

Skyline Wilderness Park Master Plan 2009 Update

10 JULY 2009

DRAFT



Prepared on
behalf of
Napa County
by Chandler + Chandler



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

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Executive Summary

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Skyline Wilderness Park is a one-of-a kind public park and an invaluable resource for the Napa County community. The goal of this Master Plan is to provide the guidance necessary to assure that future generations will enjoy the same extraordinary opportunities to play and relax in an unspoiled natural environment only minutes from home that we enjoy in the park today.

The 850 acres which make up Skyline Park lie in unincorporated Napa County just outside the southeast edge of the City of Napa. The lands are spectacular. Topography ranges from 100 to 1650 feet in elevation and provides views to Mount St. Helena to the north, Mount Diablo to the southeast, to San Pablo and San Francisco Bay to the south, Mount Tamalpais to the west, and Mount Veeder to the northwest.

Though the park is best known for its unparalleled recreational value, with trail systems that have been in use since the middle of the 19th century, it is exceptional in many ways. Animal habitat is especially diverse. Water resource conservation value is great. The park's location provides critical linkage to the developing network of regional trail systems that run throughout the Bay area. Skyline Park is the only public outdoor space in the County that is large enough to host recreational activities and community events that require great expanses of outdoor space.

The park is located on land owned by the State of California. In 1979 the State determined the land was no longer needed for State purposes and initiated the process of selling it as surplus property. Thanks to the forward thinking of a group of local citizens, it was not sold but instead was leased by the State to the County of Napa in 1980. The lease stipulated that the property would be developed and used as a public park consistent with a General Development Plan approved at that time or as subsequently amended. The volunteer group incorporated as the non-profit Skyline Park Citizens' Association (SPCA) and contracted to manage the development and operations of the park as a concessionaire on behalf of the County and the community. The SPCA has continued in this role with remarkable success for 29 years. Next year begins the 30th year of the 50 year park lease.

The volunteers who have gently coaxed this relative wilderness into the wondrous amenity it is, have met daunting challenges with limited resources and selfless commitment. There has, however, been little time to standardize and memorialize operating practices or document the incremental changes that have occurred over time. As park facilities and usage have evolved and grown, park management has become more complex, increasing the need for a comprehensive documentation of facilities and uses and standardized operating policies.

In June of 2008, the County of Napa in its update to the County General Plan officially acknowledged the importance of Skyline Park to the community and the region. This Master Plan is the next logical step in recognizing the value of the park to the community and

supporting its continued existence. This plan brings together in one document all of the incremental changes which have been approved and made since the adoption of the original Comprehensive Development Plan for the park, as well as provides guidance on the operations of the park. The plan's purpose is to provide clear and comprehensive principles and strategies for managing the park for at least the next 20 years.. The plan will be referenced in the County's Zoning Code and will be used by county leaders and staff to guide their actions related to park oversight. Because the plan does not propose substantive physical changes or new uses beyond those approved by the original General Development Plan or subsequent incremental amendments, it is not technically an amendment to the General Development Plan that requires approval by the State. Nonetheless, the draft Master Plan is being provided to the State for their information and comment prior to its consideration by the County Board of Supervisors.

The Skyline Wilderness Park Master Plan defines the term "public park" and documents the value of the park to the community. It articulates the policies and practices that have been used over time to make the park what it is today and identifies the principles and strategies that will guide maintenance, operations and management of the park in the future.

The content of the plan is based on research of the historical records of both the County of Napa and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association; information provided orally by people who are knowledgeable of the park's history and operations; three formal meetings with a diverse group of community members selected by County staff; consultation with members of the SPCA; and expertise related to park planning, mapping and organizational development provided by consulting professionals. Principles and strategies are organized into the following four categories: Governance, Stewardship, Access and Operations/Administration.

The mission of Skyline Wilderness Park is to function as a public park and is further defined as follows:

To provide the opportunity for all community members and visitors to experience the diverse natural splendor, biodiversity and recreational resources of the park in a way that appeals to their interests and in a manner that preserves and enhances these resources for future generations.

This Master Plan provides the County of Napa and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association a framework within which to make decisions and plans for the park that will perpetuate that mission -- regardless of changes in County or park leadership or economic circumstances.

The Master Plan Project

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Purpose and Use

This Master Plan has been prepared and adopted by the County of Napa with input from the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, and a community-based advisory committee. It is intended to document the value of Skyline Wilderness Park to the community, and to provide a framework for the future management and use of the park. Both the State of California lease of the property to the County of Napa, and the County concession agreement with the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, were created on the founding principle that the property would be used for a "public park". This "public park" principle guides the General Development Plan that was approved for the park at the time the County leased the property from the State.

The lease agreement between the State and the County explicitly acknowledged that the General Development Plan would be amended over time, consistent with the basic "public park" purpose. Indeed, in the thirty years since the preparation of the initial General Development Plan, numerous physical improvements and changes in use have been approved and implemented.

The Master Plan brings together into a single document a comprehensive description of all of the physical resources of the park, the natural resources as well as the constructed improvements, and activity changes that have been made over the past thirty years. This plan thus represents a complete and accurate description of the current General Development Plan for the park, and will be used by the County to guide its actions related to oversight of the concessionaire agreement, review and issuance of permits, and enforcement of County ordinances applicable to the park. In addition, by articulating the mission statement for the park, the vision for what the park is and should be, principles for how the park will operate, and implementation strategies for those principles, the Master Plan defines what is meant by "public park".

However, this plan is somewhat different from the typical park master plan. Park master plans usually consist primarily of site plans and guidelines for implementing a long-range vision for the site's development and programming. The Skyline Wilderness Park Master Plan differs in two ways. First, because of the informal way the park has evolved since the lease of the property from the State in 1980, comprehensive long-range plans and practices have not been clearly articulated, nor applied. This plan functions as an organizing document, articulating the policies and practices that have been used, over time, to make the park what it is today. Secondly, because most of the major development likely for the park has already taken place, the plan focus is less on development and more on identifying principles and guidelines for future maintenance, operations and management.

To summarize, the goals for this Master Plan project are the following:

- Inventory and summarize existing site conditions.
- Collect and summarize the numerous policies and practices that have evolved over the past 30 years.
- Affirm the purpose of the park and quantify the value it holds for the residents of and visitors to Napa County.
- Develop a comprehensive and up-to-date planning document that includes core principles and clear strategies to guide the operation of the park over the next 22 years remaining in the lease with the State.

Process

In December of 2008, Chandler & Chandler Landscape Architects were retained by the County of Napa to assist with the development of this Plan. Managing Principal, Jennifer Chandler, and Consulting Principal, Tricia Westbrook, were the lead staff on the project.

After reviewing site maps, and the records and files in the possession of the County and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, as well as interviewing several current SPCA members and park users, the consultants prepared site plans and summaries of existing policies and practices.

At the same time, County staff selected 16 members of the public representing a diverse range of interests and experience to function as special advisors to the consultants. Included among this group were representatives from the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, major park user groups, the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, and the community at large. Information and advice were obtained from the group through a written survey, e-mail dialogue and three formal master plan work sessions which were as follows:

Session One: The consultants introduced the project, then presented findings on the existing site resources, facilities, and amenities. They discussed what they found to be active operating policies and procedures. Input was taken from the group, not only to improve and enhance the accuracy of the findings, but also to listen to individual members' perceptions of issues that should be addressed by the Master Plan. Brainstorming sessions addressed two components of the Master Plan: park access (through facilities, amenities and programming) and funding. Participants took away a questionnaire to complete and return via e-mail.

Session Two: The consultants presented and discussed access and funding strategies (developed based on input from session one), then introduced and took comments on the proposed principles for future management. A summary of the group's responses to the questionnaire was given and another brainstorming session held, this time addressing the stewardship element of the master plan.

Session Three: The consultants sought input on the Preliminary Draft of the Master Plan, which the group received in advance of the session. Corrections to background and site condition information were noted, as well as input on the principles and strategies content.

Following the third meeting of this group, a meeting was held with the Skyline Park Citizens' Association Board to review the Preliminary Draft and discuss the logistics of implementation.

Based on input received, a revised public comment draft was prepared and circulated for public review, along with a Proposed Negative Declaration document pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. As part of this public review, the draft plan was provided to the County Planning Commission, the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, and the State of California, as well as other interested agencies and the general public. The Master Plan was then presented to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

Organization of the Master Plan

The Master Plan document consists of several parts: Executive Summary; Background; Summary of Existing Conditions; Purpose of the Park; Statement of Park Value; and Guidelines for Planning and Operations in Governance, Access, Stewardship and Operations. The Appendices contains relevant background resource material.

Future Review and Updates

An effective master planning process is ongoing and dynamic. It must allow for flexibility as situations and circumstances change, while adhering to the process and remaining true to core values. This plan calls for periodic review, revision and/or expansion to ensure that it is sufficient in scope, remains current, and continues to facilitate the vision. Reviews should occur every five years in conjunction with the County of Napa and SPCA's periodic negotiation of the extension of the concessionaire agreement, including its associated Five Year Plans, as provided in the concessionaire agreement between the County and SPCA. Review may also be done at other times if circumstances dictate.

Background

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History of the park

In the late 1970's the State of California was prepared to sell off as surplus property approximately 850 acres of land adjacent to the Napa State Hospital in Napa County. The land contained significant stretches of undisturbed wilderness areas and had been informally used for hiking and other outdoor recreational purposes by locals for years. At the time, the County of Napa had neither a Park and Open Space District, nor a Park and Recreation Department. Due to a lack of resources and administrative capability, county officials showed little interest in acquiring the land for preservation and recreational use.

Fortunately, State Senator Dunlap and a neighbor of the park, John Tuteur, recognized the opportunity at hand for the citizens of Napa County and refused to let it pass. They assembled a citizens group of open-space advocates who worked with the Board of Supervisors and County staff to devise a plan to have a non-profit organization operate the park. Under this plan, the organization would be responsible for normal park operations and maintenance at no cost to the County. The State agreed. The group became an independent, non-profit organization known as the Skyline Park Citizens' Association (SPCA.)

In 1979, anticipating leasing the parkland from the State, the County signed a concessionaire agreement with the SPCA, delegating responsibility to them to operate a public park on the land. On January 9, 1980, the State officially leased the land to the County of Napa for a term of 50 years, to begin February 20, 1980, for a fee of \$100.00 per year. This 850 acres came to be known as Skyline Wilderness Park. The lease agreement included informally drawn boundaries on site maps, with a stipulation that a more formal legal description of the property would be made at a future date. To date, a formal legal description has not been prepared. Skyline Park is one of the few, if not the only, park in California and possibly nationally which is operated entirely by volunteers under this type of public-private partnership arrangement.

With some initial bond funds from the County, local volunteers, under the leadership of the SPCA, spent the next three years transforming the Skyline property into the public park they had promised a somewhat skeptical State of California that they would make. They installed fencing, a parking lot and an information kiosk. They forged trails. "I remember riding my horse through the brush, finding the best route," says one equestrian who participated in the early work. "I remember my husband and I and our friends tramping out the trails with our feet," says another. "We had big work-parties and whole families came -- the kids helped too." The park couldn't open without restrooms, so chemical toilets were installed. Fundraisers were staged to secure operating money. John Csarrasco was hired as the first park ranger for \$3.35 per hour.

On April 15, 1983 Skyline Wilderness Park opened its doors for the first time. The community was welcomed with a huge open house on May 14th of that year.

The SPCA, and a host of volunteer community members too numerous to list, spent the next 15 years developing Skyline into a self-sufficient public park. Mountain bikers became official park users and volunteers in 1984. That same year, a dozen telescopes were set up in spring and fall to give the community a chance to gaze at the stars. A trail riding company came in and ran guided horse-back rides on the trails. Additional trails were built. A formal picnic area was built using tables donated by Bothe-Napa State Park. Formal equestrian facilities were added. A mobile home was set on the property to accommodate a live-in park ranger.

Cattle grazed the land through a rental agreement for many years prior to the park being leased to the County. The cows stayed on in the park for several years after the park opened, providing a sure source of income. Eventually, however, they wore out their welcome, tearing up trail sign posts and getting into other bovine mischief, and the grazing agreement was scrapped. Plans were then hatched to create a recreational vehicle campground to replace the much needed operating funds previously provided by grazing fees.

Throughout the 1980's, SPCA continued to develop the park. An archery club joined the mix, carving out an exciting range for their members and the public. Eagle Cycling Club's involvement grew, and they donated bicycle racks and a bicycle for trail patrol. A tool shed and pump house were built and infrastructure was expanded in the developed areas. A small barn donated to the park was installed and expanded to become the Social Hall that exists today. In 1985 a haunted house grossed \$5100.00 for park operations. Feral pigs loved the park as much as the local community and became the nuisance that they continue to be today.

The 1990's brought more people to enjoy the park and more organizations to help program and operate it. The Napa County branch of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) was one of these organizations. They sponsored re-vegetation and education programs and developed the Martha Walker Native Habitat Garden. Today CNPS grows local native plants for use in the park and elsewhere in the valley, and holds regular sales to the public. They created a foundation to support their work in the park. Concurrently, SPCA opened a tent campground, and two new trails, including the Rim Rock trail to the summit of Sugarloaf Peak.

It was during this period that the park began to be known as an outstanding venue for large events. Among them were the Napa Valley Music Festival, the California State Horseman's Trail Trials, the Napa Sheriff's Posse Invitational and World Cup Mountain Bike Races. In 1998, a disc golf club began working with the park to set up a range. The range now attracts players from all over the West. By August 6th of 1998, when ground was broken for a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail leading from the park onto adjacent private land, the park had achieved its vision of being a self-supporting park. Also by the end of that decade, the invasive plant species, star thistle, was edging out the feral pig as the top nuisance in the

park, and signs of mountain lions were causing concern for the SPCA, who worried about park users' safety.

The turn of the 21st century brought a website and increasingly diverse use of the park's facilities. The SPCA welcomed the public, learning what worked and what didn't as they went. School groups began to make more organized use of the park's amenities, as the Boy and Girl Scouts had for years. The popularity of the trails began to present a problem for the limited, mostly volunteer, trail maintenance resources of the SPCA. A long-term solution for this problem has yet to be found. The park leadership also pressed for acquisition of the adjacent Vallejo Lakes property, an effort that continues today.

Twenty-six years have passed since Skyline Wilderness Park opened its gates. The SPCA held their planning and problem solving meetings in local schools, banks, each other's homes, and at the Valley Bible Chapel, until they finally came to rest in the business office in the Social Hall. During these 26 years, a passionately committed group of outdoor-loving volunteers has turned a 850 acres of open space into an oasis of nature, healthy activity and fresh air, for which the people of Napa County will be forever grateful.

Section 1: Existing Conditions

Site Features, Facilities and Amenities

Summary of Findings

In Skyline Wilderness Park's more than 850 acres, visitors can find a wide range of facilities and amenities through which to enjoy the park. All of the activities have been developed to serve the parks' purpose of providing a nature based recreational facility just steps from the entry gate. More than 20 miles of trails serve hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Professional grade archery and disc golf ranges are highly sought out by enthusiasts from all over California. Picnicking and event facilities serve both the local community and organized groups. The vast majority of the park is undeveloped, except for the trail system, which takes in numerous natural features and ecological habitats. The area closest to the entry gate is easily accessible and flat. Developed facilities and higher impact activities are concentrated here. Tent and horse camping, equestrian facilities, a community building, parking, restrooms, and showers are located here, as is the recreational vehicle campground which provides a significant percentage of the park's operating revenue. This developed area provides staging and activity areas for the many large-group events that take place in the park each year.

Inventory of Attributes, Features and Facilities

Park Attributes

The principal focus of the park is the opportunity to experience nature and wilderness within a few minutes from home. From group educational outings, to family picnics, to solo contemplation, the park offers many ways to experience nature. For one person, the thrill might be the chance mountain lion sighting while biking in the upper reaches of the park. For another, it could be observing the quail and other nesting birds in the Martha Walker Garden. For another, who volunteers on a re-vegetation project, it is watching as the plants take hold and grow. A small child finds delight in turning over rocks. A group of scouts spends their first night out camping. All these experiences, and thousands more, make Skyline a precious place.

WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CLOSE TO HOME

- Hiking, biking and horseback riding
- Family picnicking
- Bird watching
- Nature study
- Wildflower viewing
- Quiet contemplation
- Photography
- Outdoor community gathering

-
- Boy and girl scout activities
- School program and field trip activities
- Nature-based education and art programs
- Outdoor volunteer projects—re-vegetation, trail maintenance, etc.
- History discovery

Natural Park Features

FLORA AND FAUNA

- **Plants:** The dominant plant community at Skyline Park is oak woodlands, including valley oak, coast live oak, blue oak, black oak, California bay and madrone. The buckeye trail is lined with its namesake, the California buckeye. The northern flat portion of the park is primarily open grasslands consisting of mostly of non-native annual grasses and a variety of native and non-native forbes. Patches of open grasslands are also found at various locations elsewhere in the park. Chaparral is found primarily along the eastern edge of the park, and includes such characteristic plants as chamise, manzanita, sticky monkey flower and coyote bush. Riparian vegetation extends along the length of the creek feeding into Lake Marie at the southeast end of the park, through the length of the park into Lake Camille and eventually into Tulocay Creek northwest of the park. The riparian vegetation includes white alder, California bay, willow and big leaf Maple. Areas of cattail, bulrush and related freshwater marsh vegetation located along the banks of Lake Marie and in a constructed wetland next to the Martha Walker Native Habitat Garden.
- **Animals:** The park is home to many animal species, with raptors, deer and large flocks of non-native turkey among the most noticeable. Sightings of mountain lion, peregrine falcon, rattlesnakes, coyote and bobcat are often reported in to the information kiosk.

TOPOGRAPHY

- **Peaks:** There are numerous unnamed ridge tops providing views of the Napa River, San Pablo Bay and the Napa Valley. They are accessible by either multi-use or hiking only trails. The elevation ranges from about 140 feet near the entrance to 1630 feet at the top of Sugarloaf Peak.
- **Stream and small lake environments:** One major stream, Marie Creek runs through the property and feeds a small, man-made lake, Lake Marie, and two smaller lakes just outside the boundary of the park in the area known as Camp Coombs owned and operated by the State of California. There are numerous smaller, seasonal drainages that feed Marie Creek.
- **Meadows:** Numerous small and large meadows are found throughout the property, interspersed with oak woodlands, and dotted with numerous spring wildflowers and mossy boulders.

Park Facilities

ARCHERY RANGE

- Hospitality area: There is a small gathering facility at the southwest corner of the range.
- 25 acre range: The fenced range consists of open, rolling terrain to the east of the main entrance with 42 targets, operated by Silverado Archers Inc. (NFAA). The range is charted with 3 separate NFAA marked yardage ranges, each range having 14 permanent targets as well as an area for 14 unmarked distance targets utilizing McKenzie 3-D's. The club host a number of tournaments each year for target archers and hunters

CAMPING

- Tent: There are 20 rustic sites near the social hall.
- Equestrian: There are 10 sites located in the southwest of the developed part of the park, near the horse arena. Each site has a picnic table and water and accommodates two horses and two rigs.
- Recreational vehicle (RV) park: Located south of the entry, there are 39 sites plus an overflow area. The park includes the following: water/electrical hookup at each space; restrooms and showers (two each), a dump station, parking for an additional vehicle adjacent to each space, and a small, fenced dog exercise area.

DISC GOLF

- 18 hole range on approximately 15 acres: There is a short, technical course on rolling, fairly open land that can be played in two hours. Alternately, it can be played as either the front nine or the back nine.

EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

- Arena for day and event use (for both equestrian and other uses). Regularly scheduled schooling shows (western, trail, gymkhana and English), as well as 4-H and other youth shows are held in the sand arena. The arena is otherwise available for training.
- Exercise ring: There is a small ring for warming up horses in a small area near the main arena.
- Trail trial course
- Horse camping (See Camping above.)

GARDENS and PLANT PROGRAMS

- Martha Walker Native Habitat Garden (an International Peace Garden): The fenced garden includes numerous garden-worthy native plants, with strolling paths, sitting areas, and a small pond. Besides being a good educational resource for the public, it provides high quality habitat for birds and other small creatures. The garden is an excellent place to bird watch. It is located

near the social hall and is very close to parking, providing easy access for those with limited mobility.

- Native plant restoration program greenhouse: The Napa Chapter of the California Native Plant Society runs a native plant propagation program. Plants propagated there are used both in the park and elsewhere, and are also available to the public on regular sale days.
- Marsh restoration project

MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

- Equipment Barn
- Pump House

OUTDOOR EVENT SPACE/ PICNIC AREAS

- Individual, family, large group picnic facilities (One large group area, three wilderness areas)
- Cook shack/BBQ
- Refreshment bar

PARKING

- Striped, paved day use parking (58 spaces) and additional informal parking at the social hall
- Horse trailer parking area

SOCIAL HALL

- Large gathering space (2,275 square feet): Located south of the park entrance, the social hall includes a conference room, event kitchen and serving station counter. There is a small outdoor entertaining area on the south side of the building. Restrooms and informal parking are adjacent.

TRAIL SYSTEM

- 20+ miles of unpaved trail: Ranging from rocky single track to smooth fire road, with varied levels of difficulty and access for hikers, cyclists and equestrians, the trail system is the pride and joy, as well as the central focus, of the park.
- Regional trail systems connections: The Park is host to a section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, which is planned to eventually connect south to American Canyon, east to Solano County, and north to northern Napa Valley. The park also connects to the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Napa River Trail via the River to Ridge Trail at the southwest edge of the park.

TRAIL ACCESS			
Trail Name	Hikers	Cyclists	Horses
Bay Leaf	Y	Y	Y
Buckeye	Y	Y	Y
Chaparral	Y	Y	Y
Hikers Bypass, Marie Creek	Y	N	N
Lake Marie Road Trail	Y	Y	Y
Manzanita	Y	Y	Y
Marie Creek	Y	Varies	Varies
Rim Rock	Y	Not Suggested	Not Suggested
Skyline and Lower Skyline	Y	Y	Y
Toyon	Y	N	N
Toyon Creek	Y	N	N

VISITOR SERVICES

- Information Kiosk: This is the visitor entry point where visitors can pick up maps, be apprised of any new park information, pay fees, register for overnight use, report wildlife sightings, etc. The kiosk is adjoined by the main paved parking area and restrooms with showers (2).
- Event facility/space rental: While not an every day feature of Skyline Wilderness Park, a limited number of larger events occur at the park every year. To accommodate these events, the level open field area in the northwestern portion of the park is typically used for event parking. Depending on the type of event, various facilities may be utilized, such as the social hall, the picnic area, horse arena, etc. Smaller events make use of the social hall and picnic areas.

Park Usage

The park currently hosts approximately 25,000 visitors per year. See recent park statistics on of usage in Appendix 8. Below is a summary of the challenges related to park usage that were identified during the planning process. Subsequent sections of the Master Plan address these challenges in more detail.

Challenges Posed by Existing Conditions

Skyline Wilderness Park is well-loved by the community, and existing conditions are generally good, but there are notable challenges. Key challenges are summarized below, and discussed in greater detail in succeeding sections.

- The existing network of trails in many areas does not meet modern trail design standards for multi-use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists and hikers, in terms of width, drainage, slope and sight lines. Today they experience much higher levels of usage than when they were first constructed. This is causing problems with soil erosion, water damage and conflicts between users.
- A complete property boundary survey has never been completed, but partial surveys in recent years have revealed several areas where existing trails encroach on to adjacent private property.
- As with virtually all open space lands in the region, invasive non-native plants such as star thistle, broom and wild pigs pose a threat to habitat health.
- The ability of the Skyline Park Citizens' Association to enforce compliance with park regulations is limited by the fact that the Association has no independent authority to adopt ordinances, deputize park rangers and issue fines; at the same time, the County and the Association have never jointly evaluated whether new County ordinance authority is needed.
- Most park facilities were constructed before the adoption of the Americans With Disabilities Act; while many retrofits have been made in response to this legislation, a comprehensive evaluation of all park facilities has not been undertaken.
- Most park structures do not meet modern energy efficiency and water conservation standards, which results in higher operating costs and greater resource consumption than necessary.
- Except for several notable but nonetheless sporadic capital grants provided by the County of Napa, Skyline Park has had to be operationally self-sufficient, which limits the ability of the Skyline Park Citizens' Association to address facility maintenance and resource stewardship needs.
- The fact that the County's lease of the land from the State only runs until the year 2030, combined with periodic attempts by the State to sell the land on the open market as surplus property, creates uncertainty about the future and inhibits efforts to undertake long-term projects.

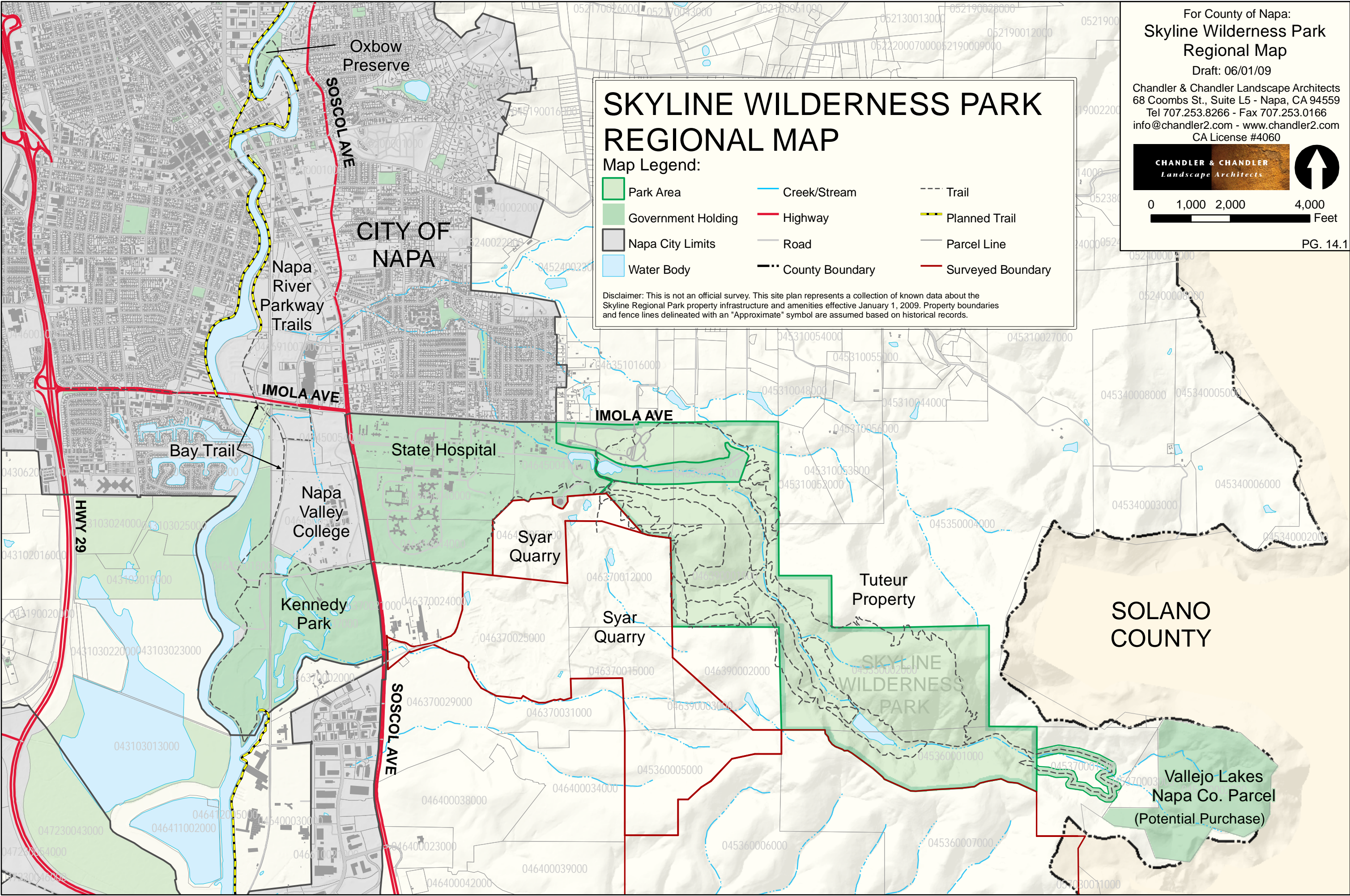
Park Policies and Records

A thorough survey of records related to Skyline Wilderness Park was undertaken to determine what approved policies and practices are in place to govern the park. That survey was augmented with interviews of Skyline Park Citizens' Association leaders, and a survey of all relevant Park collateral materials. The relevant files held by the County of Napa and by the Skyline Park Citizens' Association revealed records in five categories:

1. Lease and Concessionaire Agreements
2. Development and Site Improvement Plans
3. Environmental Studies
4. Skyline Park Citizen Association (SPCA) General Meeting Minutes and Financial Records
5. Various undated and dated documents of unknown origin related to park development planning and park-use guidelines.

At the time the survey was undertaken, neither the County nor the SPCA had a comprehensive policy manual nor a formal collection of previous or current park governance guidelines. The SPCA president had compiled for his use a reference notebook with a sheet referencing approved park policies, as well as original and duplicate copies of other park documents related to important agreements and actions for his personal use. The appendices to this Master Plan include key policies and agreements identified during its preparation. It also includes practices used in the day to day operations of the park, which have not been formally adopted but which have been inferred through the evaluation of notes and memoranda in various files, park rules documents prepared by the SPCA, and discussions with SPCA leaders and County staff.

The lack of a generally available and comprehensive policy manual has sometimes resulted in inconsistent practices and a need to “reinvent the wheel”. Adopted park policies as well as current practices, as determined through the above research, are contained in Appendix 10. This appendix is intended to be a living document, and revised when more is learned about past decisions and as new policies are adopted.



SKYLINE WILDERNESS PARK REGIONAL MAP

Map Legend:



Park Area	Creek/Stream	Trail
Government Holding	Highway	Planned Trail
Napa City Limits	Road	Parcel Line
Water Body	County Boundary	Surveyed Boundary

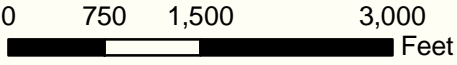
Disclaimer: This is not an official survey. This site plan represents a collection of known data about the Skyline Regional Park property infrastructure and amenities effective January 1, 2009. Property boundaries and fence lines delineated with an "Approximate" symbol are assumed based on historical records.

For County of Napa:
**Skyline Wilderness Park
Regional Map**
Draft: 06/01/09
Chandler & Chandler Landscape Architects
68 Coombs St., Suite L5 - Napa, CA 94559
Tel 707.253.8266 - Fax 707.253.0166
info@chandler2.com - www.chandler2.com
CA License #4060

0 1,000 2,000 4,000
Feet

For County of Napa:
Skyline Wilderness Park
Park Map
Draft: 06/01/09
Chandler & Chandler Landscape Architects
68 Coombs St., Suite L5 - Napa, CA 94559
Tel 707.253.8266 - Fax 707.253.0166
info@chandler2.com - www.chandler2.com
CA License #4060





0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

1 inch = 1,500 feet

PG. 14.2

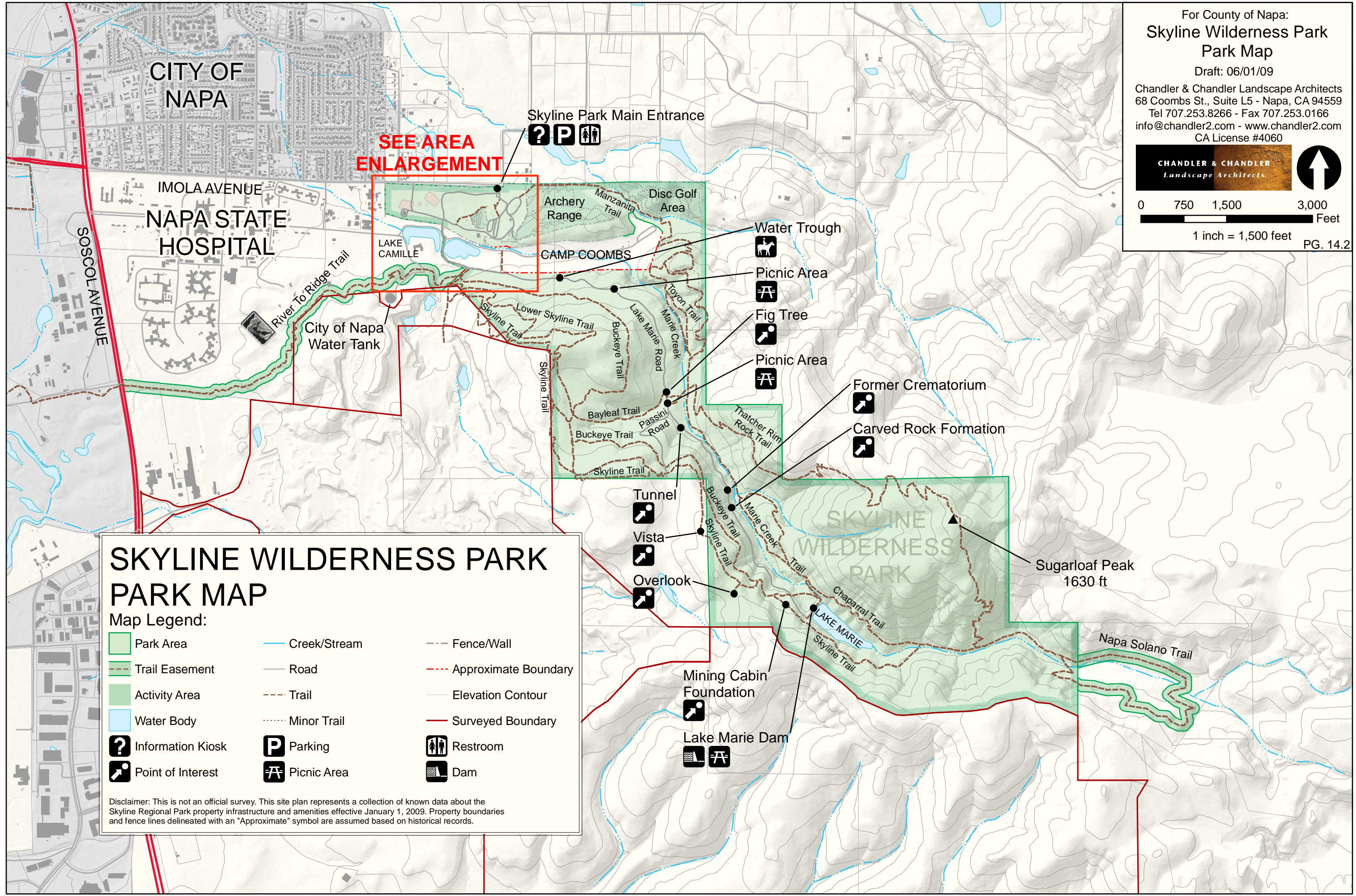
SKYLINE WILDERNESS PARK

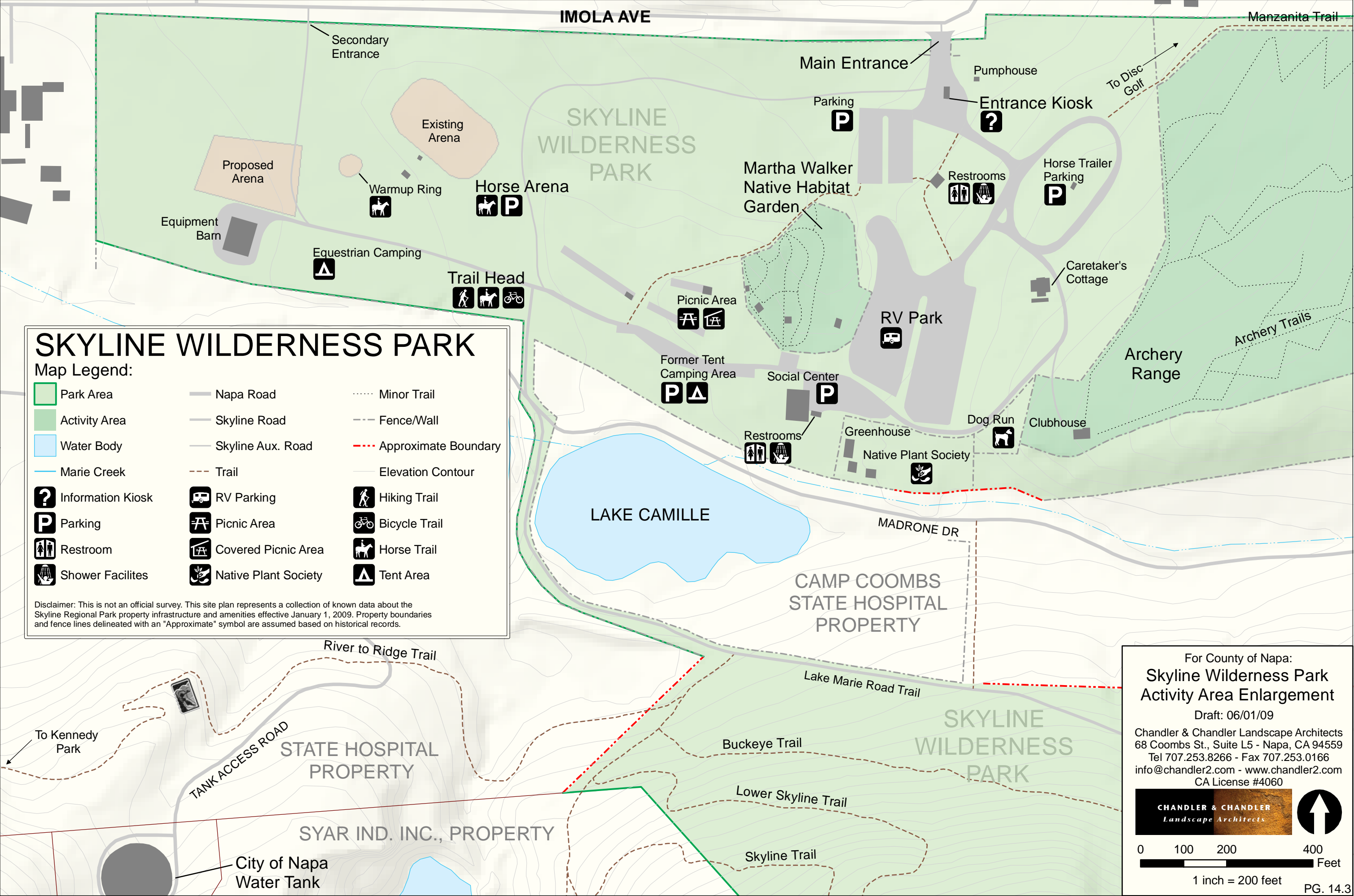
PARK MAP

Map Legend:

Park Area	Creek/Stream	Fence/Wall
Trail Easement	Road	Approximate Boundary
Activity Area	Trail	Elevation Contour
Water Body	Minor Trail	Surveyed Boundary
Information Kiosk	Parking	Restroom
Point of Interest	Picnic Area	Dam

Disclaimer: This is not an official survey. This site plan represents a collection of known data about the Skyline Regional Park property infrastructure and amenities effective January 1, 2009. Property boundaries and fence lines delineated with an "Approximate" symbol are assumed based on historical records.

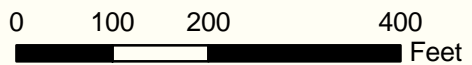




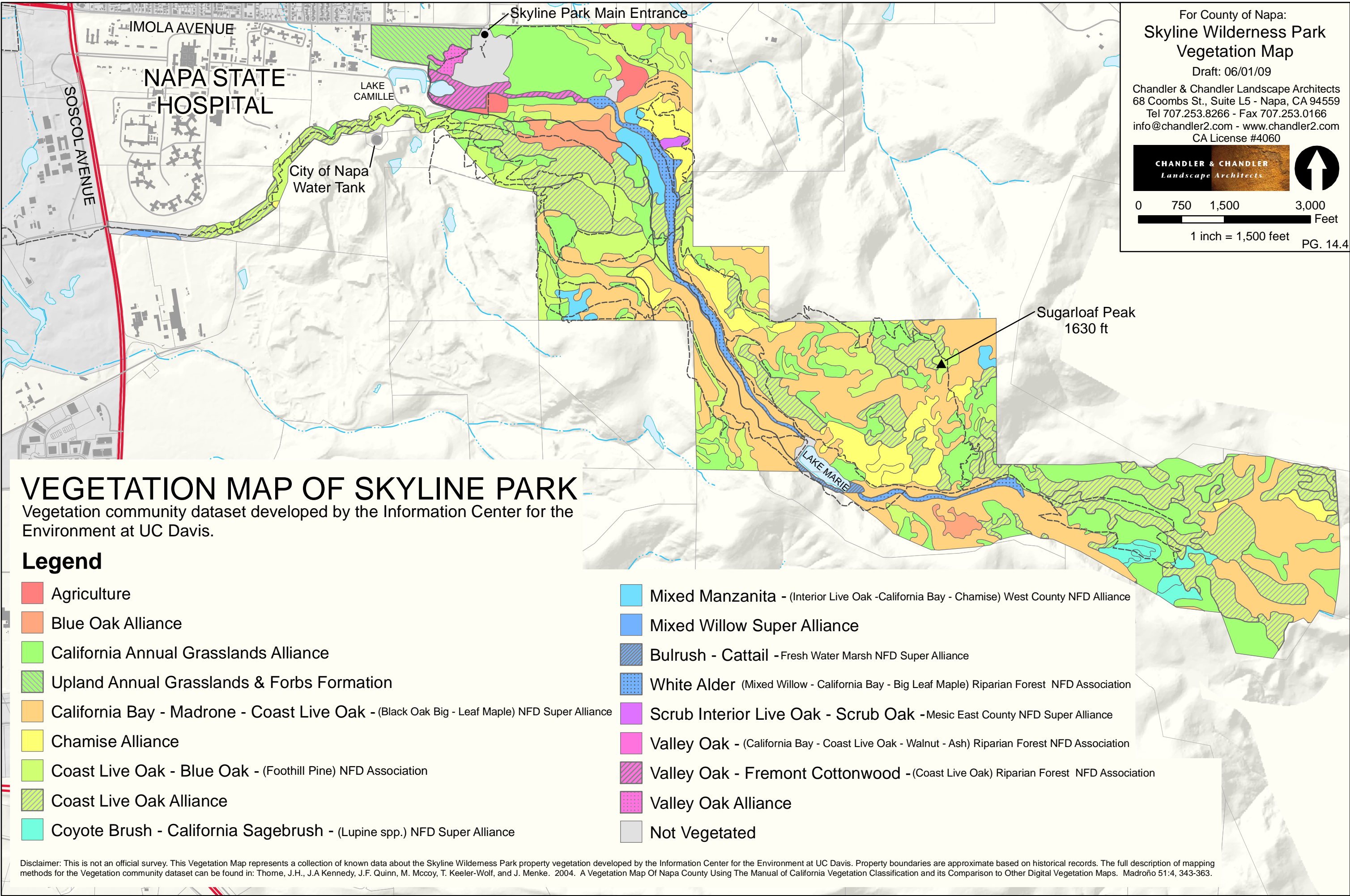
For County of Napa:
**Skyline Wilderness Park
Activity Area Enlargement**

Draft: 06/01/09

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1 inch = 200 feet



Section 2: Purpose of Skyline Wilderness Park

□

Based on the research leading to the development of this Master Plan, it is clear that the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, as longtime stewards of the park, view the park as a significant and diverse environmental asset. They have sought to protect and share it with the community in a way that focuses on the unique attributes of the landscape, provides recreational and educational experiences that reflect the interests of the local community and visitors, and which tread lightly on the park's natural resources. Their long-term vision for the park includes maintaining the parks' wilderness areas and public access, as well as its rustic appeal.

The Master Plan work sessions with the Advisory Committee validated the basic tenants held by the SPCA. Committee members confirmed the mission and vision, but then expanded the mission slightly to address the changing constituent population and an increasingly complex park context.

The results of the Master Plan research, and the Advisory Committee input, are captured in the following definition of a public park, and the following mission and vision statements for the park. These serve as the core guideposts for the principles and strategies contained in this Master Plan. They are intended to guide future development and operation of Skyline Wilderness Park in a way that will sustain it over time, and through changes in leadership, surrounding land-use patterns and economic circumstances.

Definition of a Public Park

The lease agreement between the County of Napa and the State of California requires that Skyline Wilderness Park be improved and operated as a "public park". The lease agreement does not define what constitutes a "public park"

This Master Plan defines "public park" as a place where the following applies:

1. All uses are consistent with current and long-range protection and preservation of the natural resources of the park for the benefit of future generations.
2. All facilities and programs are open to the general public, and to user groups and organizations on an equal basis. Special provisions may apply to approved Partner Organizations, as discussed in Section Four—Access.
3. Fees for general park use or for membership in Partner Organizations are equitable, as low as is fiscally practicable and do not have the affect of excluding or unreasonably limiting appropriate public use.

Mission Statement

The mission of Skyline Wilderness Park starts with the requirement that it be a public park, but goes well beyond this by also encompassing a range of resource stewardship and community participation objectives, as follows:

Provide the opportunity for all community members and visitors to experience the diverse natural splendor, biodiversity and recreational resources of the park in ways that appeal to their interests and preserves and enhances these resources for future generations.

The Mission Statement reflects the following objectives for the preservation and public use of this unique resource:

- Preserve, protect and restore the natural systems of the park.
- Provide activities which take advantage of the unique attributes of the park and which appeal to the contemporary interests of county residents and visitors.
- Provide interpretive experiences for the community so they understand and appreciate the natural values of the park.
- Foster public involvement in site planning and stewardship in order to continue and strengthen the public's commitment to the park and the preservation of its resources.
- Sustain the history of shared-use trail corridors and foster programming and practices that enhance positive relationships among disparate users.
- Foster an atmosphere of openness and cooperation among the State of California, the County of Napa, the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, other partners and user groups and the local community, which recognizes their shared responsibility for stewardship for the park.
- Seek to form new and expanded partnerships with like-minded organizations in order to contribute to optimum use of public resources by maximizing collaboration and minimizing programming overlap and competition for funding.
- Preserve the rustic character of developed areas, and avoid the development of an urban-park ambiance with manicured landscaping.
- Seek permanent protection for and operation of Skyline Wilderness Park as a public park.

Vision Statement

Skyline Wilderness Park will offer the same opportunity for future generations to experience the wonder of the wilderness close to home through nature based activities which suit their interests that we can experience at Skyline Wilderness Park today.

Section 3: Statement of Value

Why We Care

Skyline Wilderness Park is a public resource like no other.

Its 850 acres of natural habitat in the beautiful Napa Valley is certainly noteworthy. Rising from just 100 feet to 1,650 feet above sea level, the park is the scenic backdrop to the largest city in Napa County. Oak woodlands, rock outcrops, unexpected meadows and riparian habitats are home to an incredible diversity of wildlife ranging from newts and salamanders to mountain lions and bald eagles.

Traces of Native Americans and rural eighteenth and nineteenth century life in the Napa Valley catch the eye and tweak the imagination of modern-day visitors. Intrepid hikers can take in sweeping views of downtown San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge, the twin peaks of Mount Diablo in the East Bay, Mount Tamalpais rising above Marin County, and the dramatic image of Mount St. Helena defining the northern extent of the Napa Valley.

As special as these qualities are, they are not what makes Skyline Wilderness Park unique. People, involved with nature, define this special place.

Skyline Wilderness Park exists because of community leadership, public involvement, and personal passion.

The park is built on State of California land that the State has periodically considered selling as surplus. Only the vision and energy of many concerned citizens preserved this land and developed this park, and only a partnership of public officials and private advocates has continued to protect it.

The park provides exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities. These include 22 miles of multi-use hiking, mountain bicycling and equestrian trails—the most of any park, by far, in Napa County. The park has the best disc golf range in northern California, and a world-class archery range. With an arena, warm-up corral and horse trail training area, the park is the best public equestrian facility in the region. The open lower meadow is ideal for historical appreciation groups such as the Society for Creative Anachronism and environmental education events such as Earth Day.

Located immediately adjacent to the City of Napa, and just north of the City of American Canyon, the park is close to home for three-quarters of the residents of the entire county—a critical adjacency for public health advocates seeking to encourage Americans to make exercise part of their daily routine, as well as for school teachers seeking a place where their urban students can see, smell and taste nature. Open space next to where people live and work is also the formula for success for the native plant propagation and restoration work of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

□ The park provides one of only two public campgrounds in Napa County where kids can pitch a tent, roast a marshmallow or see the stars at night without the blinding interference of city lights.

Skyline Wilderness Park is also exemplary in the pragmatic world of economics: the park is operationally self-sufficient, relying not on taxes but on volunteers and financial support from park users.

The State of California, in the introduction to its current Strategic Vision, (The Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks 2001.) quotes the great law of the Iroquois Confederation as the primary motivation for good park planning. That law says:

***“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact
of our decisions on the next seven generations.”***

When applied to the destiny of Skyline Wilderness Park, it is clear that the County of Napa and the community it represents must do whatever is necessary to enhance, protect and preserve in perpetuity the biodiversity, spirit of participation, enlightenment and delight it provides for the people of our region

Section 4: Guidelines for Planning and Operation

Governance

Background

Governance refers to the collection of responsibilities that a small group assumes for an organization on behalf of a constituency. Governance activities include setting direction for the organization, preparing plans and assuring implementation of those plans. Governance includes assuring that funding is sufficient, establishing policy, arranging for paid and unpaid staff to manage the organization effectively and exercising fiduciary responsibility. It also includes ethical and accountable management of organizational resources. The process of governance is an exercise in reflecting and balancing the interests of constituent communities in decision making. Governance responsibilities are separate from administrative and management responsibilities, although in small, volunteer, non-profit organizations such as the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, members of the governance Board of Directors often also function as volunteer management staff.

The Lease Agreement between the State of California and the County of Napa runs through the year 2030. It establishes the goal for Skyline Wilderness Park to function as a public park. Responsibility to achieve that goal through governance and management is delegated by the County, through a Concessionaire Agreement, to the Skyline Park Citizens' Association (SPCA), an independent non-profit organization. The original Agreement was for five years, but included automatic renewals every five years through the year 2030, assuming the SPCA requests renewal, and the County determines the SPCA is in compliance with the terms of the Agreement. SPCA is responsible for adopting by-laws, policies and procedures to guide the governance and operation of the park. As a concessionaire of the County of Napa, operating on public land, the SPCA is the legal agent of the County and subject to County policies and procedures as well as numerous regulations of the State of California. As a California non-profit corporation, it is also required to act consistently with its articles of incorporation and its adopted by-laws.

The SPCA governs through a volunteer Board of Directors made up of the 7 members. According to the SPCA by-laws, board membership includes: the officers of the Corporation (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasury), the Past President of the Corporation, and three Directors at-large who represent the equestrian, bicyclist and hiker user groups. An additional three individuals are designated to serve as alternatives in the absence of the Directors at-large. Board of Directors are elected annually by a majority vote of the SPCA membership. They serve a one year term with no term limits. Officer duties are spelled out in the bylaws, as are the limitations on board authority. There is no general board member responsibility description nor is there a formal board member recruitment process.

The current SPCA board is made up of individuals who live in or adjacent to the City of Napa. Three board officers and one member at large are equestrians and members of the Saddle Jacket Riding Club. The current president is also the current president of the Archery Club. Other members-at-large represent hiking and cycling activities.

The SPCA currently has about sixty-five members. The membership meets monthly for a total of at least 10 meetings per year, where information is shared, plans are considered and issues are occasionally put to a vote. SPCA membership meetings are open to the public. The SPCA board also meets monthly to tend to the business of the organization. These meetings are closed to the membership and the public.

Various board committees have formed to address specific aspects of park planning, programming, development and management. They tend to function in an episodic, rather than on-going manner.

Historically, the park has been self-sufficient in terms of funding operations with only occasional, though significant, capital funding provided by the County of Napa. Board governance and operating policies beyond the organizational by-laws have been relatively informal, not well-publicized and inconsistently applied. This approach was generally adequate when the park officially opened in the early 1980's. Over time, as the economic and physical context of the park has changed and the demographic of the local population has shifted, the user base of the park has grown both in numbers and diversity, and the issues faced by the community and by regional park governing boards have grown more complex.

The current board consists of committed, hardworking and loyal local citizens who have volunteered their time and talents generously to lead the park. Many of them have worked as directors of the park for decades, some from the very beginning. Among board members there is both an appreciation of the informal nature of park oversight, and a frustration with the problems it creates. As is the case with many volunteer-based non-profit organizations, policies are often reactionary rather than strategic in nature. This sometimes results in a tendency to “reinvent the wheel” and to second-guess and reverse decisions because they were done on an ad-hoc basis in response to particular immediate issues. The task of leading the park was likened by one board member to “reaching into a bowl full of Jello.” This Master Plan provides an opportunity to set guidelines for the park that will allow it to continue to serve its intended mission, no matter who is at the helm.

In order to continue to serve its mission, the board needs to turn its attention to developing the board of the future. As existing board members retire or move on to other pursuits, new board members must be recruited who can move the park forward. These new members will need to bring experience to the board that will benefit the park and have the skills required to carry out their responsibilities with confidence. They must also represent the contemporary Napa County community, which the park exists to serve.

Improvements to board governance practices such as systematizing planning, decision making, and record-keeping practices and memorializing those systems would help to relieve some of the frustrations of current park leaders and assure that consistency can be maintained through changes in leadership. As an independent, non-profit corporation, the

SPCA is primarily responsible for addressing these issues. At the same time, the County of Napa and the community at large have benefited greatly from the services provided by the SPCA in the past. It is therefore in the interest of the County to assist the SPCA when appropriate and possible to do so, as it confronts the continuing challenge of Board succession planning.

Objective

To provide governance practices for Skyline Wilderness Park that are:

1. Big-picture oriented, far-sighted and strategically integrated
2. Open, inclusive and community-interest driven
3. Ethical
4. Mission-based
5. Financially sound
6. Operationally effective
7. Clearly publicized

Principles

The following principles describe basic and contemporary standards for the governance of Skyline Wilderness Park, reflecting the multiple levels of distinct and independent yet interrelated laws, regulations and practices within which the park operates. They are intended to provide guidance for the County of Napa and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association, as well as for any future governing bodies responsible for stewardship and operations of the park, as they proceed with their planning and decision-making.

1. Governance practices are in compliance with all applicable agreements and state and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the SPCA's Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, and the Concessionaire Agreement between the SPCA and the County of Napa.
2. Business related to the operation and management of the park is conducted in the spirit of the Brown Act for public agencies (Government Code Section 54950 et seq) under which the County of Napa is required by law to operate. The Skyline Park Citizens Association, as an independent, non-profit corporation is not required by law to comply with the terms of the Brown Act. However, because of the responsibility held by the County to assure that Skyline Park is operated as a public park and because of the inherent requirement for operational transparency that implies, SPCA business related to operation and management of the park must be conducted openly as well.

The spirit of the Brown Act which is relevant to Skyline Park business primarily includes the public noticing about and openness of membership and special meetings, including meetings of the Board of Directors. It also includes public noticing and openness related to other processes and forums through which discretionary decisions are made on behalf of the public about the operation and management of the park, as well as public posting of results. Specific protocols are

- spelled out in Appendix 5: “Protocols for Communication. Planning, Operations, Approvals, Permitting and Construction Projects.”
3. The governing body represents the community in all of its diversity.
 4. The governing body collectively has the range of skills, experience and time needed to manage the complexity of park operations.
 5. Governance leaders have a clear understanding of their fiduciary responsibilities and are skilled and engaged board members.
 6. Goal setting, planning and decision-making are mission and vision driven, strategic and non-discriminatory.
 7. Resources are managed with efficiency, effectiveness and the long-term sustainability of the whole park in mind.
 8. Site planning and any new facilities and amenities preserve and enhance the natural resources and rustic nature of the park.
 9. Operating policies reflect the park mission, protect park resources and facilitate public access to the greatest extent possible.
 10. Funding is sufficient to sustain infrastructure, programs and the natural resources of the park as well as to promote access that allows the widest possible community base to enjoy the park’s natural splendor and developed amenities. (See Access section for discussion of principles that should guide user fees.)
 11. Opportunities for expanding the boundaries of the park are explored, in order to further protect the natural character of the park, enhance the park’s mission, facilitate efficient maintenance and operations, and to provide an improved visitor experience.

Strategies

As an independent non-profit organization, the SPCA has a lead role in implementing the following strategies. At the same time, through the Concessionaire Agreement between the SPCA and the County of Napa, the SPCA acts as an agent of the County for matters affecting the operation and management of the park; as such, the County of Napa has a responsibility to assure compliance with the principles of this Master Plan and the following strategies. The appropriate venue for the County to exercise its responsibility is during the renewal process for the Concessionaire Agreement in 2010 and each successive five years thereafter.

1. Evaluate board composition and seek to expand skill mix and representation.
2. Evaluate governing documents, update and fill in gaps as needed.

3. Review and articulate responsibilities for board members and initiate appropriate board member orientation and training programs.
4. Develop standard concessionaire assignment agreements with the Partner Organizations operating in the park that are consistent with the terms of the Skyline Wilderness Park Lease and Concessionaire Agreement and this Master Plan..
5. Evaluate park funding needs and available funding sources and opportunities. Develop an integrated funding plan with specific revenue stream designations, funding base targets and fundraising deadlines. Use the Mission Statement provided in this Master Plan to guide articulation of the role fees play in the over-all funding plan. Incorporate a diverse mix of funding sources—fees, memberships, fundraising events, grants, matching fund programs, gifts and bequests, in-kind services and donated goods--to provide the park with a sufficient and steady income stream.
6. Review decision-making policies and practices to assure that all users of the park are treated fairly and equally, and enjoy equal opportunities to access park facilities. At the same time, encourage organizations and user groups to finance the development of approved, mission based, activity-specific facilities within the park, as long as those facilities are reasonably open to the public. Such contributions can be used to offset standard user fees and provide priority in utilizing those facilities, provided such benefits are based on clearly articulated policy that applies equally to all groups. (See the discussion in Section 2—Definition of a Public Park, and Section 4--Access for more guidance on this topic.)
7. Develop a partnership between the SPCA and the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District to share information and resources, coordinate grant and related fundraising efforts, and pursue common-interest projects and programs.
8. Articulate design standards for the park and apply them to existing and proposed new infrastructure, signage, landscape and building projects, so that the park retains the rustic, wilderness character that is the basis of its appeal.
9. Consider incorporating the operation and maintenance of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on the adjacent Tuteur property into the scope of the Concessionaire Agreement.
10. Pursue opportunities to incorporate Camp Coombs, Vallejo Lakes and other adjacent lands as available into the park.

Stewardship

The concept of stewardship extends beyond just environmental stewardship. For purposes of this document, it encompasses practices that sustain the viability of the natural resources within the park, as well as the social and cultural benefits of the park to the community, and society in general. There is also stewardship responsibility associated with the economic

sustainability of the park, which is addressed in both the Governance and Access sections of the Master Plan.

Historically, the park has viewed stewardship as pertaining primarily to preservation and protection of the park's natural resources. As a result, a variety of policies and practices are in place to protect park features. The current focus tends to be more on prevention of damage by limiting access rather than on proactive user education and involvement or strategic restoration programs. A notable exception is the strong partnership that the SPCA has developed with the Napa Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, which has resulted in effective and proactive progress in habitat restoration, environmental education and community outreach.

Objectives

To assure the long-term protection, preservation and sustainability of the park's sensitive natural and cultural resources and to enhance their value to the community by implementing a stewardship program which is:

1. Effective
2. Visionary
3. Economically feasible
4. In keeping with the mission of the park
5. Flexible enough to respond to changes in community demographics and recreational needs

Principles and Strategies

Environmental Stewardship

Both the mission and the vision for Skyline Wilderness Park center on environmental stewardship combined with the enjoyment of nature by people. By preserving and expanding the natural landscapes and natural systems in the park, those responsible for the management of the park can provide incalculable value for park users and wildlife. This work increases biodiversity and galvanizes the sense of place that is unique to this park.

In addition to practicing good stewardship itself, the park provides an ideal opportunity for park users to learn about good stewardship practices, and about nature generally. Users of the park should have the opportunity to learn not only about the biodiversity of the park environment but also about the importance of biodiversity to the well-being of the earth, the importance of animal and plant habitat to biodiversity and the impact users of the park have on the nature within it.

The County of Napa recognizes the benefits of sustainable design and construction. The County in June of 2009 adopted the State Code related to sustainability, which is in most cases equivalent to the Silver rating of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. The standards will be mostly voluntary until January 2011. The County's ordinance, together with the broader movement toward "green building" principles, creates an opportunity to expand the concept of park

stewardship to encompass not only preservation of natural features at the park, but also the built and operating environment of the park.

The following principles and strategies are intended to guide the park in a proactive effort to enhance the successful sustainable practices it already has in place and to add new practices over time, as feasible. The desired outcome is a park that sets the contemporary standard in development and management for environmental sustainability among regional parks of its kind.

PRINCIPLES

Skyline Wilderness Park is part of a greater environmental context consisting of spaces that share soil systems, water, vegetation and topography. Design, development and operational practices will recognize that greater context and be consistent with the following principles:

1. Eliminate adverse impacts to the environment, both from construction or other short-term projects, and ongoing activities.
2. Enhance ecological functions of landscaped and natural areas.
3. Improve the health, safety and comfort of park visitors consistent with the essential rustic and nature-oriented character of the park.
4. Reduce waste and energy use to the lowest level feasible.
5. Recycle post-consumption materials where ever feasible.
6. Reduce long-term operation and maintenance costs.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop signage, educational programs, activities and events designed to interpret and educate park users about the natural resources of the park and their value. Concurrently, educate people about the impact they have on park habitats and how they can tread lightly on the environment while still having a good time.
2. Embrace site planning and construction practices that minimize impact on the park's natural resources and the environment in general.
 - Use capital improvement activities as opportunities to enhance sustainability.
 - Continue to concentrate construction in the already disturbed flatland areas that are away from sensitive environments.
 - Make development decisions with the whole park in mind. Strive for connectivity of green spaces to extend habitat and avoid isolated green patches.
 - Minimize alterations to natural topography.
 - Retrofit existing buildings and orient any new buildings to take advantage of passive solar energy, daylight and natural ventilation.

- Plant deciduous trees on the south and west sides of buildings to provide summer shade, and plant evergreen vegetation on the north and east sides of buildings to provide protection from winter storms.
 - Plan facilities, activities and landscaping to conserve water.
 - Use local plant and building materials to reduce transportation-related energy use.
 - Minimize light pollution at night.
 - Provide bicycle parking and adopt access policies that discourage single-occupant motor vehicle trips to and from the park.
 - Retrofit existing buildings, and strive for any new construction to meet the highest LEED Green Building Rating System level that is feasible.
3. Use design practices that reveal natural features and processes and which incorporate site specific cultural elements whenever feasible.
 4. Use local native plants when restoring and enhancing the natural landscape and minimize long-term irrigation needs in developed areas.
 5. Evaluate purchasing practices and take steps to acquire durable products that are both recycled and recyclable.
 6. Evaluate energy use, identify and implement strategies to reduce energy consumption, and switch to renewable energy sources where feasible.
 7. Evaluate storm water runoff to increase infiltration, decrease off-site flow volumes, and identify and correct problems of sediment entering streams.
 8. Evaluate the handling of animal waste, the use of insecticides, herbicides and other chemicals including those associated with park septic systems to identify and correct problems that may result in health hazards or degradation of water quality.
 9. Evaluate trash and vegetation debris disposal practices and improve composting and other re-purpose and recycling programs.
 10. Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of all of the trails within the park and make improvements that address impacts on water quality in the park's waterways, soil erosion and ponding of water on trails due to improper design, users short-cutting trail switchbacks and other issues.
 11. Evaluate landscape maintenance practices and strive to do the following:
 - Allow plants to realize their natural forms with minimal pruning.
 - Use organic mulch to retain water and suppress weeds where needed.
 - Use organic fertilizers where needed.
 - Implement integrated pest management practices where feasible.Discontinue use of non-organic pesticides and herbicides and limit use of organic pesticides and herbicides to the greatest feasible extent.

- Evaluate irrigation controllers, delivery systems and operating practices and improve efficiency to the greatest degree feasible.
- 12. Identify degraded habitats and implement restoration programs.
- 13. Assess short and long-term environmental sustainability of all Park facilities and programs on a regular basis.
- 14. Adopt environmental sustainability policies for users of the park. Include language in all agreements that require the organization proposing a program or event to implement environmental sustainability practices by addressing how they will minimize energy and water use, waste, and negative impacts on the parklands and neighbors.

Community and Cultural Stewardship

The County recognizes the importance of optimizing resources, and values the exponential benefit that accrues to a community when like-minded organizations or those with similar missions collaborate, coordinate and support each other. Skyline Park is linked in mission with other recreational park and open space resources in the County and in vision and spirit with the Agricultural Preserve and the lands that have been preserved as open space by the Land Trust of Napa County. The size of Skyline Wilderness Park combined with the scope of its natural splendor provides unique opportunities for large groups to gather to play and enjoy nature. The Land Trust and the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District are valuable sources of information and counsel which can offer support to and be supported by Skyline Wilderness Park in many ways. Local schools, service and special interest groups and municipal park and recreation departments are other parts of the community with which Skyline Park is integrated and in a strategic position to partner with and serve.

PRINCIPLES

Community and cultural stewardship at the park will be based on the following principles:

1. Recognize that the park is governed, developed and operated on behalf of the public.
2. Acknowledge that the park serves a local, regional, and touring visitor community and strives to respond appropriately to the interests of those communities.
3. Seek to partner with like-minded park or open space organizations to optimize collaboration and coordination, and minimize duplication of programs and competition for funds.
4. Seek to provide opportunities for people to gather and build community and good will.

5. Seek to provide programming that develops social capital -- the sense of public ownership that comes with participation, and results in reduced vandalism and increased safety.

STRATEGIES

1. Evaluate facilities, programs, activities and events for appropriateness within a public park setting.
2. Evaluate local, regional, and visitor needs and establish service levels for each group that are appropriate to the park mission and resources. Assure a balance of uses and a diversity of users at the park.
3. Develop an outreach program to identify potential partner organizations. Explore opportunities for collaboration on programming, funding, operations and/or administration and work to forge mutually beneficial partnerships.
4. Provide frequent opportunities to use the park for community gatherings that are in keeping with the park's mission.
5. Develop, train and deploy a diverse and loyal corps of volunteers to assist with every aspect of park management and operations practicable.

Access

Access refers to the opportunities for the public to use the park. It includes park amenities, facilities, programming and special events. This section also addresses fees and governing regulations that apply to park use by the general public and by organized user groups.

The original facilities and programming offered at Skyline Wilderness Park were determined by the interests of the SPCA Board and membership at the time the park was created. Over time, those offerings were augmented by new programs hosted or organized by special activity clubs that discovered the park and realized the opportunities it could provide for their members.

Current policies and procedures that govern general park use have been set by the SPCA board, with varying levels of involvement and concurrence by the County of Napa. Policies and procedures for group-sponsored activities have been set by user group leadership, in consultation with the SPCA board.

Fees for facility use and programming have been set on a case by case basis based on input from user groups and research into what other parks charge for similar activities. Under the terms of the concessionaire agreement between the County and the SPCA, park user fees must be approved by the County prior to implementation; however, County approval has not been sought nor obtained in quite some time.

Current access opportunities are listed in detail in the Section I – Existing Conditions.. Most of these have been in place for years and have been well-used by the public since the day the park opened.

Over time the local community has expanded and public interests have diversified, suggesting a need to take a broader, more inclusive and more strategic approach to future facility development and programming. This includes looking not only at the facilities themselves, but also the need for a fee-setting strategy that considers both the role that fees play in the park’s overall funding base, as well as the effect that fees have in shaping how the park is used and by whom.

Objectives

To assure that facilities, programming, use regulations and fee structures at Skyline Wilderness Park offer opportunities for all sectors of the contemporary local community to enjoy the park, and provide them with a better understanding about the value of nature-based experiences, about the natural world itself and about the impact of their place in it.

Principles

Facilities, amenities and programs for Skyline Wilderness Park will be:

1. Consistent with the park’s purpose and mission.
2. Reflective of the intersection between the park’s unique resources and community interests.
3. Open to the public to the greatest practical extent.
4. Non-discriminatory, in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability, and as inclusive as possible in terms of the income levels of users.
5. Based on broad citizen participation in the planning and development process, and periodically evaluated for relevance and value to the local community.
6. Designed to create a visitor experience that reflects a culture of welcome.
7. Appropriate to the preservation and enhancement of the park’s natural resources and operated with environmental stewardship in mind.
8. Compatible with other uses of the park. In the case of events, activities will be designed to cause the least possible displacement or interruption of other uses at the park.
9. Compatible with adjacent neighborhood uses.
10. Versatile enough to respond to the changing needs of the population.

11. Provided through a fee structure which is as low as is fiscally practicable in order to avoid excluding or limiting appropriate public use, and tailored to advance stewardship objectives (such as minimizing vehicular traffic)
12. Within the park's funding and operational capabilities.
13. Consistent with applicable Napa County Codes, including but not limited to construction-related permits and special event permits.

Strategies

1. Periodically evaluate all existing facilities, amenities, and programming for appropriateness to the park's Mission and Vision and for expression of the principles stated in this Master Plan. Use the standard criteria provided in Appendices 9 and 10.
2. Periodically evaluate the range of facilities and programs provided at the park to determine if new or modified facilities or programs would result in a more balanced program mix that optimizes the park's unique attributes and responds to the local community's diverse and evolving recreational interests. Seek periodic input from the community about the scope and quality of facilities and programs in the park.
3. When new or expanded facilities are proposed, evaluate their appropriateness in terms of use, scale and location in light of the Mission, Vision, and principles contained in the Master Plan, and using the standard criteria provided in Appendices 9 and 10.
4. Develop and maintain a binder of standard policies and procedures for the use of Park facilities and activities that are in keeping with the park's mission. (See Appendix 10 for current policies and procedures).
5. Review the overall fee schedule for consistency with the principles contained in this Master Plan and consider adopting a new fee schedule for the park.
6. Encourage volunteerism by providing opportunities for users to offset fees by contributing volunteer work.
7. Proactively seek sponsors for and give priority to events that are clear expressions of the park's mission. Work cooperatively with such event sponsors to proactively overcome potential operational challenges.
8. Adopt a "good neighbor-policy." Implement it proactively to foster positive relationships with neighbors of the park, explore mutually beneficial alliances and promote successful dispute resolution between neighbors and the park when and if conflicts arise.

9. Adopt a “conflict resolution” procedure. Implement it fairly and consistently in order to amicably resolve disputes between user groups or between users and the park.
10. Evaluate all facilities and activities for consistency with current requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
11. Install additional native landscaping in the tent camping and RV areas to enhance the quality of the camping experience.
12. Evaluate enforcement strategies for maximum overnight stays in the park in order to ensure that, with the exception of up to two live-in caretaker units, the maximum overnight stay of two weeks policy is strictly enforced.
13. Set dog use policies that are the same for all park users. Continue to prohibit dogs south of Lake Camille, east of the RV areas and in the Martha Walker Native Habitat Garden. Allow off-leash dogs only in the designated, fenced area o. Give further consideration to whether dogs should be allowed on-leash in other areas of the park.
14. Communicate all park use policies clearly to park staff and volunteers, and in particular to those supervising the entry kiosk and grounds, so that policies are consistently applied. (See Administration & Operations section)

Special Considerations for Partner Organization Facilities and Uses

Skyline Park has a strong tradition of partnerships with membership-based organizations that have a recreational or nature-based purpose. The park currently houses facilities for several such organizations. These partners are responsible for most of the facilities that have been developed in the park. Most of them host activities that need a great deal of space. Skyline Park is one of the few places in the community that is large enough to host outdoor equestrian facilities, archery facilities, disk golf facilities, native plant growing facilities and large, outdoor, group-sponsored events. These partner relationships are integral to the fiscal and operational health of the park.

In order to be true to the purpose of a public park, these partner-sponsored facilities and activities must reflect the park’s mission and be accessible to the public.

Principles

The SPCA and the County of Napa will encourage volunteer participation in and support for the park through both informal and short-term arrangements as well as through standing agreements with Partner Organizations. Informal and short-term partnerships consistent with this Master Plan are appropriately approved by the SPCA. By contrast, standing agreements with Partner Organizations must be formally authorized by both the SPCA and by the County through a Concessionaire Assignment Agreement.

Concessionaire Assignment Agreements with Partner Organizations are subject to the following principles:

1. Partner Organizations may have unique and on-going roles in constructing, maintaining and operating facilities and programs at the park. By virtue of these unique roles, Partner Organizations may have privileges (such as access to facilities, times of use, priority for use, or fee schedules) which are different than those which apply to the general public. Such privileges must be as limited in scope as is reasonable in relation to the public benefit provided to the park by the organization .
2. Partner Organizations will within the park provide activities, and only those activities, which reflect the park's mission.
3. If privileges include member-only events, such events may not unduly interfere with the ability of the public to engage in other appropriate park uses during the same time.
4. Membership and participation in Partner Organizations must be open to the public on a fair and equitable basis, membership criteria must not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability, and membership fees and charges must be as low as are fiscally responsible.

Strategies

Evaluate existing partnerships with member-based organizations that are operating facilities in the park to verify appropriateness to the park's Mission and Vision and to ensure consistency with the principles stated above. Use the standardized criteria provided in Appendix 9 to assist with this evaluation. Concession Assignment Agreements should then be taken to the SPCA Board of Directors and the County Board of Supervisors for review and approval.

1. Evaluate any future Partnership Organization proposals using the same standards as provided above
2. Evaluate fee, reservation and use policies for facilities in the park developed and/or operated by Partner Organizations for consistency with other park fees and policies.

Special Considerations for Trail Use

The long-standing tradition of multiple, non-motorized trail user groups sharing the park's trail system is highly valued and should be preserved and enhanced. At the same time, the diversity of trail users presents challenges. Maintenance for multi-use trails, which were not expressly and professionally designed with multiple uses in mind, requires significantly more effort than does maintenance for single use trails.

Skyline Wilderness Park is connected to the regional trail system through the River to Ridge Trail on the northwest and the Bay Area Ridge Trail (future) on the south of the park. These access points, as well as the auxiliary pedestrian access to the northwestern corner of the park, provides or previously provided a clear public benefit. However, allowing access to the park at locations other than at the main gate makes it difficult to effectively charge admission fees or monitor who enters the park. In response, the SPCA closed the northwestern pedestrian access and has expressed concerns about access via the River to Ridge Trail. The difficulty of collecting fees on the River to Ridge Trail has generated controversy between those who see this as an important regional trail link and those who object to users of this trail being able to access the park without paying an admission fee.

In addition to the public inconvenience caused by restricting the number of park access points, the closures have created ancillary problems, including damage to fences and gates as hikers and cyclists climb over gates and throw bicycles over fences to gain access at a convenient point in their ride.

Finally, the original lease agreement provided that Napa State Hospital employees be allowed to continue to use the entire park without charge. Over time, unlimited access for these employees at secondary entry points created oversight problems that the SPCA did not have the resources to handle; as a result the practice was discontinued. Access to the operationally separate Camp Coombs by Napa State Hospital employees, patients and guests also creates some challenges, since that access is through Skyline Park.

Principles

Trail use is one of the primary benefits of Skyline Wilderness Park and particularly appropriate for the park's natural character. Therefore, trail use policies will do the following:

1. Encourage appropriate multiple use of the trail system.
2. Ensure trail use is as safe and enjoyable as possible.
3. Encourage non-motorized access to the park, including logical and convenient trail connections to the regional trail system.
4. Encourage participation by representatives of trail user groups in the development of new trails and the resolution of any trail use maintenance problems or user conflicts.

Strategies

1. Where feasible, maintain current policies allowing multiple use of trails, but consider designating specific trails or time periods for specific types of users where needed for environmental or safety reasons.

2. Mark trail heads with maps and information on trail length, degree of difficulty, and tips for minimizing user impact. Provide interpretive information about surrounding views, geology, flora, fauna and items of historic or cultural interest.
3. Support formation of a trained and organized volunteer trail steward group, consisting of trail users, for purposes of maintenance, restoration, safety and prevention of vandalism. Consider the feasibility of partnering with the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District in forming, training, equipping and managing a volunteer trail steward group that works on public trails throughout the county.
4. Continue and expand partnerships with trail advocacy groups and cultivate mutually beneficial policies, procedures and practices related to the inclusion of the park's trails in regional trail systems.
5. Evaluate park access locations and access policies in conjunction with the evaluation of the park fee schedule in order to balance the objective of convenient public access with the need for consistent and effective operational practices.

Administration & Operations

Administration and Operations refer to the day-to-day management activities of the park. In theory, these responsibilities differ from the responsibilities of boards of directors, whose focus should be on setting direction, standards and policies.

In practice, as a small, all-volunteer working board, the Board of Directors functions both as a governing body and as volunteer staff. SPCA members take responsibility for administrative, operational and management tasks as needed.

The park currently employs a caretaker who lives on-site. The caretaker staffs the entry kiosk and provides general park oversight. The park also has an on-site caretaker who manages the RV campground. There is also a part-time park trail manager and part-time maintenance personnel. Other work in the park is done by volunteers.

The popularity of the park, especially its trail system and its appeal as a site for large events, is stretching the management resources of the SPCA board. Park users, SPCA members and other community members have emphasized the importance of finding ways to augment those resources, with qualified paid or volunteer staff and task forces, so that all of the responsibility does not fall on a small group of people. This will ensure that the ability of the community to enjoy the park is not unnecessarily limited due to lack of oversight capability.

Objectives

1. To administer the park within its funding and procedural capabilities, and according to the needs of the community.

2. To utilize well-trained and competent professional staff, and to retain that staff by recognizing their contributions and compensating them fairly.
3. To encourage volunteerism by treating volunteers with respect and recognizing their contributions.
4. To communicate and enforce park use regulations in a clear, fair and consistent manner.

Principles

1. The park is sufficiently staffed with appropriately qualified paid and volunteer workers who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, roles and the park's mission.
2. Park management practices are fiscally sound, operationally effective, ethical and non- discriminatory.
3. Park management and oversight challenges are addressed through creative thinking so they do not result in limiting appropriate public.

Strategies

1. Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of park administrative and operational needs, including the following:
 - Extent to which the existing paid staffing and volunteer support meet those needs, and whether there could be a more effective and efficient staffing approach that would also lessen the administrative burden of volunteer members of the SPCA Board
 - Whether changes in operational policies and procedures related to user regulations, park security and park maintenance could reduce administrative and operational burdens without adversely impacting essential park purposes and resources.
 - Whether existing enforcement procedures and authorities are appropriate and sufficient, including whether additional or amended County ordinances are needed.
2. Create a single "Park Use Regulations" handout which can be posted in the park and distributed to paid staff, volunteers, and park visitors. The handout should serve as the definitive reference on rules for park use and visitor behavior.

Conclusion and Future Steps

Conclusion

Creating a Master Plan for Skyline Park in its 29th year of operation presents both unique opportunities and expected challenges. On the one hand, there are 29 years of hands-on experience to inform the thinking. On the other hand there are practices that were put in place over time by both the County of Napa and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association that are well-ingrained in the current park operating culture but are not necessarily the most effective or efficient systems for fulfilling the park's mission as a public park.

Representatives for the primary park stakeholders -- the County of Napa, the Skyline Park Citizens' Association and the local community-- have diverse perspectives on all aspects of park development and operations. What has allowed these groups to come together to collaborate on this Master Plan is the degree to which they concur on the critical value this park holds for the citizens of Napa County specifically and for the health of the natural environment in general. These three stakeholder groups understand that they are joint stewards of the park. They agree that it is critical to put a plan in place that captures and articulates the core values behind the park's purpose and expresses them as principles which can be used to guide the park in a way that keeps it true to its original mission.

The power of the Skyline Wilderness Park Master Plan lies in the potential for it to embed the original mission of the park into all future thinking and decision making about park operations and planning. Adherence to the Master Plan offers the best possible assurance of economic, political and environmental sustainability of the park through changes in leadership, economic circumstances, local community recreational needs and attitude toward the parklands by the State of California. The vision that Skyline Park will continue to be a rich environmental and recreational resource for future generations is what unifies these diverse stakeholder groups as they take up the work of implementing this plan together.

Strategy for Implementation

Implementation Steps

The logical approach to implementing this Master Plan is to build on systems that are already in place. To that end the following activities are recommended to be accomplished collaboratively by the County of Napa and the Skyline Park Citizens' Association.

Consistently Apply Existing Procedures and Policies

Over the course of the park's first 29 years of operation, many policies and procedures have been developed by the SPCA and the County of Napa related to communications between the County and the SPCA, when County approvals and permits are needed and how they should be obtained, appropriate activities at the park, and enforcement of ordinances and regulations. Due to staffing and volunteer turnover, and inconsistent record-keeping, these policies and procedures have not been consistently followed. The appendices to this Master Plan include the key agreements, policies and procedures that are applicable to Skyline Wilderness Park. By their inclusion in this Master Plan, all interested parties have access to the same information. A description of protocols for planning, operations, approvals and permits is included as Appendix 5. These existing agreements, policies, procedures, and protocol must be consistently followed. When changes are made to these documents, the appendices will be updated accordingly, so that future staff, volunteers and the general public will continue to have clear and consistent guidance.

Modify the Zoning for Skyline Wilderness Park

Along with adopting this Master Plan, the County of Napa is proposing to modify the County Zoning Code to make it consistent with the County General Plan policies related to protecting and enhancing Skyline Wilderness Park. The proposed modification will establish a new Skyline Wilderness Park zoning designation and apply it to the park, in combination with the area's underlying Agricultural Watershed zoning. The proposed zoning amendment will require that uses at Skyline Wilderness Park be consistent with this Master Plan.

Renewal of Concessionaire Agreement

The following steps shall be taken during consideration of the 2010 renewal of the County/SPCA Concessionaire Agreement.

1. The County and the SPCA shall review all existing standing agreements between the SPCA and the special user groups that utilize the park, negotiate changes as needed to ensure consistency with the policies and strategies contained in this Master Plan, and take the resulting Partner Organization Concessionaire Assignment Agreements to the County Board of Supervisors for formal approval.
2. The County and the SPCA shall review the existing park policies and procedures presented in Appendix 10 for consistency with the policies and strategies of this Master Plan, negotiate changes as appropriate, obtain County and SPCA governing board approval as needed, revise Appendix 10 accordingly, and make the resulting information widely and readily available to the SPCA governing board, SPCA members, County staff, and the general public.
3. The County and the SPCA shall review the current fee schedule for consistency with the policies and strategies of this Master Plan and develop a new fee schedule for approval by the SPCA and the County.
4. The County and the SPCA shall develop a new five-year capital improvement plan that identifies which of the strategies identified in this Master Plan will be

implemented in the period 2010 through 2015. While all of the recommended strategies discussed in the Master Plan should be considered for inclusion, the following shall be given priority:

- i. Conservation. One priority for the upcoming Five Year Plan should be an assessment of current park water and energy use practices followed by the development of a strategy for improvement that is in keeping with the Stewardship provisions set forth in Section 4 of the Master Plan.
- ii. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Though the subject was outside the scope of this Master Plan, access to a community recreational resource such Skyline Wilderness Park cannot be considered adequate nor in keeping with the Mission of Skyline Wilderness Park unless the nature-based recreational experience it provides is accessible to users whose physical abilities require accommodation. While much has been done to make the park accessible to persons with disabilities, a priority for the upcoming Five Year Plan must be a comprehensive assessment of current park grounds, facilities and programs for accessibility followed by the development of a strategy to extend the amenities of the park to disabled users to the greatest extent feasible and in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act..

Partnership Initiatives

The County shall encourage the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District and the SPCA to work with each other and with the County to strengthen collaborative efforts to improve efficiency and prepare for future challenges, including the following:

1. Work together to ensure the permanent protection of Skyline Wilderness Park as a public park through local acquisition of the property from the State of California.
2. Work together to protect the integrity of the park and to increase the benefits it provides, including potential expansion of the park to the south and east.
3. Explore the feasibility of creating and implementing a joint volunteer trail/park steward program to work in both Skyline Wilderness Park and the parks managed by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District.
4. Explore joint grant development and revenue generating opportunities.

Governance and Administration

Governance and administration issues discussed in the Master Plan are primarily the purview of the SPCA. At the same time, since the SPCA is a concessionaire to the County, the County has an interest in having the SPCA continue to be a strong and effective organization. To advance this interest, the County should:

1. Provide technical assistance to the SPCA on matters such as data gathering and financial accounting and auditing practices, to enhance the ability of the SPCA to do strategic planning and secure grants and other funding.

2. Encourage the SPCA to actively undertake the public outreach and Board succession planning objectives identified in this Master Plan.
3. In cooperation with the SPCA, evaluate whether existing County Codes and enforcement procedures need to be modified to provide the tools the SPCA needs to enforce park regulations.

The development of this Master Plan has and will continue to create heightened interest in the services provided by the park. Consequently it presents multiple opportunities for broadcasting the park's value to the public. To capture this momentum, implementers of the Master Plan must move ahead quickly, steadily, cooperatively and with the same passionate commitment that has brought people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives together to appreciate, play in, and protect these lands since 1979.