



The “big plans” issue

“Make no small plans, for they have no power to stir the soul,” said Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), a founder of modern land-use planning.

California State Parks (CSP) has been producing big plans since Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. outlined his plan in 1928 for a state park system of more than 35 parks (see http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/1929_state_parks_survey_ii.pdf).

Thirty years later CSP created the *California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)*, the nation’s first such plan and a template for similar plans now used in all fifty states.

Plans for individual state parks have evolved from simple architectural drawings to today’s complex reports such as general plans (see this page). Topical plans, such as the *California Recreational Trails Plan* (see page 7) and geographic initiatives, such as the *Central Valley Vision*, address topics needing special attention. These plans provide guidance as useful in difficult periods as in flush times, reminding us of long-term goals and core strategies for preserving resources, and creating outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire Californians.

— Planning Division staff



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Latest *California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)* points to fresh grant funding possibilities

by Philomene Smith, psmit@parks.ca.gov

California State Parks’ recently approved 2008 *California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)* identifies recreation issues and suggested actions for California outdoor recreation providers. This year’s *CORP* includes two new issues. *CORP* “issues and actions” influence criteria for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) federal grant program (<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/>).

The *CORP*, updated by CSP’s Planning Division about every five years, helps guide recreation planning and development by California outdoor recreation providers. It includes facts on public opinions, trends, challenges, protected areas, state recreation providers and more.

California cities, counties and districts authorized to acquire, develop, operate and maintain park and recreation areas also *CORP*, page 2.

General plan influence endures even in changing times

by Dave Keck and the General Plan team, generalplan@parks.ca.gov

Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), in his second report to the California State Park Commission, wrote:

“[T]o obtain satisfactory results in the long run from any given park unit...there should be a carefully developed ...deliberately adopted, ...comprehensive, unified and clearly understood... ‘Master Plan.’”

Olmsted was describing what today is known as a General Plan (GP). Arguably the most important document adopted for a park, a GP must be approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission before major facilities can be developed. Olmsted also noted that these precepts are

General Plans, page 4.

CORP, from page 1.

use information in the *CORP* to help secure grants from the LWCF. Administered in California by CSP's Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS), the LWCF program aims to make available into perpetuity the recreation opportunities it funds.

The 2008 *CORP* identifies eight issues for California's recreation providers and many suggested actions. Six of these issues were also in the 2002 *CORP*; Issues 2 and 8 are new.

One corresponding action from the *CORP* for each issue is included in the list below. For more information, see the "Issues and Actions" chapter of the *CORP*, http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23880.

Issue 1: The lack of access to public park and recreation resources. Action example: Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for underserved populations, such as communities in the Central Valley.

Issue 2 (new): The lack of linkages and seamless delivery of recreation opportunities.

Action example: Support projects that further develop the 27 regional trail corridors described in the *2009 California Recreational Trails Plan Progress Report* (http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=25677).

Issue 3: The need to protect and manage natural resource values. Action example: Support the acquisition and preservation priorities of the state's wetland preservation organizations such as the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture's goal of restoring, enhancing and protecting a network of functioning riparian habitat across California.

Issue 4: The need to preserve and protect California's cultural heritage. Action example: Study the potential positive effects on the economy from using historic preservation tools and incentives to

promote jobs, stimulate investments in local communities and encourage heritage tourism.

Issue 5: The lack of sufficient financing for parks and recreation. Action example: Explore the feasibility of alternative, long-term and sustainable funding sources for parks and recreation.

Issue 6: The need for increasing the status of parks and recreation. Action example: Research, quantify and publicize the relationship between recreation opportunities and reductions in community crime levels.

Issue 7: The need for statewide leadership in parks and outdoor recreation. Action example: Create a web clearinghouse available to park and recreation providers and others, with links to park and recreation research, case studies, examples of park and recreation programs and projects and other information about improving outdoor recreation services.

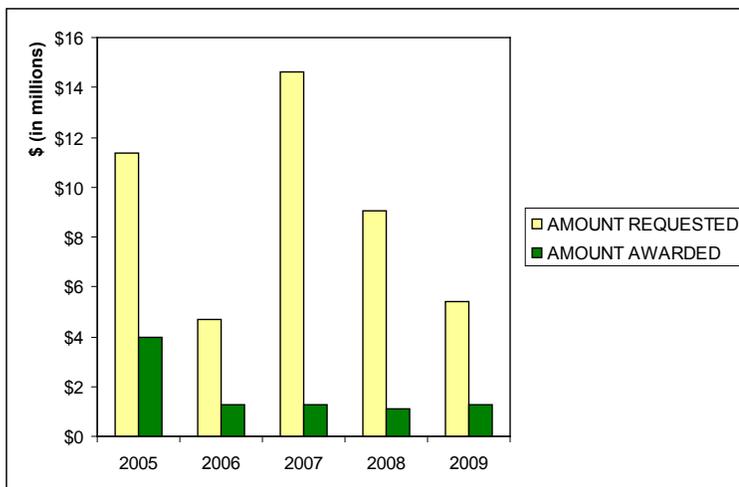
Issue 8 (new): The need for workforce development and succession planning. Action example: Revise job specifications

and minimum qualifications; hire candidates with degrees outside the field of parks and recreation to bring in other disciplines to broaden the profession.

Other *CORP* strategic recommendations include:

- Provide opportunities for the top four outdoor recreation activities identified by CSP's *Survey on Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation (SPOA)*:
 1. Walking for fitness or pleasure
 2. Camping in developed sites
 3. Bicycling on paved surfaces
 4. Day hiking on trails
 - Support the five goals of California's Recreation Policy:
 1. Adequacy of recreation opportunities
 2. Leadership in recreation management
 3. Recreation's role in a healthier California
 4. Preservation of natural and cultural resources
 5. Accessible recreational experiences
- (See the policy at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recpolicy.pdf>)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant funds requested by local government park and recreation providers from CSP's Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS), and amounts awarded, 2005-2009.



• Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for children, such as the ten activities in the Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights [<http://www.calroundtable.org/cobor.htm>]

Where to find more information on LWCF funding

LWCF funding is limited and is awarded on a competitive basis. Grant seekers may find these

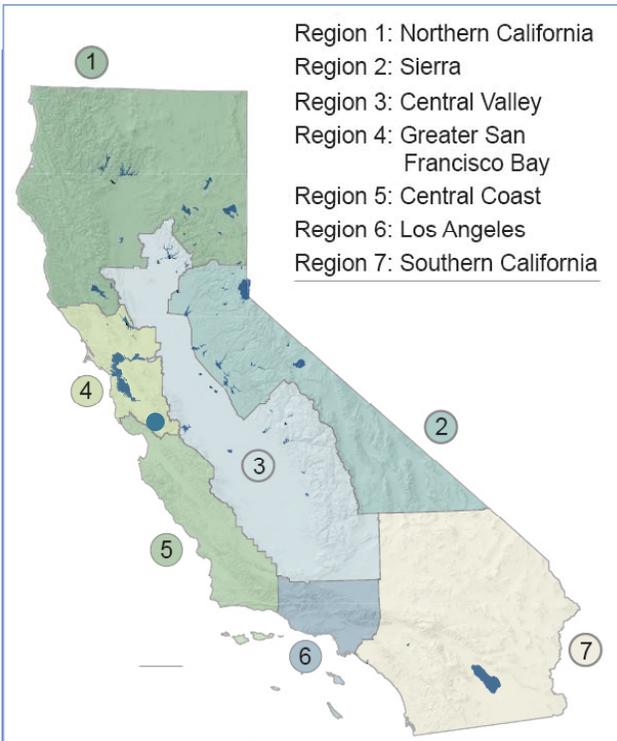
resources helpful:

• Information on the OGALS web site. *The OGALS LWCF Procedural Guide*, which includes scoring criteria for funding, application forms and more. Download the guide at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?Page_id=21360. Additionally (State budget permitting), OGALS provides technical-assistance workshops for recreation providers eligible for LWCF funding. For

workshop information, see the OGALS website, http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1008.

• Recent *CORP* and *SPOA* documents, which include more information on the issues and actions used as criteria for LWCF funding. See http://www.parks.ca.gov/planning_SPOA.

• The LWCF program website. See <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/> for more information. ●



Left: Map showing California regions.



Top photo: Cabin in winter at McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park.



Bottom photo: Mountain biking at Fort Ord Dunes State Park.

New research to focus on recreation in California’s regions

A California State Parks report still in the planning stages, *California’s Regions*, is expected to add significantly to existing information on recreation in each of California’s regions. The report is scheduled for release in 2012.

California’s Regions will characterize existing recreation resources and analyze recreation demand, challenges and opportunities. The study will include recreation trend data from the 2009 and 2012 *Survey on Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation* documents. The seven regions (see map) are defined by political, economic, demographic and geographic/political boundaries.

General Plans, from page 1.

“fundamental and well-established principles of good park administration.” Also fundamental to park planning, these precepts are consistently applied in state park GP development.

The contents and focus of the state park GPs have changed over the years. Early GPs provided site-specific development proposals and had a limited lifespan. Today’s state park GP is a comprehensive long range policy and guidance document with a longer lifespan, accommodating unanticipated opportunities and issues (such as climate change) and changing demographic and recreation trends (such as the burgeoning immigrant population). The example on page 5 shows how a GP has served one state park over the years.

General Plans are multi-purpose and adaptable

The planning and evolution of

the GP is a dynamic process that involves adapting and changing for continuous improvement, based on CSP priorities and strategic initiatives as well as new issues.

Development of a state park general plan involves a variety of complex tasks and objectives. The GP:

- identifies the park’s purpose and long-term vision;
- highlights park-site history and resources and considers a range of possible alternatives for access, visitor use, resource protection and park management;
- analyzes a range of visitor experiences and describes opportunities for enjoyment of park resources through recreation, interpretation and education;
- describes the management intent for specific park areas as a framework for future site-specific planning, facility design, activities and programs;
- provides information to help guide fund-raising organizations and volunteer associations;

- identifies and evaluates sensitive and/or significant plants, wildlife, habitats, archeological and historical sites and features, and recommends desired protection;
- serves as a programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) purposes;
- identifies appropriate land additions, including goals for future property acquisitions; and
- is used to establish capital-outlay development programs.

To accomplish these tasks, general planning is a collaborative effort involving numerous park professionals, government agencies, nonprofits and of course, the general public. The GP serves park planners and managers, resource specialists and multiple stakeholders in making land-use and development decisions and for defensive planning purposes. During the past 30 years, over 180 general plans have been approved for California state parks.

Planning documents available

The recently updated *Planning Handbook* is available to help guide planning teams, consultants, and park managers in the preparation, reviews, and requirements of future general plans. This handbook and copies of the approved and in-progress general plans are available online at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21299.

As Olmsted implied, satisfactory long-term results at a park can only be achieved by having a plan. By providing enduring guidance as well as the flexibility to respond to changing needs, the GP is a vital tool for park planners and managers. ●



Alan Tang (left), a CSP Planning Division landscape architect, explains a point to an attendee at a 2007 open house in Pescadero on planning concepts for Año Nuevo State Park & State Natural Reserve and Butano State Park. CSP Ranger Ziad Bawarshi (right) looks on.

Crystal Cove State Park, a general plan success story

Crystal Cove State Park is an excellent example of how a general plan, with its shared vision and clear direction, can guide development at a state park over decades.

Located near the busy Pacific Coast Highway between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach, 2,791-acre Crystal Cove State Park is one of Orange County's largest remaining examples of open space and natural seashore. CSP acquired the land in 1979. The general plan proposed preserving most of the park as natural open space.

To provide public access, the general plan defines general recreation opportunities and park development objectives and identifies connections to regional natural land and trails.

The general plan guides project implementation

Many major projects outlined in the 1982 general plan have been achieved or are in progress:

- In 1986, public access was developed and habitat restored at the former equestrian facility.
- In 2006, half of the 46 oceanside cottages were historically rehabilitated and major renovation was completed in the Crystal Cove Historic District, increasing alternative forms of overnight accommodation and generating revenue.
- Development is underway on a 60-site coastal campground and day-use area, which connects the park's coast to the inland Moro Canyon area and adds the first substantial campground to a

Southern California state park in more than 20 years. Increasing the number of campgrounds in Southern California is a long-standing CSP goal.

The general plan helps achieve park goals

The goals described in the general plan for long-term development, resource preservation and management also are invaluable in maintaining the integrity of the park. The approved general plan helps:

- Meet legal and political challenges at the park.
- Protect the park against inappropriate or incompatible development, such as soccer fields, or roads in inland habitat areas.
- Negotiate with landowners. In the 1980s and 1990s, the GP was the basis for negotiating modifications to—and environmental mitigation actions for—proposals and projects for the Newport Coast Local Coastal Program, on land adjacent to the park.



Cottages at Crystal Cove State Park before (top) and after (bottom) their 2006 historic rehabilitation.

Thanks to decades of planning, park development, resource preservation and park management, Crystal Cove State Park in large part has been transformed into the park envisioned by the park general plan.

Forms, guidelines, other “non-traditional” approaches streamline planning efforts

by Stuart Hong, shong@parks.ca.gov

In addition to comprehensive planning efforts such as general plans, California State Parks uses specialized tools and documents to suit various planning needs. A few examples are described here.

Acquisition Feasibility Guidelines (AFG). The essence of the *AFG* is a list of questions to help select property for the CSP system. The number of questions can be expanded or condensed to fit each project.

Immediate Public Use Facilities Plan (IPU Plan). The *IPU Plan* facilitates and guides immediate public use and facility development on CSP property before a General Plan (or a General Plan Amendment) is created. For example, installation of a trailhead with parking, signage, picnic tables and a portable chemical toilet might be part of the *IPU Plan*.



The vegetation management statement for Gaviota State Park (above) addresses impact to sensitive plants.

Interim Management Guidelines (IMG). This document helps Park Operations staff manage a state park on an interim basis, before creation of a General Plan. The *IMG* is a strategic document that contains information on topics such as recreation needs and use patterns, resource management priorities and locations for temporary facilities.

Recreation Assessment (RA). Planning Division and Park Operations staff collaborate on this document to update priorities for recreation opportunities at state park units. Recreation-related information such as survey and trend data and proposed and current recreation facilities are analyzed.

Vegetation Management Statement (VMS). This document, which includes desired conditions, helps Park Operations staff establish guidelines to manage vegetation at an individual state park. Operations staff typically can complete a *VMS* in about 40 hours. ●



The *Immediate Public Use Facilities Plan* helps make state parks available to visitors before a general plan is complete. (At left, Fallen Bridge Trail at Annadel State Park.)

California Recreational Trails Plan aids regional trails planners

by Wayne Breece, wbreece@parks.ca.gov

Whether walking, hiking, horseback riding or mountain biking, Californians are ardent trail users. In California State Parks surveys, trails are consistently rated as one of the most popular outdoor recreational facilities.

Funding, other topics featured in *Trails Plan*

California's trail management agencies face many challenges when planning, developing and maintaining California's trails, including:

- Obtaining funding for trails development and maintenance
- Linking trails to other regional trails
- Marketing trails to the public
- Planning for California's growing population

CSP's *California Recreational Trails Plan* ("Trails Plan") can help providers meet these and other challenges. The *Trails Plan*, completed in 1978 and updated in 2002, is a guide for trail management agencies on a number of topics, including: the benefits of trails for California's changing demographics, finding funding, ensuring effective stewardship and fostering cooperation among equestrians and other trail users. The *Trails Plan* assesses present and future demand for trails,

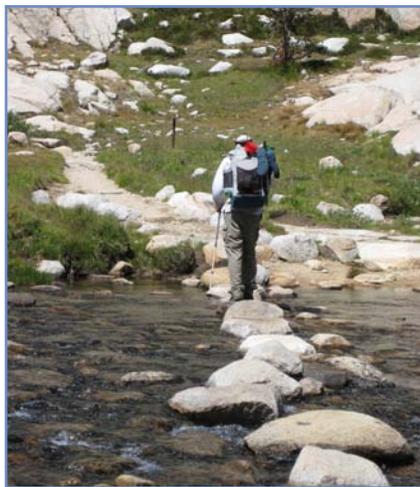
recommends an integrated system of trail routes and includes goals and action guidelines.

The *Trails Plan* designates 27 trails as part of the Recreation Trails system and is part of The California Recreational Trails Act (available in the Appendices of the *California Recreational Trails Plan* document at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26009).

Two renowned trails required extensive planning

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and the California Coastal Trail (CCT), both in the Recreation Trails system, are testimonies to the benefits of trail planning and collaboration.

Each year thousands of people trek or ride on horseback along



A hiker on the Pacific Coast Trail.

the 2,650-mile PCT, which runs from Mexico to Canada. Numerous individuals, agencies and other organizations collaborated for decades to create the PCT. This contiguous trail offers an alluring challenge to those seeking to complete the entire trail, either all at once (a relatively rare feat) or in sections. As one of only 11 National Scenic Trails, the PCT also provides users the opportunity to explore some of the most scenic regions of California, Oregon and Washington. Learn more at the Pacific Crest Trail Association site: <http://www.pcta.org/>.

The 1,200-mile CCT, a network of trails along the entire California coast, is almost half complete. Among organizations working to complete the trail are Coastwalk, the Coastal Conservancy, CSP and community and local non-profits. The completed CCT will be a continuous coastal trail from Oregon to Mexico and is expected to attract tourists to communities along the route. See more at this Coastwalk site: <http://www.californiacoastaltrail.info/cms/pages/main/index.html>.

Where to find more information

Go online for more on the *Trails Plan* and related efforts, including the annual statewide Trails and Greenways Conference (the next conference is in April 2010). See http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=23443 for more. ●

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Published twice a year, *The California Park Planner* provides employees of California State Parks and park agencies with information on trends and developments affecting park planning.

Wide variety of plans available online

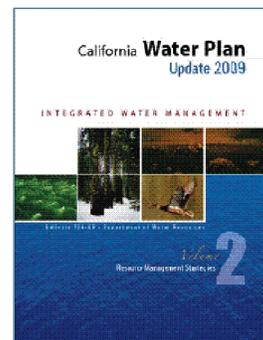
by Eileen Hook, ehook@parks.ca.gov

Here is a selection of the many plans available online related to California parks and open space.

Plans by California's Natural Resources agencies

California State Parks' two-volume *The State Park System Plan 2002* analyzes CSP's status in 2002 and includes goals for the coming decade. http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24512.

California State Parks' draft *Central Valley Vision Implementation Plan* proposes state park system improvements to meet needs of this rapidly changing region. http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23483.



The Department of Water Resources' *State Water Plan Update 2009* is available online.

The public-review draft of the Department of Water Resources' *State Water Plan Update 2009* focuses on water recreation in Volume 2, Chapter 26. http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/1208prd/vol2/WaterDependentRecreation_PRD_09.pdf.

Plans by the Department of Fish and Game include *California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges (California's Wildlife Action Plan)*. <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wap/report.html>.

The Department of Boating and Waterways' *California Boating Facilities Needs Assessment* analyzes existing boats and facilities and projects boating needs through 2020. <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Reports/CBFNA.aspx>.

Plans by other state agencies, municipalities and organizations

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing general management plans for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore. See NPS plans at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/Plans.cfm>.

The *Orange County Parks Strategic Plan 2007* guides the county park system in its business, stewardship and funding needs. <http://www.ocparks.com/strategicplan/default.asp?Show=FinalStrategicPlan>.

East Bay Regional Park District's *2007 Master Plan Map* updates its 1997 plan. http://www.ebparks.org/planning/mp/2007_map.

Restoring the Estuary is the implementation strategy of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture. http://www.sfbayjv.org/pdfs/strategy/Restoring_The_Estuary_Full.pdf.

Save the Redwoods League's *Master Plan for the Redwoods* guides League efforts to protect and restore redwood forests. http://www.savetheredwoods.org/protecting/master_plan.shtml. ●