
BEAR FACTS

Planning Trends and Information from California State Parks

December 2004

Changing Demographics: Baby Boomers are Looking for Improved Recreational Vehicle Camping Opportunities in California

California's need for more and improved camping opportunities is acknowledged in *The Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California, 2002, An Element of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan*, published by California State Parks in December 2003. Over 45% of the individuals surveyed want more outdoor recreational facilities at lakes and reservoirs, such as picnic and camping sites and 39% of those surveyed want more developed campgrounds with hot showers and electrical and water hook-ups in outdoor recreation areas.

A New Wave Of Wanderlust

The survey statistics indicate that baby boomers are influencing the design and marketing strategies of recreational vehicle providers. The growing trend is confirmed in a *Los Angeles Times* article published March, 22, 2004 that describes a "New Wave of Wanderlust" among baby boomers who have more leisure time and who are taking advantage of low interest rates to purchase high-end, better equipped recreational vehicles for camping.

Sales of recreational vehicles are increasing, the article reported. "RV sales have typically surged months ahead of recoveries in the national economy." The new, better-equipped motor homes are being used mostly for weekend trips

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A Freeway Runs Through It

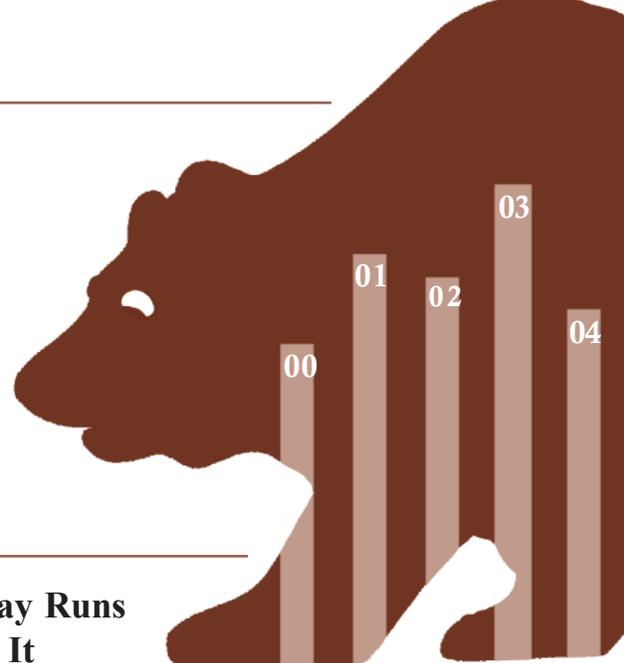
What if one day you woke up and saw bulldozers cutting a path through your favorite park? But what if that bulldozer was helping your community unsnarl its traffic jams or meet some other public policy goal? Should parks be immune from development pressure?

Parks are, essentially, open spaces in the landscape. As California becomes increasingly urbanized and crowded, it can be tempting for development projects to treat park lands as good candidate locations for construction work. Large-scale public works projects seem to be particularly attracted to this line of thinking. So it is not unusual that parks are proposed for freeway alignments, bridge abutments, and even railroad lines. But park land does not exist in abundance. When faced with development proposals, park professionals are having to reiterate that park lands were acquired for specific purposes. Unless the environmental integrity of park lands is assured, their value to future generations can be compromised.

To understand this important issue, consider two recent proposals for major infrastructure projects: the Foothill-South Toll Road linking Orange and San Diego Counties and the California High-Speed Rail project between Northern and Southern California.

The Foothill-South project is a proposed southern extension of the Route 241 Toll Road to Interstate 5 in the vicinity of San Clemente. Planning efforts

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and include showers, bathtubs, refrigerators and freezers and enough sleeping space for guests. The RV industry is eager to speed baby boomers on towards the good life and has demographics on its side as wanderlust-inspired boomers respond to a marketing campaign targeting consumers who haven't yet reached retirement age." Luxury camping is a growing trend but are there enough high-end RV campgrounds in the state to accommodate the needs of this fast growing segment of California's population?

Where Am I Gonna Feel Comfortable With My Rig?

Most RV campgrounds on federal lands in California are located inland, in the foothills and in the Sierra Nevada mountain forests. State RV camping facilities are situated primarily on the coast. A regional map and list of federal, state and privately owned campgrounds can be seen at <http://www.reserveamerica.com>. KOA commercial campgrounds with RV sites are located throughout the state and are easily accessed from the Interstate and state highway system. The website <http://www.koa.com> gives information on their 25 California locations. A list of private RV campgrounds, some in interesting out of the way locations, is available at the Go Camping America website, along with a clickable map of the state <http://www.gocampingamerica.com/directory/california.html>.

Choosing and making a reservation to accommodate the bigger, better equipped and more luxurious motor homes can be difficult. The

author of *Big Rigs Best Bets Campground Directory* suggests that "Selecting an RV park reminds one of

wedding dress or choosing the right club on a par three hole. Where am I gonna feel comfortable with my rig, even if it is just for an



overnight stay?" Most campground listings and reservation systems provide general information about the campground, but it is often hard to determine if an individual camp site has adequate electrical, water, and sewer hookups to accommodate the more luxurious vehicle.

The State Park System *Statistical Report for the 2001/02 Fiscal Year* reports the availability of 5,369 individual camp and group camp sites in 78 parks throughout the state that serve some 7,050,890 visitors per year. There are only 1,101 sites with RV hookups for electricity, water and sewer connections. A list of parks that can accommodate RV campers, motor homes, trailers and pop-ups, sorted by the maximum vehicle length for each type of RV can be found at http://www.parks.ca.gov/campsite_info.asp.

Demand Is So High

In 2000 and 2002, California voters passed two bond acts to fund construction of new state park facilities. RV campground improvement projects are underway at Half Moon Bay State Beach and Morro Bay State Park. Francis Campground at Half Moon Bay opened to the public on April 2, 2004. There are no hookups, but outside showers, flush toilets and a payphone are at nearby Venice Beach. Other state park improvement projects are in design or under construction as well, but the report, *The State Park System Plan 2002, Part I: A System For the Future*, acknowledges that the coastal campgrounds are filled to capacity and turn people away throughout the year. "Demand is so high that if the department were to add 325 camp sites a year, it would not keep up with requests."

The Department's Office of Grants and Local Services also makes federal and state grants to local agencies for park development. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program helped develop two urban RV campgrounds in Alameda County, one at Lake Del Valle in the hills south of Livermore and one at Anthony Chabot Regional Park just minutes from downtown Oakland. The Del Valle Family Campground has 150 sites, 21 with water and sewage hookups (no electrical). The sites are

(continued from previous page)

served by centrally located toilet and shower facilities. The Chabot Family Campground has 75 trailer, tent, or walk-in campsites, hot showers, naturalist-led campfire programs, an amphitheater, and hiking/fishing access to Lake Chabot. Both campgrounds are operated by the East Bay Regional Park District.

The Riverside County Regional Park and Open-space District is improving two close-in RV camping areas with 2000 Bond Act funding. Rancho Jurupa Park, located along the Santa Ana River near Riverside, is a quick escape from the city. The park has 67 sites available, 12 with full hook-ups, 55 with water and electricity. Lake Skinner Park, located 10 miles north of Temecula, has 158 camp sites with full hook-ups, 16 with water and electricity and 39 with water only. Restrooms with showers, shade structures, barbecues, and an on-site caterer are available for campers interested in a more luxurious camping experience.

Making Reservations Can Be Frustrating

Due to the limited availability of utility hookups at most government-owned campgrounds and the lack of information about individual sites in commercial campgrounds, luxury RV owners ready to hit the road should call ahead to determine if a campground has the required electrical, water and sewer hookups to accommodate the shower, bathtub, refrigerator and freezer found in many luxuriously equipped motor homes. 

The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation



California State Parks is expecting another element of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan to be done this spring. The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation comes at a time of great concern over California's declining health trends and shrinking budget. This report explores the many documented benefits that can be gained from participating in recreational activities. It describes the negative trends affecting California today and the substantiated studies that document the

effectiveness of recreation facilities, areas and programs on these trends. The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation will be useful to Park and Recreation providers in gathering support and funding for their programs. This publication will be available by contacting the Planning Division at (916) 653-9901 or visiting www.parks.ca.gov/planning and selecting the Outdoor Recreation Planning link. 



Which Park and Why?

Stone quarries in these state parks provided building materials for local construction and urban improvements. Can you name the state parks where the following quarries are located?

1. Construction quality Franciscan sandstone extracted from Quarry Point in this state park was used to build some of the earliest commercial buildings in San Francisco.
2. Hard, dense flows of andesite and basaltic andesite were quarried at this state park for use as paving blocks and building stones in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire of 1906.
3. Lime-grade limestone from the Cave Valley quarry in this state recreation area was used in the manufacture of beet-sugar.
4. The streets of this state historic park have curb stones and gutters shaped from marble blocks that were quarried on site.
5. The fine grade of concrete used to construct this state historical monument was made from rock quarried on site and mixed with sand from a nearby beach.
6. Native stone at this state historic park was used to build the Pig Palace.
7. California Conservation Corps laborers unearthed locally found embedded stone at this state park to build a 6,000 seat outdoor theater.

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(A Freeway Runs Through It continued)

for this project have continued for more than 20 years, involving a wide range of local, regional, state, and federal agencies. Project staff are currently responding to draft environmental document input from the comment period that closed in July 2002. The possible alignments run through or alongside state, local and regional parks and open space lands. Alternatives being considered include an alignment along the road lengthwise through state park land at San Onofre State Beach. California State Parks has formally commented that San Onofre State Beach impacts would be devastating to the park's functionality and resources.

The High-Speed Rail project proposes to connect the Bay Area and Sacramento with Southern California. In November 2006 voters will be asked to consider a bond act to pay for the project. In preparation, the California High-Speed Rail Authority is circulating a conceptual plan about the routes (comments on the Authority's environmental documents were due by August 31, 2004). The proposed alignments run through or alongside many state, regional and local parks and beaches, including the Henry W. Coe State Wilderness (AKA Orestimba Wilderness). Trains would run several times per hour at speeds that could exceed 200 mph. At this early, conceptual stage of the project, the specific impacts are difficult to identify. But it is not too early to imagine some potential for the project to help parks (by improving visitor access) or to hurt parks (by conflicting with visitor experiences and park resources). Undoubtedly, more studies will be done before November 2006 and, if the ballot measure succeeds, for years afterwards.

Meanwhile, the law is clear that park lands deserve protection from non-park development projects. Among the statutory tools available to parks are:

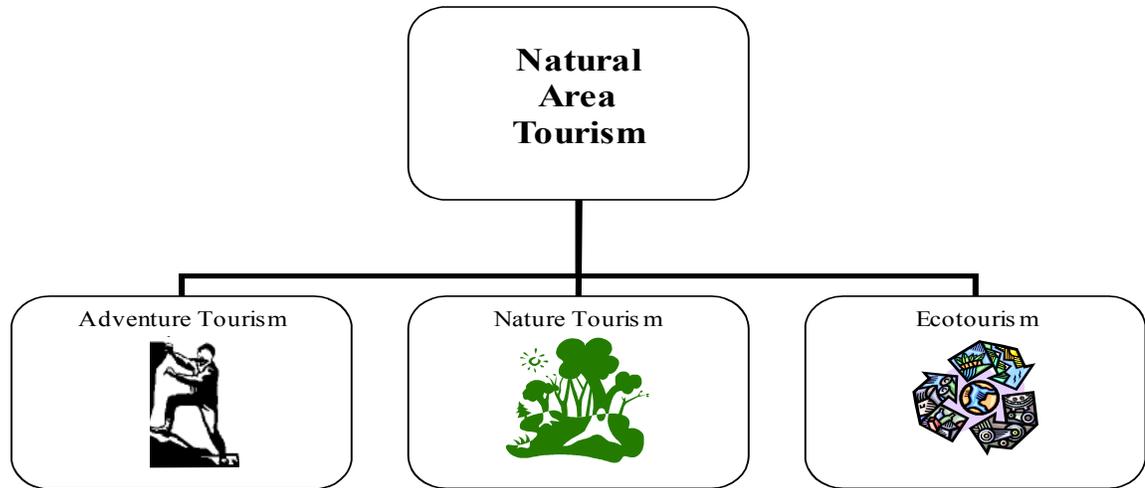
- The California Public Park Preservation Act of 1971 (Public Resources Code §5400 et seq.) provides that a public agency that acquires public parkland for non-park use must either pay compensation that is sufficient to acquire substantially equivalent substitute parkland or provide substitute parkland of comparable characteristics.

- In Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303), Congress declared that "special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands." As a means of realizing these broad goals, Congress specified two fundamental substantive mandates under the Act: (1) prohibiting federal agencies from approving transportation projects that require use of a public park or recreation area unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to using the parkland; and (2) requiring transportation projects which use a public park or recreation area to include all possible planning to minimize harm to the parkland.
- When lands are acquired or improved using Land and Water Conservation Fund Act grants (16 U.S.C. §§ 460-4 through 460-11, September 3, 1964, as amended 1965-1996), Section 6(f) of the Act prohibits converting these properties to a non-recreation purpose without the approval of the Department of the Interior (in practice the National Park Service is delegated this responsibility). Section 6(f) directs the Department of Interior to ensure that replacement lands of equal value (monetary), location, and usefulness are provided as conditions to such conversions. Consequently, where such conversions of Section 6(f) lands are proposed, replacement lands must be provided.
- Public Resources Code Sections 5024 and 5024.5 and CEQA Section 15064.5 require a state agency that proposes a project which may result in adverse effects on historical resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and to identify feasible and prudent measures that will eliminate or mitigate the adverse effects.

More information on the Foothill-South Toll Road and High-Speed Rail projects is available at http://www.thetollroads.com/home/current_foothill.htm and <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov>. 

What is Natural Area Tourism?

Tourism is one of California's largest industries and parks play an important role in increasing the popularity of natural area tourism. Natural area tourism is travel within natural settings that encourages environmental understanding, appreciation and conservation. Natural area tourism is often referred to as 'Adventure Tourism', 'Nature Tourism', and 'Ecotourism.' All of these are included in the broader scope of natural area tourism.



Natural area tourism activities within parks include hiking, fishing, camping, climbing, rafting, bird watching, and more. Through responsible development and careful planning, parks can continue to offer tourism activities and bring benefits to both the community and visitors.

Why do people seek travel to the outdoors?

Travel to natural settings has a long history. National and State parks have a long history of being preserved for ecological protection for the public to enjoy. Many people are drawn to the outdoors and natural area tourists often feel the need to get in touch with nature, seek activities that involve the challenge of an untamed environment.

Did you know?

- Tourism grows by 4% every year and natural area tourism is the fastest growing segment of mass tourism in the world.
- There were 67 million overnight visitors to state parks in the U.S. in 2002 and an estimated average of 2.6 billion people per year in North America take part in natural area tourism.
- Tourists in California include international and domestic visitors and State parks are an attraction for many. Almost 300 million domestic travelers visited California in 2003. Eight out of every ten California tourists are Californians. The typical natural area tourists are upper middleclass and between the ages of 31 and 50.

Pros of Natural Area Tourism:

When people visit parks they experience an increased interest in nature, which builds environmental awareness. When visitors have a personal connection with nature they begin to concern themselves with conservation issues and become advocates for preserving parks for future generations. Areas that may have been destroyed and developed can now be preserved for tourism instead. Visitors want to continue to see nature, not degraded landscapes and depleted wildlife populations, so preserving the environment is vital.

Tourism can be low impact and non-consumptive. Natural area tourism can be a powerful economic

(What is Natural Area Tourism? continued)

resource. Local jobs are created to support the industry including hotels and restaurants, as well as recreational activity and supply companies. Increasing the economy in the community can give parks added political value within California. Tourism can create an alternative source of income for parks when funds are limited and working with local tourism concessionaires can create a new source of revenue.

Cons of Natural Area Tourism:

There is a concern for park managers about the negative impacts that can occur from natural area tourism. Those impacts include overcrowding, trash, vehicle use pollution, disturbance to wildlife, and possible destruction to the environment. Most parks lack sufficient numbers of staff and resources to support the added visitors. This leaves parks vulnerable to degradation from tourism, however proper planning can minimize these impacts.

How to plan for natural area tourism in your park:

It is important for park managers to plan for tourism. This includes looking at long-term goals and objectives such as collaborating with all stakeholders and including the local community, businesses and tourism bureaus. Work with local and state tourism agencies to identify tourism opportunities within your park, including trip ideas and promotions. Does your park have a unique quality that tourists may want to see? Identify those opportunities and work with local tourism concessionaires to create new ways to channel money back into the parks.



Make sure your park can sustain an increase in visitors and has the infrastructure to support it. Consider the ecological constraints of tourism development and how you can mitigate any damages. Develop guidelines that tourists can follow. For example, some National parks provide education programs on low impact camping techniques. You can educate visitors

about minimizing trail erosion and cooking with stoves instead of firewood.

All of your tourism plans should also consider the community and how it will gain from added visitors to the area. Will local jobs be created? Is there enough lodging in the area? Do you have a sufficient employee and volunteer base to help with interpretive programs and tours? If not, how can you increase it? Be creative in looking at revenue sources from tourism. For example, parks can take advantage of movies' popularity, because Hollywood loves to film in State parks. Look at fee infrastructure and how parks can receive donations and royalties from these ventures. Use the sites from the films as a promotional tool to get more tourists to visit your park.

There are many ways to plan for tourism. Once again, consider everything that is valuable in your park that might appeal to visitors from all over the world. Work closely with the local community and tourism industry. Educate on the environment and minimize any ecological damage. Natural area tourism can foster a conservation ethic to visitors that will help protect parks for future generations. 🐻

(Which Park and Why?, continued)

- 8. Rock used to build the breakwaters and causeways at Port San Luis were blasted from the quarry located at this state park. More than a million tons of rock were removed before quarrying ended in 1962.
- 9. The Mt. Burdell quarry in this state historic park could have supplied the andesite rock for the fountain center piece in the formal garden Mary Burdell designed after her 1874 trip to Japan.
- 10. From the 1880s until the early 1900s, sandstone from the quarry in this state park was used to construct buildings and the harbor breakwater in Los Angeles.



(Answers on back page-Which Park and Why?)

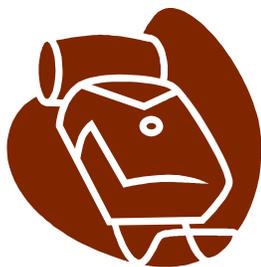
California Recreational Trails Plan: Phase II

The June 2002 California Recreational Trails Plan: Phase I was the first update of the original 1978 California Recreational Trails Plan. Phase I reviewed those changes that occurred during those intervening 24 years. While limited initial statewide trails inventory work has been started, the majority of Phase II will commence in spring 2005.

The several trails workshops planned for March/April will serve two functions: allow a regional look at statewide trails issues—a sort of mini-trails conference; and open a public trails forum to explore the potential CRTP: Phase II scope.

Any statewide trails plan, by necessity, will be general in nature. Hundreds of political jurisdictions and land management agencies control the trails and trail programs throughout California. Add the ever-increasing numbers of trail-user advocate organizations and their memberships to the tens of thousands of non-organization-related trail users, and the numbers of ideas of what trails mean and what they should be enter the twilight zone.

The CRTP: Phase II should include a preliminary inventory of California trails; preliminary due to the impossibility of complete cooperation from all the state trail managing entities, also since new



trails are being added weekly. We'll be looking at trail trends, trail issues and insightful trail research. Standards or guidelines for trail planning—including regional planning—design, construction and maintenance are also being

considered for inclusion. Funding strategies, including grants and public-private trail partnerships, will also be considered.

The final CRTP: Phase II will ultimately be influenced by the public and the schedule and funding availability for the planning effort. 

Quick Facts - Easy to Find and Full of Details!

How many park units does the Department of Parks and Recreation own? (278) OK, that was easy. How many are operated by other governmental entities? (31) Hmmm, getting harder. Do you know how many prehistoric and historic archeological sites the department is responsible for? (10,000!) Maybe this is easier - what fund contributes the most to the department's annual operating budget? (State Park and Recreation Fund, SPRF, at 27%) Keep an eye on the State Parks web page since the *Quick Facts* link is coming soon!

The executive summary piece *Parks by the Numbers*, is supported by more detailed sections on topics such as *Interpretation and Education*, *Parks People*, *Camping in Your State Parks*, and *Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division*. *Quick Facts* is intended for use by the department's executive staff, district superintendents, and division chiefs when they speak with legislators, the media and the public. It is also a good source of important facts for anyone interested in the State Park System. *Quick Facts* will be updated whenever new information is available.

Test your knowledge. How many of these quick facts do you know?

1. The number of acres owned by California State Parks.
2. The number of permanent positions authorized to State Parks.
3. The number of natural and cultural preserves and reserves in the State Park System.
4. The year the off-highway motor vehicle recreation division was established.
5. The number of State Beaches in the State Park System.

(Answers on back page-*Quick Facts*)

Bear Facts

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Division Chief -
Nina Gordon

Editor - Philomene Smith
psmit@parks.ca.gov

Cover Design - Philip Carey

For address changes or additional subscriptions contact Adrienne Tillis at (916) 653-9901
FAX (916) 653-4458



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We would like to introduce Nina Gordon, our newly appointed Planning Division Chief. Nina started with Parks in 1977, first as a State Park Ranger for 10 years, then in Headquarters' Planning and OHV Divisions and later worked in the Legislature and Resources Agency. She fills in behind Keith Demetrak who retired in May.

Answers to Quick Facts

1. 1.5 million acres
2. Approximately 2,400
3. 71
4. 1971
5. 64

Answers to Which Park and Why?

1. Angel Island State Park
2. Annadel State Park
3. Auburn State Recreation Area
4. Columbia State Historic Park
5. Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument
6. Jack London State Historic Park
7. Mt. Tamalpais State Park
8. Morro Bay State Park
9. Olompali State Historic Park
10. Santa Susana Pass State Park

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

