam on hold for an indefinite period until Congress determines whether the dam will be constructed. With the indefinite delay in construction of a dam, Reclamation prepared an Interim Resource Management Plan (IRMP) in 1992, in coordination with CSP, to provide guidance for the management of the area until the dam was constructed (Reclamation 1992). This IRMP focused on the management of resources within ASRA/APL with the assumption that much of the area would eventually be inundated by an Auburn Reservoir. The IRMP still provides direction for the management of the area today. Because the construction of the Auburn Dam continues to be on hold indefinitely, the General Plan and Resource Management Plan (GP/RMP) are necessary to replace the 1979 General Plan and the 1992 IRMP and provide a long-term and comprehensive framework for the management of ASRA/APL in its current condition. If funding for an Auburn Dam is authorized, and all required state and federal approvals are obtained, the federally-authorized dam and reservoir could be constructed in the future. In the event that construction is resumed or the Project is deauthorized, CSP and Reclamation would develop a new or revised GP/RMP to reflect a long-term and comprehensive recreation and resource management plan that includes a dam and reservoir.

1.4 Sense of Place

Identifying ASRA/APL's "sense of place" is an important step in establishing the area's purpose and vision. The sense of place refers to the distinctive characteristics that draw visitors to the area and the special qualities that should be emphasized, protected, and enhanced. ASRA/APL is characterized by rugged and varied terrain intersected by the North and Middle Forks of the American River, which provide a variety of water-related, upland, and backcountry outdoor recreation activities that are accessible for visitors of all abilities with outstanding opportunities for appreciation of the resources and for relaxation. A 1993 study completed by Reclamation found that the Middle Fork and North Fork of the American River through ASRA/APL were determined to be eligible for Wild and Scenic designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Reclamation 1993). A study to



Source: Ascent Environmental

In 1965, Public Law 89-161 authorized construction of Auburn Dam and Reservoir and the acquisition of lands for the Dam and Reservoir, and to provide for the purposes of water supply, hydropower generation, outdoor recreation, public use and enjoyment, and fish and wildlife enhancement. Although the Auburn Dam and Reservoir are delayed indefinitely, footings and other preparatory construction features are visible from trails and roadways in ASRA/APL.



Source: CSP

The GP/RMP defines the purpose, vision, and long-term goals and guidelines over the next 20 years or more. It must be flexible enough to accommodate expected future changes while clearly guiding decision-making consistent with the adopted park vision.

determine the suitability of a Wild and Scenic designation for the North Fork and Middle Fork of the American River was never completed; thus, formal designation was never achieved. While not designated, the eligibility of portions of the North and Middle Fork for Wild and Scenic designation identified and highlighted the unique values of the river through these canyons including the scenic rugged canyons, dramatic rock formations and the whitewater and trail recreation opportunities. This recreation area is a place that provides for the perpetuation of important natural and cultural resources, active play, relaxation, social gatherings, and inspiration.

1.5 Purpose of the General Plan and Resource Management Plan

1.5.1 State Parks General Plan

There are substantial similarities between the requirements for a CSP general plan and a Reclamation resource management plan. Both documents are intended to identify and integrate management direction, implementation, and monitoring. The planning processes for both involve an inventory of resources, identification of issues, analysis of opportunities and constraints, formulation of goals and objectives, and identification of implementation procedures.

General plans are broad-based policy documents that provide management guidelines for a park unit. These guidelines define a unique framework, focused on this particular unit, for implementing CSP's mission of resource stewardship, visitor use, interpretation, recreation and visitor services.

The general plan defines the purpose, vision, and long-term goals and guidelines for park management and facility enhancement for the next 20 years or more. Typically, a general plan provides guidelines for future land management and for the facilities required to accommodate expected visitation.

Because a general plan is likely to be in effect for so long, it must be flexible enough to accommodate expected future changes while clearly guiding decision-making consistent with the adopted park vision. Thus, the general plan provides broad guidelines for future operation of the park but does not prescribe specific operational strategies (such as establishment of parking and special event fees or limiting or expanding different allowed uses on trails) that may need to be adjusted over time.



Source: CSP

The Planning Handbook developed by CSP provides guidelines for the preparation of general plans for state parks in California.

1.5.2 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Vision and Resource Management Planning

Reclamation's Vision Statement: Through leadership, use of technical expertise, efficient operations, responsive customer service and the creativity of people, Reclamation will seek to protect local economies and preserve natural resources and ecosystems through the effective use of water.

The Commissioner's plan for how Reclamation will attain its vision:

- ◆ Directing our leadership and technical expertise in water resources development and in the efficient use of water through initiatives including conservation, reuse, and research.
- ◆ Protecting the public and the environment through the adequate maintenance and appropriate operation of Reclamation's facilities.
- ◆ Managing Reclamation's facilities to fulfill water user contracts and protect and/or enhance conditions for fish, wildlife, land, and cultural resources.
- ◆ Working with Reclamation's customers and stakeholders to achieve mutual objectives.
- ◆ Assisting the Secretary in fulfilling Indian Trust responsibilities.
- ◆ Implementing innovative, sound business practices with timely and cost-effective, measurable results.
- ◆ Promoting a culturally diverse workforce which encourages excellence, creativity, and achievement.



Source: Reclamation

The Resource Management Plan Guidebook developed by Reclamation identifies required components of resource management plans.

Understanding and striving to attain our vision are critical to effectively implement the Government Performance and Results Act. GPRA was enacted in 1993 to improve public confidence in Federal agency performance by holding agencies accountable for achieving program results; and to improve congressional decision making by clarifying and stating program performance goals, measures, and costs "up front."

As described above, there are substantial similarities between the requirements for a CSP general plan and a Reclamation resource management plan. The required components of a resource management plan identified in the Reclamation Resource Management Plan Guidebook (2003) are almost identical to those required of a general plan under the CSP Planning Handbook (2010).

This GP/RMP serves as one integrated, comprehensive plan consistent with the requirements of both CSP and Reclamation. Due to similarities in purpose, process, and required components, there is no need or attempt to cross-reference state or federal requirements, or to specifically address consistency with each agency's approach.

1.6 Organization of the Plan

This GP/RMP is organized into the following sections:

- ◆ **Executive Summary:** The executive summary provides a brief discussion of the most essential information in the general plan. It provides an overview of the purpose of the general plan and resource management plan; the planning process; and the most essential information related to the GP/RMP.
- ◆ **Chapter 1, Introduction:** The introduction provides a brief overview of ASRA/APL. It describes the purpose of the GP/RMP and summarizes the planning process and subsequent steps.
- ◆ **Chapter 2, Existing Conditions:** Chapter 2 describes the existing land uses, facilities, resource values, visitor experiences, operations, and interpretation found within ASRA/APL. It also describes the partnerships and planning influences that affect the GP/RMP. It serves as the baseline against which the GP/RMP is evaluated in the accompanying Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), which is contained in a separate document.
- ◆ **Chapter 3, Issues and Analysis:** Chapter 3 explains the planning assumptions that inform the GP/RMP. It also identifies the key issues, opportunities, and constraints that are addressed by the GP/RMP.
- ◆ **Chapter 4, The Plan:** Chapter 4 presents the purpose of APL and the purpose and vision for ASRA. It includes the goals and guidelines applicable throughout ASRA/APL and management zone-specific goals and guidelines that direct management of the areas.
- ◆ **Chapter 5, References:** Chapter 5 lists the written sources and individuals cited in the GP/RMP.
- ◆ **Chapter 6, Acknowledgements:** Chapter 6 lists the contributors to the GP/RMP.



Source: CSP

The contents of the GP/RMP include the character of existing conditions of the park and goals and guidelines are included that address issues and opportunities that were identified throughout the planning process as well as address additional management needs in the park.

1.7 Planning Process, Planning Hierarchy, and Subsequent Planning

State park unit planning occurs under a planning hierarchy that begins with the Department's mission statement. First and foremost, a state park unit serves statewide interests, as described in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CSP 2015). The unit is studied to document its resources, classified based on the physical attributes, and subject to management guidelines provided in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5019.50-5019.80. A general plan is then prepared based on PRC Section 5002.2. When circumstances change, the general plan may need to be amended or revised to best serve the park unit and statewide interests.

Similarly, Reclamation resource management planning occurs under a planning hierarchy that begins with Reclamation's mission statements. The specific legal basis for Reclamation's resource management planning are contained in the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-72), Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-575), and project-specific authority, in this case Public Law 89-161, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate and maintain the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, American River Division, Central Valley Project. Resource management plans are prepared in enough detail to direct future development and use of the resources within the management area while being flexible enough to allow for the resolution of day-to-day operational problems (Reclamation 2003).

With both general plans and resource management plans, subsequent planning occurs to address resource-specific or site-specific topics. At the most site-specific scale, project specific planning, including environmental review, occurs before implementing individual projects that would implement a general plan or resource management plan. This GP/RMP calls for the preparation of the following subsequent management plans:

- ◆ State Parks Road and Trail Management Plan,
- ◆ Reclamation Fire Management Plan,
- ◆ State Parks Fire Management Plan or Vegetation Management Plan for state fee title lands,
- ◆ Cultural Resources Management Plan, and
- ◆ Emergency Access and Evacuation Plan.



Source: Ascent Environmental

Members of the public, stakeholder groups, and other agencies provided input throughout the planning process.

1.8 Interagency, Stakeholder, and Public Involvement



Source: Ascent Environmental

Three public workshops provided an opportunity for people to participate in the planning process.

An integrated CSP/Reclamation planning team conducted the GP/RMP planning process. Members of the public, stakeholder groups, and other agencies provided input throughout the planning process. The planning team used a combination of agency and stakeholder workshops, questionnaires, a dedicated project webpage, an online engagement tool, and personal contacts to engage with the public and stakeholders.

The planning team engaged with CSP, Reclamation, and USACE technical specialists to review key information; provide input to the purpose and vision, management zones, and intent; develop concept alternatives; and recommend a preferred alternative. Planning team and technical staff meetings were held after each of the first two public workshops to review input and develop the alternatives and preferred alternative. Comments received at all of the public workshops were discussed at planning team meetings after all of the public workshops were completed.

1.8.1 Public Workshops



Source: Ascent Environmental

Representatives from numerous agencies and stakeholder groups participated in the planning process.

The planning team conducted three public workshops at key points in the process to provide information, and gain feedback that informed the next steps. An average of approximately 200 individuals participated in each workshop. The first public workshop was held on November 12, 2015. At this workshop, staff provided an overview of ASRA/APL and the planning process, and solicited input on issues and opportunities to be addressed in the GP/RMP.

The second public workshop was held on December 7, 2017. The planning team shared information on four GP/RMP alternatives and collected feedback. This workshop also served as a scoping meeting for the preparation of the environmental impact report. The third public workshop was held on June 26, 2018. At this workshop the team shared information on the proposed GP/RMP and collected input on refinements to the plan.

1.8.2 Stakeholder and Agency Meetings

At key points in development of the plan, CSP and Reclamation met with stakeholder agencies, including BLM, USACE, U.S. Forest Service, El Dorado County, Placer County, City of Auburn, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and Auburn Recreation District. One meeting provided an opportunity to discuss and develop the

GP/RMP alternatives and another meeting was held to help select the preferred alternative. CSP and Reclamation staff also conducted numerous briefings and meetings with community members, community groups, and agencies.

1.8.3 Webpage

The planning team posted to a GP/RMP webpage (www.parks.ca.gov/PlanASRA) to share information throughout the planning process. The webpage was continually updated with information about the status of the plan, opportunities to provide input, public workshops, topic-specific fact sheets, and other planning documents.

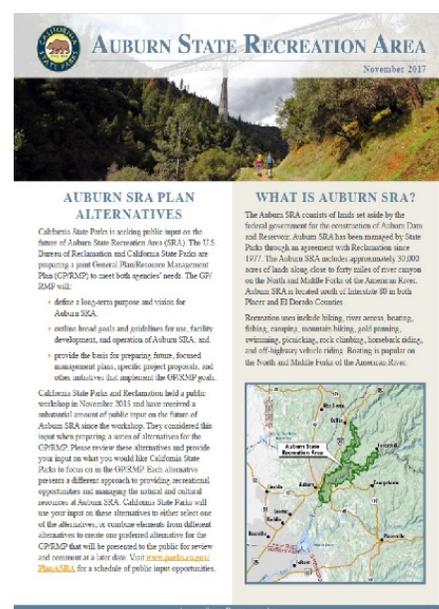
1.8.4 Questionnaires

Questionnaires provided interested individuals with the opportunity to provide feedback on proposals under consideration in the GP/RMP alternatives. The questionnaires were available at two points in the planning process through an interactive website that allowed respondents to learn about the alternatives, view maps, answer questions, and provide comments. In addition, the same information was made available through printed questionnaires.

1.8.5 Newsletters and Mailings

Contact cards were developed for field staff to distribute the webpage address to ASRA/APL users, stakeholders, and other interested parties. At meaningful points throughout the planning and environmental review process, the planning team prepared and distributed a postcard, newsletters, and e-blasts to update the public and interested stakeholders on important planning process developments. Newsletters were posted on the ASRA/APL GP/RMP webpage, distributed to workshop participants and sent to media contacts with press releases.

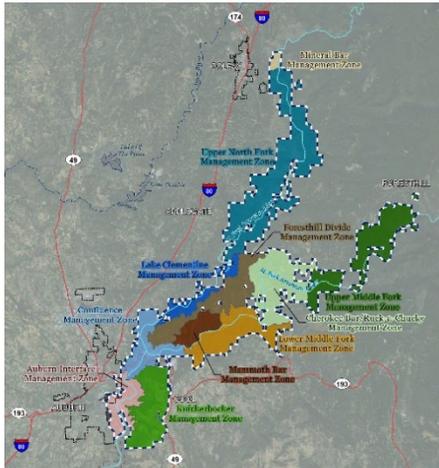
Throughout the process, the planning team invited people to stay apprised of plan development progress. Interested parties were invited to provide their contact information on sign-in sheets at the public workshops or could provide it via email to the planning team at plan.general@parks.ca.gov. The resulting contact list with nearly 3,400 individuals was used to provide regular direct outreach.



Source: Ascent Environmental

Newsletters, a postcard, and e-blasts were sent to stakeholders and the public to provide project updates and public input opportunities at meaningful points during the planning process.

A postcard, newsletters, and email blasts were sent to the contact list of nearly 3,400 individuals at the following times:



Source: Ascent Environmental

Interactive online maps and questionnaires provided one of several opportunities for the public to learn about the plan and weigh in on key issues.

- ◆ October 2015 – a postcard was mailed to the initial contact list a few weeks before the first public workshop. The postcards notified contacts (1) that input throughout the process is welcomed through the project webpage, telephone, and email; (2) that the ASRA/APL GP/RMP planning process was being initiated; (3) of the date and location of the first public workshop, and (4) estimated schedule for additional future public input opportunities.
- ◆ November 2015 – the first newsletter announced preparation of the GP/RMP for ASRA/APL. This newsletter explained the purpose for the GP/RMP, described ASRA/APL, and invited input on key issues to be studied and addressed during the planning process.
- ◆ November 2017 – the second newsletter included information on the four project alternatives. This newsletter also included notification of a public workshop to provide an opportunity for further input from the public.
- ◆ E-blasts – throughout the planning process, eight e-blasts were sent to the contact list to announce the workshops, share the two newsletters, remind recipients of opportunities for public input, and announce the release of the Preliminary GP/RMP and Draft EIR/EIS.