



NEVADA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan

May 2024

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act | DIPS | Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship |
| APA | American Planning Association | DoF | California Department of Finance |
| ARPA | American Rescue Plan Act | DSA | Donner Summit Association |
| ATP | Active Transportation Plan | EDA | Economic Development Administration |
| BAM | California Department of Water Resources Best Available Maps | EDD | Employment Development Department |
| BEA | Bureau of Economic Analysis | EIB | Environmental Impact Bond |
| BEF | Bonneville Environmental Foundation | EIR | Environmental Improvement Report |
| BLM | US Bureau of Land Management | FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| BRIC | Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program | FERC | Federal Energy Regulatory Commission |
| BYLT | Bear Yuba Land Trust | FRC | Family Resource Center |
| CCC | Convene, Champion, and Catalyze | FY | Fiscal Year |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish & Wildlife | GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| CDP | Census-designated Place | GIF | California - Berkeley Geospatial Innovation Facility |
| CEC | California Energy Commission | HMGP | Hazard Mitigation Grant Program |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act | HOA | Homeowners Association |
| CERF | Community Economic Resilience Fund | HUD | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| CNRA | California Natural Resources Agency | HWY | Highway |
| COL | Cost of Living | IFNF | Innovative Finance for National Forests |
| COLA | Cost of Living Adjustment | ITS | Intelligent Transportation Systems |
| COP | Certificates of Participation | JPA | Joint Powers Authority |
| CSAC | California State Association of Counties | LAFCO | Local Agency Formation Commission |
| CSF | Cubic Feet Per Second | LHMP | Local Hazard Mitigation Plan |
| CSP | California State Parks | LOS | Level of Service |
| CTC | California Transportation Commission | LWCF | Land and Water Conservation Fund |
| CWPP | Community Wildfire Protection Plan | Master Plan or Plan | Nevada County Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan |

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------|---|
| MLB-MLBA | Major League Baseball-Major League Baseball Players Assoc. | TDA | Tahoe Donner Association |
| NCAC | Nevada County Arts Council | TDRPD | Truckee-Donner Recreation and Park District |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act | TNF | Tahoe National Forest |
| NID | Nevada Irrigation District | TOT | Transit Occupancy Tax |
| NRPA | National Recreation and Park Association | USACE | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| OES | Nevada County Office of Emergency Services | USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| OHV | Off-highway Vehicle | US | United States |
| PAOT | People at One Time | USFS | United States Forest Service |
| PG&E | Pacific Gas and Electric | VMT | Vehicle Miles Traveled |
| PRD | Park and Recreation District | VUM | Visitor Use Management |
| PSPS | Public Safety Power Shutoff | VTT | Visit Truckee Tahoe |
| PUD | Public Utility District | WHP | Wildfire Hazard Potential |
| RIC | Recreation Intensity Class | WRI | Willamette River Initiative |
| ROC | Recreation Opportunity Spectrums | WUI | Wildland-Urban Interface |
| RPD | Recreation and Park District | | |
| RTP | Regional Trails Program | | |
| S&P | Standard & Poor's | | |
| SAR | Search and Rescue | | |
| SBC | Sierra Business Council | | |
| SBTS | Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship | | |
| SEDD | Sierra Economic Development District | | |
| SNC | Sierra Nevada Conservancy | | |
| SYRCL | South Yuba River Citizens League | | |
| SYRPS | South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort | | |
| TBID | Tourism Business Improvement District | | |

A stylized mountain range graphic at the bottom of the page, composed of overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of light blue, teal, and dark teal. The mountains vary in height and are arranged in a series of peaks and valleys. Below the mountains is a solid dark teal horizontal bar.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Plan Purpose & Structure

The Nevada County Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan (Plan or Master Plan) presents a cohesive and comprehensive approach for recreation in Nevada County. By coordinating recommendations and priorities with aligned planning efforts, the Plan advances cross-jurisdictional solutions that promote community health and safety, economic development, environmental sustainability, and resiliency to reduce the impact and risk of natural disasters like wildfire, flooding, and extreme heat. This Plan is not only a first for Nevada County, but it is also one of only a few efforts in the State of California and nation to integrate resiliency adaptation measures as part of planning for parks, trails, and open spaces.

The unprecedented increase in visitation in Nevada County during the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the risk of catastrophic wildfire and drought due to climate change, threatens the area's invaluable parks, open spaces, and trails. This Plan is the result of a collaborative process with stakeholders and residents to evaluate individual community needs while addressing system-wide issues and challenges. A wide cross-section of recreation partners participated in the process, including local parks and public lands managers, community health and safety professionals, agency and community partners at the local, regional, state and federal level and many others.



Purdon Crossing, South Yuba River

Recreation Snapshot

The term recreation brings to mind different images. Some may envision a park with ball fields and playgrounds; others may think of their favorite hiking trail, swimming in a lake, or kayaking down a river; still others describe the rejuvenating power of just being in nature; and some share memories of youth camps, guided hikes, interpretive programming, farmers markets, cultural events in parks, or gold panning with their family. The way a person connects to the outdoors is rich and varied. Outdoor recreation touches all the many ways we interact with nature.

For this Plan, recreation is viewed as a system and is organized into three categories:

- Local, community, and regional parks, facilities, & programs (organized recreation)
- Access to open space, lakes, & rivers
- Trails

Each category is important. They work together and at times overlap. For example, trails provide a way to access open spaces, rivers, and lakes. Recreation is not viewed through a lens that isolates parks as islands. But rather, recreation is seen as a thread in the fabric of the county. This Plan takes a comprehensive view to understand how it all fits together.

Partnerships and volunteerism play a significant role in the way the system of

What Makes Up Our System of Recreation

Local, Community, and Regional Parks, Facilities & Programs

Parks and public facilities that offer amenities to support organized sports, play, and programming are an important part of a recreation system. People of all ages can build physical and social skills, and improve health and fitness. Providers include cities/towns, recreation and park districts, schools, libraries, and nonprofits. Private businesses also play a role.



Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

An extensive network of open space, year-round and seasonal creeks, streams, and rivers, as well as reservoirs and high mountain lakes are found throughout the county and are beloved by residents and visitors alike. Federal, state, and local agencies, utility providers and nonprofits own and manage lands to provide access. Agricultural lands play a role in recreation by preserving the overall character of the county and offering opportunities for agritourism.



Trails

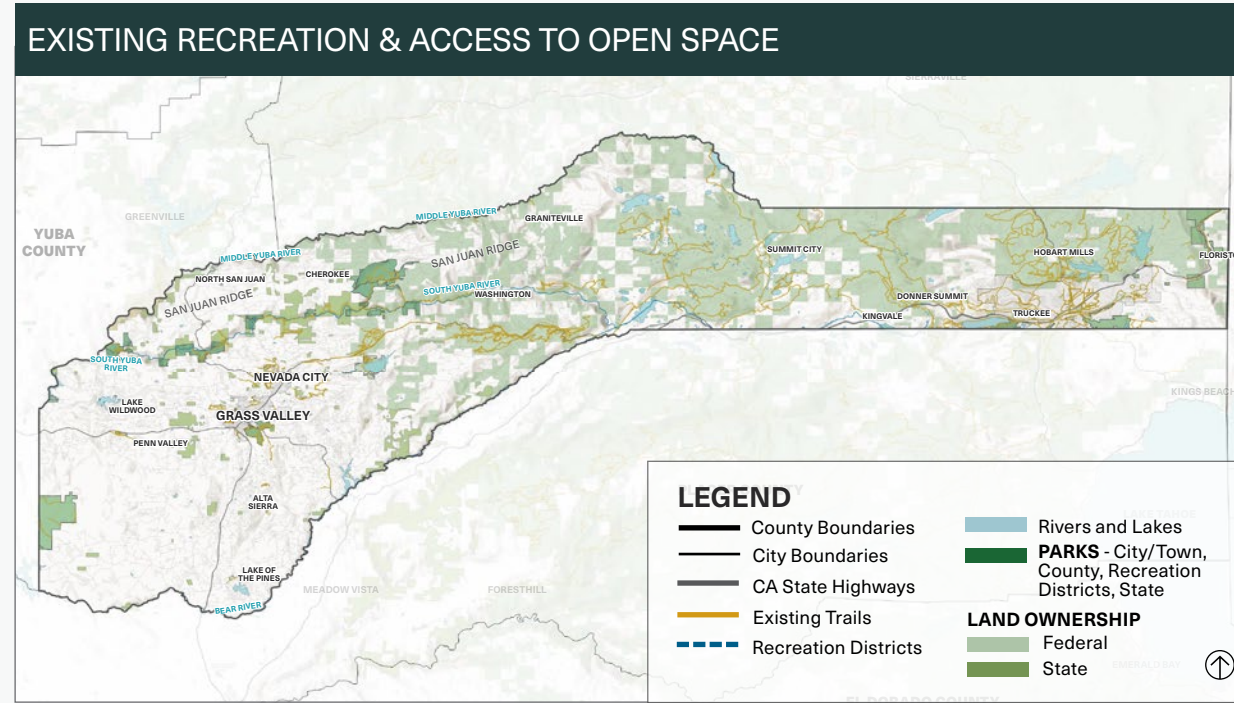
Trails provide a primary way for people to both connect to community destinations and their surrounding public lands. A multitude of agencies and organizations own or maintain trails in the county, including but not limited to the County of Nevada, Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, Town of Truckee, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, California State Parks, Bear Yuba Land Trust, Bicyclists of Nevada County, Gold Country Trails Council, Tahoe Pyramid Trail, Truckee Donner Land Trust, and Truckee Trails Foundation.



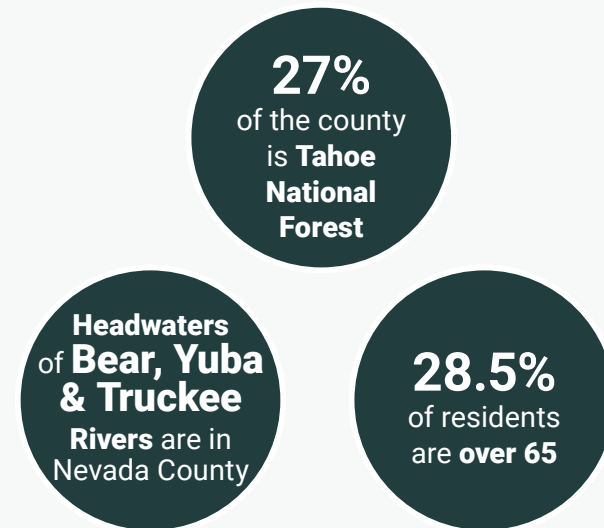
Plan Purpose & Structure

recreation is offered to users. The County of Nevada currently owns no recreation land other than Tobiassen Park in Nevada City. The 1995 General Plan describes that the County of Nevada encourages the formation of local park districts to provide community and district parks and to develop level of service standards. The General Plan Policy 5.7 identifies the preparation of a countywide Master Parks and Recreation Plan which this Plan is intended to satisfy.

The public recreation system itself is owned and managed by a variety of entities, including federal, state, and local governments; four recreation and park districts; utility providers PG&E and NID; and many nonprofit organizations. Volunteers are heavily relied upon by these agencies and organizations. The level of volunteerism reflects residents' love for the outdoors and their pioneering spirit to address challenges and shortfalls that may occur from limited fiscal dollars. This is particularly evident in the role organizations like Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) play to provide trail access. While the eastern portion of the county has a variety of natural surface and paved trails provided by federal, state, and local agencies as well as by entities like Truckee Trails Foundation and Truckee Donner Land Trust, in the western portion of the county, BYLT has been the primary entity to work with land owners to obtain easements and to build and maintain trail corridors.



The County of Nevada plays a critical leadership role in recreation as a convener and an entity that can advance projects. Along with implementing certain policies of the General Plan, revisions to the Recreation Element are recommended to clarify that while the local Recreation & Park Districts (RPDs) should maintain independent programming and oversight of local facilities, support by the County of Nevada for administration, funding, and project implementation is necessary to help the RPDs maintain sustainable fiscal and staffing capacity.



Plan Purpose & Structure

Recreation & Resiliency

Threats and hazards that Nevada County faces present risks and disruptions that are likely to impact recreation use, access, safety, and sustainability in the future.

Many of the environmental threats facing the county are exacerbated by the effects of a changing climate or long-term shifts in

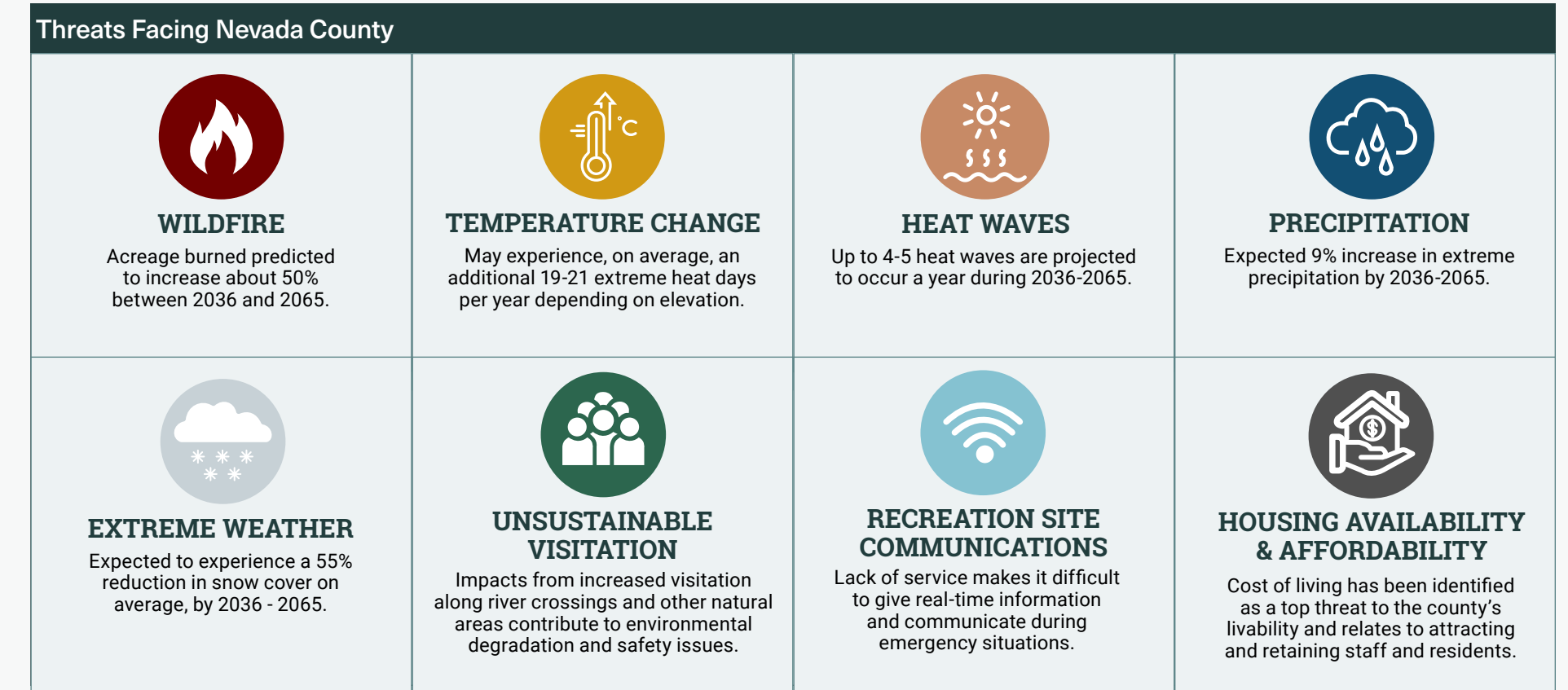
weather patterns. These effects include, but are not limited to, changes in temperature and the quantity and distribution of precipitation.

Impacts that are already being observed include increasing and more severe wildfires, increasing average temperatures, more extreme precipitation events, less precipitation falling as snow, and earlier snow runoff periods.

Human-related threats include unprecedented increases in recreation demand that was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of broadband connectivity, and increase of housing prices and insurance costs that make it increasingly difficult for community members to reside in Nevada County.

The effects of climate change in Nevada County have the potential to impact the occurrence and significance of hazardous

Figure 1: Threats Facing Nevada County



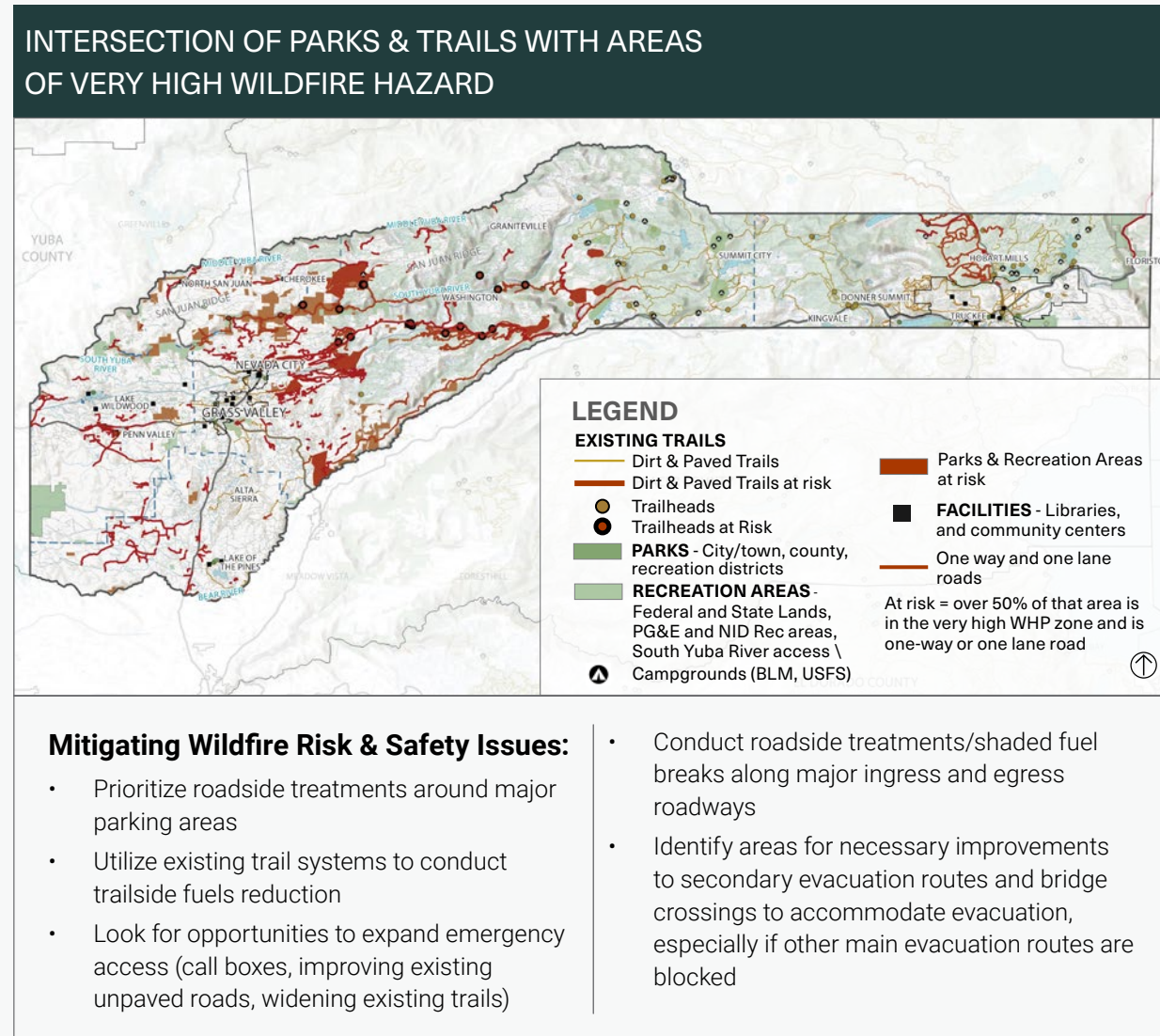
Plan Purpose & Structure

disruptions. Identifying potential impacts and changes for both landscape systems and communities is a core part of recreation planning. The introduction of climate resiliency into a recreation system is therefore of critical importance.

Addressing potential changes and hazards as part of the recreation system creates opportunities to find solutions that promote community health, safety, economic development, environmental stewardship, and climate resiliency. The Plan summarizes key threats facing the county and overlays them with the recreation network to identify which areas may be most impacted in order to inform priorities.

For high-use recreation areas and recreation areas that are accessed by narrow roads and have little to no cell service, the risks associated with hazards, such as wildfire, are increased. Crowded recreational areas can cause traffic congestion and limit egress and ingress for emergency personnel and local traffic. Limited parking can cause people to park on roadsides, increasing the potential for roadside ignitions. Radiant heat from the underside of vehicles can be enough to ignite dry fuels on roadsides.

Examples of ways to address wildfire risk and safety concerns are shown under the graphic to the right. Examples of recreation projects and strategies with multiple benefits are shown in Figure 2.



Mitigating Wildfire Risk & Safety Issues:

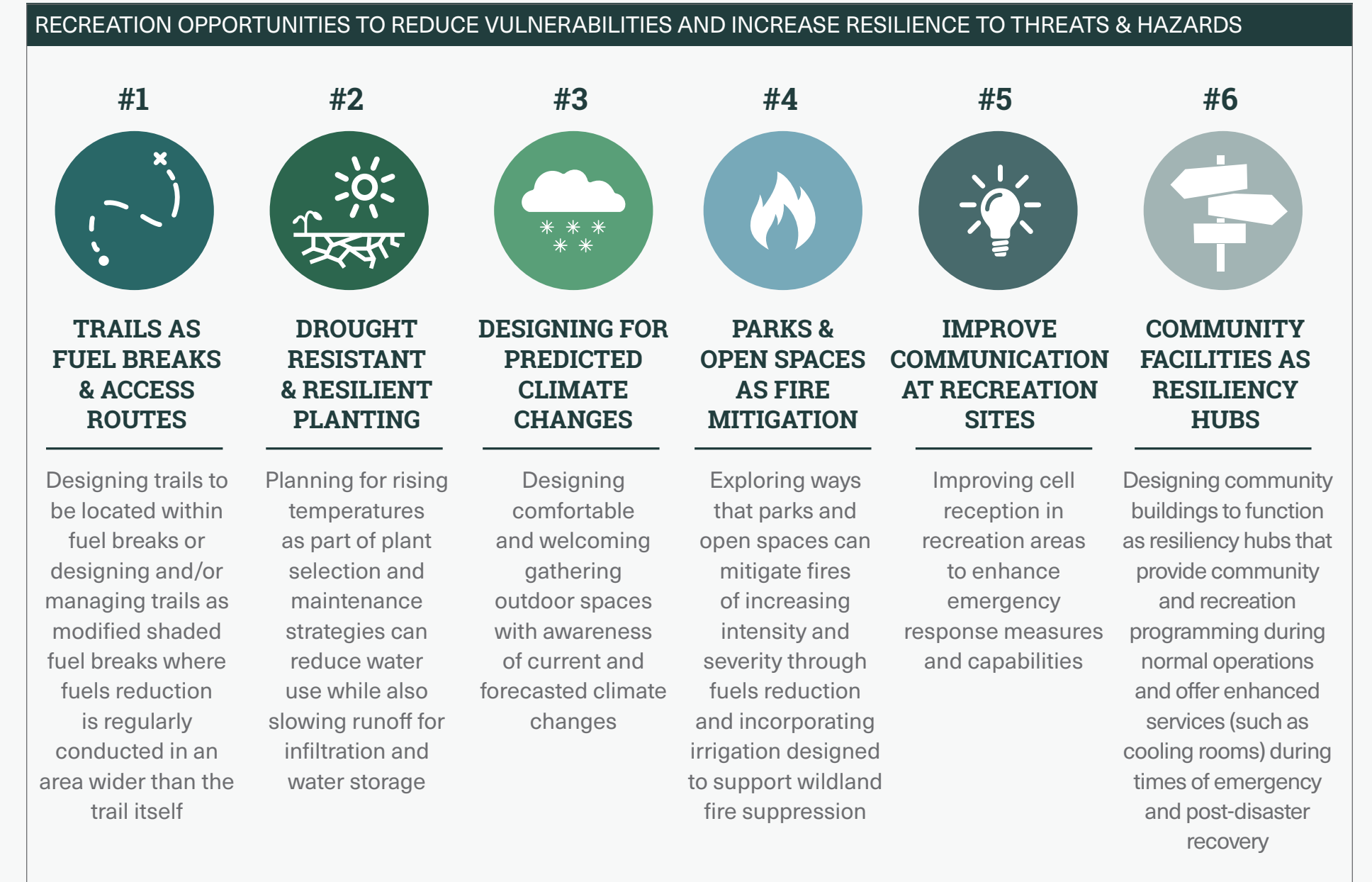
- Prioritize roadside treatments around major parking areas
- Utilize existing trail systems to conduct trailside fuels reduction
- Look for opportunities to expand emergency access (call boxes, improving existing unpaved roads, widening existing trails)
- Conduct roadside treatments/shaded fuel breaks along major ingress and egress roadways
- Identify areas for necessary improvements to secondary evacuation routes and bridge crossings to accommodate evacuation, especially if other main evacuation routes are blocked

There are **245,740 acres** of land in Nevada County that are considered to be in a "very high" fire hazard severity zone.

Note: Numbers based on CAL FIRE from 2023. Acreage located in Very High Severity designations may have increased in mapping released April 2024.

Plan Purpose & Structure

Figure 2: Recreation and Resiliency Opportunities



Plan Purpose & Structure

Previous Planning Efforts

Relevant plans and documents (listed below) were reviewed at the beginning and throughout the planning process in an effort to build upon past and ongoing efforts and to align goals. Related goals were derived from each and a summary of the key topics was analyzed.

- Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Report (2023-2024) by Americans for the Arts
- Bear River Recreation & Park District Master Plan (2003)
- Bear Yuba Land Trust Strategic Plan (2020)
- 2023-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) - Sierra Economic Development District
- California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (2021)
- CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit (NEU) 2021 Strategic Fire Plan
- CALREC Vision White Paper (2020)
- California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience (2022)
- Climate Change and Health Profile Report Nevada County (2017)
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2016, with update in progress)
- County of Nevada Economic Development Action Plan (2024)
- Donner Summit Public Lands, Trails and Recreation Facilities Plan (2023)
- Empire Mine State Historic Park General Development Plan Amendment (1996)

- Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship Plan (2022)
- Grass Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2001)
- Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Interpretation Master Plan (2015)
- Nevada County Area Plans - Greater Higgins Area (2023), Loma Rica (2008), North San Juan (2010), Penn Valley (2020), and Soda Springs (2016)
- Nevada County Active Transportation Plan (2019)
- Nevada County Bicycle Master Plan (2013)
- Nevada County Broadband Strategy (2023)
- Nevada County Evacuation Study (2024)
- Nevada County General Plan (1995), updates: 2008 (Safety Element), 2010 (Circulation Element and Housing Element, 4th Revision), 2014 (Land Use Element and Housing Element, 5th Revision, 2014 (Safety and Noise Elements)
- Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress)
- Nevada County Recreation Districts Sphere of Influence Updates (2021)
- Nevada County and Continuum of Care Joint Homeless Action Plan (2022)
- Park and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study for Nevada County (2018)
- Recreation and Parks Study by League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County (2017)
- Recreation Districts Organizational Study (2020)
- Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2022)

- Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan (2019-2024)
- South Yuba River Citizens League Strategic Plan (2019)
- South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan (2005)
- Truckee Destination Stewardship Plan - in development (2023)
- Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990)
- Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District - 2020 Updated Strategic Plan Objectives
- Truckee 2040 General Plan Update (2023)
- Truckee River Regional Park Master Plan (2020)
- Truckee Trails and Bikeways Master Plan (2015)
- USFS's schedule of proposed actions for the Tahoe National Forest (2023)
- Western Nevada County Non-Motorized Trails Master Plan (2010)
- Western Nevada County Organized Recreation Projects and Organizational Recommendations (2021)
- Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness Action Plan (2020)
- Yuba County Parks Master Plan (2008)
- Yuba Forest Network Resiliency Strategy (2022)

In addition to the documents listed above, the Master Plan takes into account numerous planned and in-progress projects related to recreation and infrastructure providing access to recreation.

Plan Purpose & Structure

Plan Structure

The Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan presents a summary of the state of the system, organized by the three categories of recreation. A key component of the Plan is the suite of project recommendations to guide recreation investments over the next 10 to 15 years. The graphic to the right summarizes Plan content by chapter. The appendix contains a full list of projects presented throughout the Plan, which is also contained in an editable spreadsheet for the County of Nevada to maintain and update over time. The matrix includes the project name, description, location, project lead and partners, stage, and potential funding sources.

Figure 3: How to Navigate This Plan



The Vision & Road Map

Vision Statement

Nevada County strengthens communities and safeguards nature through a connected and coordinated system of parks, open space, rivers, lakes, trails, and facilities. Working together, land managers, residents, volunteers, and users seek to enhance recreation access and opportunities while stewarding natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.

The Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan envisions a county-wide system of recreation that is coordinated between recreation providers and strengthens communities while safeguarding nature. The goals, recommendations, and projects offer a road map to:

- Enhance recreation access
- Improve health and safety
- Preserve natural resources
- Support local economic growth and sense of place

The goals, prioritization criteria, and projects described within the Plan were developed and guided in partnership with stakeholders and community members. Engagement activities and outreach occurred throughout the county to encourage participation and broad representation inclusive of many diverse views and perspectives. During the process, the planning team found opportunities to coordinate outreach with related projects and planning efforts with the County of Nevada and a range of stakeholders.

Engagement by the Numbers

Below are a few takeaways from the countywide engagement work:

Engagement Window #1

- Input on how people recreate, barriers, needs, & projects
- 1,773 survey responses
- Over 90 organizations contacted for interviews, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, & partner meetings

Engagement Window #2

- Collection of recreation & resiliency projects: what it is, where, why it's important
- 822 survey responses
- Over 25 micro-engagement events throughout the county

Engagement Window #3

- Refining and vetting projects with partners and communities
- 722 survey responses

A series of values and criteria for guiding the vision and road map were derived from community engagement, an inventory assessment, and analysis. These guidelines were applied to community-generated project ideas to help organize the numerous recommendations into a prioritized list of project focus areas that would advance recreation and resiliency in Nevada County.

Chapter 7 describes each of the prioritized projects in eight different focus areas, also shown in Figure 6. Each are described in detail and include mapping and conceptual diagrams, high-level costs, and potential funding strategies. All eight focus areas combined touch all areas of the county and are tailored to meet individual community needs. Keep in mind that as any project advances, permitting and environmental review will be required and completed at a project specific level that may affect their feasibility and design.

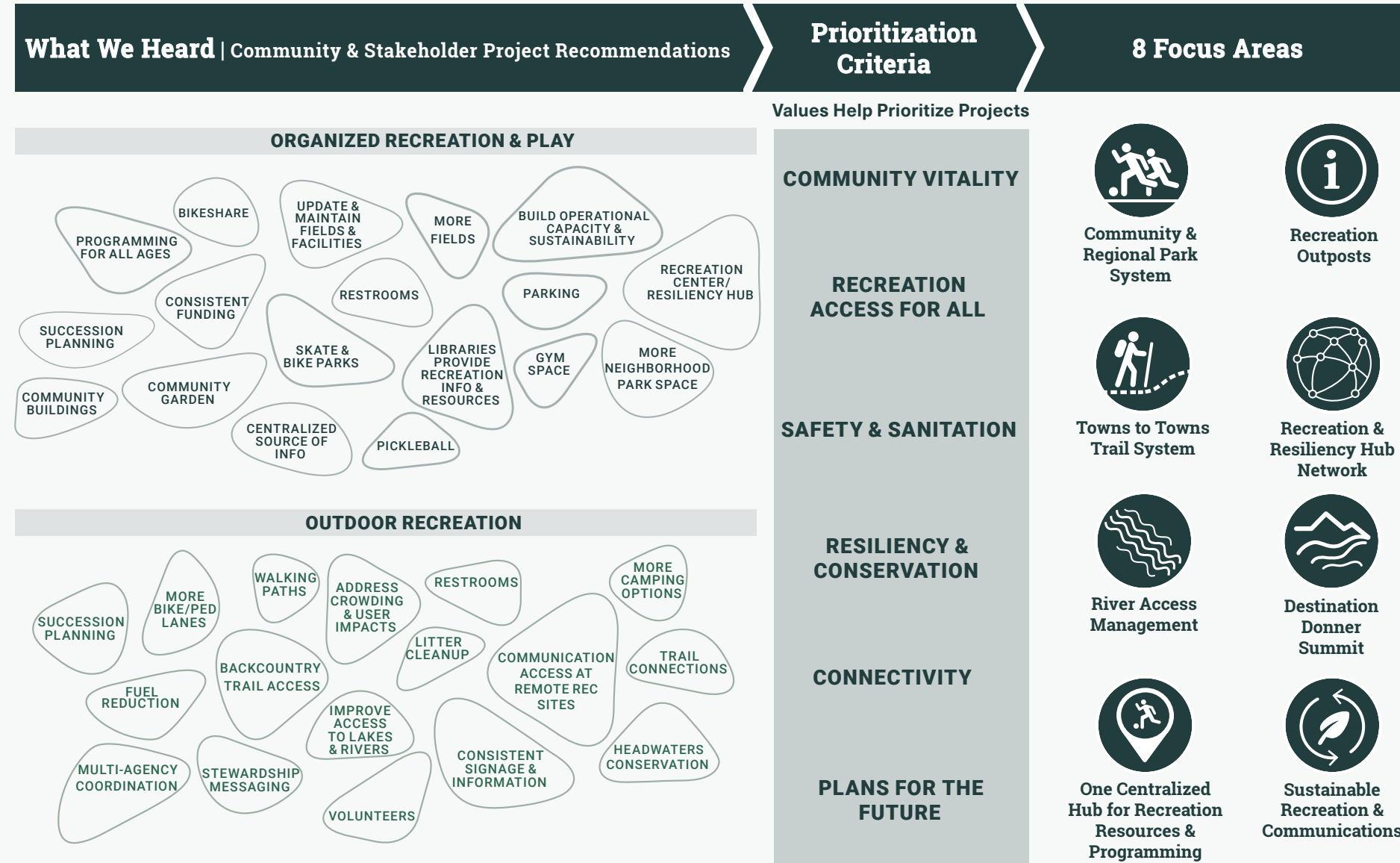
Following the summary of the eight focus areas, a list of guiding goals and opportunities for each category of recreation are presented. Chapters 4 through 6 offer background information related to the goals and opportunities. In particular, Chapter 4 presents considerations for each recreation and park district that can be used to guide future, independent decision-making.

Figure 4: Prioritization Criteria

| PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Community Vitality</p> <p>Relates to projects that contribute to a robust, diverse economy that supports the well-being of residents, creates jobs, and attracts investment. This includes contributing to a vibrant arts and culture scene, honoring local heritage, and bolstering agriculture & agritourism.</p> | <p>Safety & Sanitation</p> <p>Underscores the importance of minimizing risks associated with recreation by providing appropriate facilities, enforcement, restrictions, infrastructure, and education. Provides and promotes responsible recreation that safeguards the environment and preserves natural beauty.</p> | <p>Connectivity</p> <p>Enhances the network of paved and unpaved trails with a focus on offering multi-modal access to community open spaces and facilities. Reduces or eliminates barriers and gaps in the system and provides a consistent experience across public lands while meeting the need of multiple users and skill levels.</p> |
| <p>Recreation Access for All (Inclusive & Welcoming)</p> <p>Elevates the need to provide parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and programming for users of all ages and abilities.</p> | <p>Resiliency & Conservation</p> <p>Puts nature first by increasing biodiversity and ecological health of open spaces, rivers, and lakes. Protects healthy ecosystems and mends those that are damaged. Builds a culture of stewardship for locals and visitors.</p> | <p>Plans for the Future</p> <p>Considers recreation access and connectivity needs of future generations and proactively plans for acquiring or setting aside open space and trail corridor easements now before development increases costs, creates barriers, and limits opportunities.</p> |

The Vision & Road Map

Figure 5: Values Prioritize Projects Into Focus Areas



The Vision & Road Map

Figure 6: Eight Focus Areas



The Vision & Road Map

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | LOCAL, COMMUNITY, AND REGIONAL PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAMS

1. Provide diverse, accessible, multi-generational opportunities to support healthy communities.

- 1.1 Reinvest in existing parks to offer quality amenities and continue to adapt park offerings to appeal to a range of users.
- 1.2 Ensure ADA access requirements and special needs for all ages are accommodated including consideration of comfort, safety, and surfaces.
- 1.3 Provide opportunities for fully accessible, special needs play.
- 1.4 Support parks as vibrant community spaces that empower residents to contribute to their neighborhood identity.
- 1.5 Strategically build new local park facilities such as playgrounds, multi-use lawn areas, and picnic spaces in underserved areas.
- 1.6 After existing resources are optimized, consider the development of a regional, shared indoor recreation and community facility to serve western Nevada County (e.g., gym, fitness, and programming space).
- 1.7 Expand the “Art in Public Spaces” program to outdoor and indoor park and recreation spaces.

2. Increase role of community parklands and facilities in countywide resiliency strategies.

- 2.1 Invest in equipment and maintenance practices to continually improve irrigation efficiencies.
- 2.2 Consider opportunities for solar powered lighting and solar parking shade structures with major park renovations.
- 2.3 Install wildland fire suppression systems as part of irrigation approaches, where appropriate.
- 2.4 Decrease lawn areas and utilize low-maintenance, drought tolerant, native landscaping that also increases and connects wildlife habitat areas within parks and open spaces.
- 2.5 Consider transitioning maintenance fleets to electric vehicles.
- 2.6 Improve energy efficiency of buildings through recommendations provided in the Nevada County Energy Action Plan.
- 2.7 Develop information, signage, and programming that highlight the use of climate resiliency strategies (such as use of native plants) as an educational opportunity for members of the public and to promote the benefits of resiliency.

3. Increase awareness and use of organized recreation and program offerings.

- 3.1 Provide information on park offerings and events that is relevant, easy to find, and user friendly.
- 3.2 Promote existing services and expand participation.
- 3.3 Through signage and improved website communications, make it easier to find and explore nearby parks, trails, and public spaces to expand the public’s experiences in nature and build stewardship principles and practices.
- 3.4 Develop programming and park amenities that promote wellness, placemaking, and connect to Nevada County’s culture, heritage, and art.
- 3.5 Support programs and facility development for youth and young adults, particularly for before- and after-school enrichment and activities.

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The Vision & Road Map

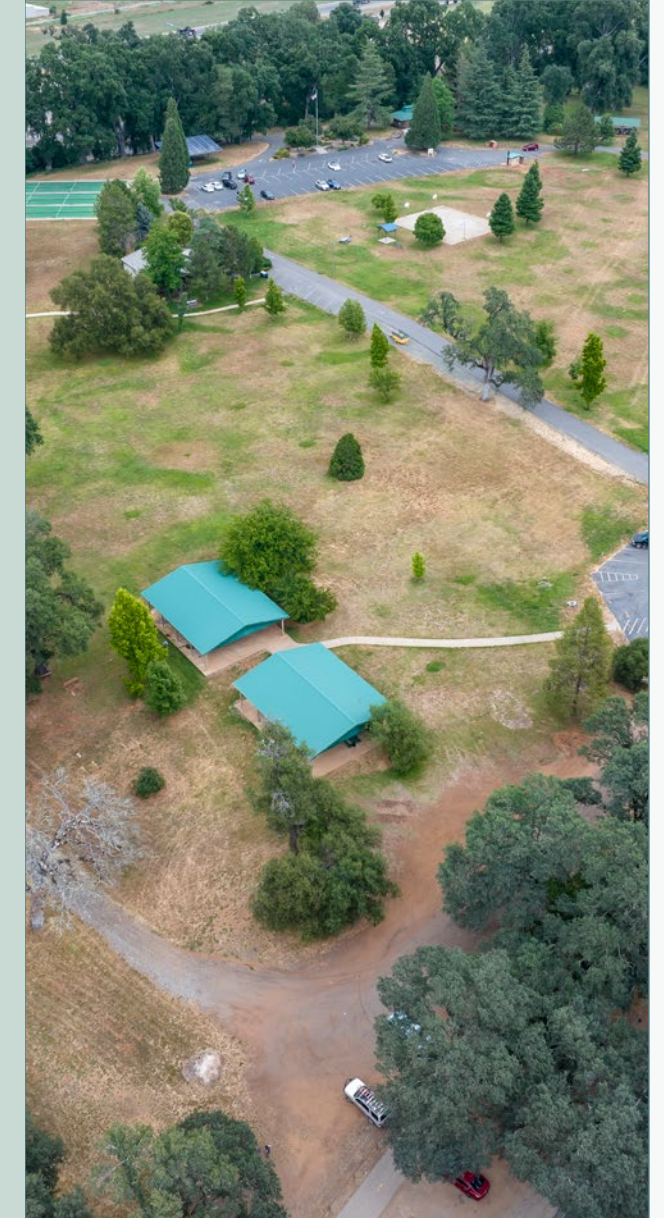
GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | LOCAL, COMMUNITY, AND REGIONAL PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

4. Increase funding and operational resources for fiscal and operational sustainability.

- 4.1 Diversify financial strategies to include new and increased methods of funding for projects and maintenance.
- 4.2 Confirm County of Nevada role in leadership to advance the fiscal and operational stability of recreation districts.
- 4.3 Provide consistent, centralized administrative and operational support for interested western Nevada County recreation and park districts.
- 4.4 Foster board and volunteer succession planning for recreation providers.
- 4.5 Evaluate opportunities to form a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) as an organizational structure for shared resources of interested western Nevada County recreation and park districts.
- 4.6 Develop and identify the roles and responsibilities, policies, and agreements needed to increase operational sustainability of the western Nevada County recreation and park districts.
- 4.7 Review fee structures for revenue generation.
- 4.8 Explore new or revised parcel assessments to support organized recreation operations.
- 4.9 Work with private sector, community groups, and contractors for donations of funding and in-kind services for development of facilities.

5. Maximize existing resources and address maintenance needs of existing parks.

- 5.1 Actively address deferred maintenance.
- 5.2 Prior to constructing new buildings or facilities, optimize assets of local and regional partners (e.g., schools, college, library, nonprofits, fire stations).
- 5.3 Ensure new development has provided funding for on-going maintenance and capital replacement.
- 5.4 Consider long-term operations and maintenance prior to building new facilities.



The Vision & Road Map

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE, LAKES, & RIVERS

1. Put nature first. Connect to tribal values and use the best available science to protect healthy ecosystems and restore degraded habitats.

- 1.1 Protect and enhance the headwaters of the Bear, Yuba, and Truckee Rivers for improving water infrastructure and carbon sequestration.
- 1.2 Cultivate biological diversity and conservation in parks and natural areas.
- 1.3 Restore and enhance resiliency of degraded habitat and natural systems.
- 1.4 Sustain, enhance, connect, and restore habitat blocks and areas of high ecological value and potential.
- 1.5 Increase habitat and ecological system connectivity.
- 1.6 Mitigate resource impacts by restoring, designating, re-routing, or recategorizing undesignated trails, especially in sensitive habitat areas, while considering appropriate routes to connect desired destinations.
- 1.7 Reveal past and present stories from diverse populations and experiences that have shaped Nevada County; give focus to underrepresented and indigenous people; express through landscapes, art, structure, and placemaking.

2. Promote and support responsible and sustainable recreation.

- 2.1 Provide the right facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms, trash receptacles) in the right places.
- 2.2 Disperse use to appropriate areas.
- 2.3 Update management plans, data, and monitoring to support adaptive recreation management strategies that are informed by up-to-date information and desired conditions.
- 2.4 Provide uniform messaging, mapping, and signage around appropriate recreation access locations and uses.
- 2.5 Continue to leverage ambassador programs to increase appropriate recreation use.
- 2.6 Respect needs of local communities.
- 2.7 Invest in digital connectivity and technology infrastructure improvements in backcountry and river access locations.
- 2.8 Employ customer service training programs to teach area employees how to effectively use and share visitor information.
- 2.9 Provide appropriate locations for winter access needs for snow play.
- 2.10 Offer multilingual visitor information to connect with non-English speaking populations.

3. Respect and build a resilient future for our agricultural lands.

- 3.1 Support the conservation of high-quality agricultural lands as open space which preserves a rural sense of place and views that help support the anticipated recreation experience in Nevada County.
- 3.2 Communicate and support mutual respect for private property owners and those appropriately accessing and using recreation resources.
- 3.3 Increase agritourism.
- 3.4 Increase demand, supply, and access to local, community-based foods.
- 3.5 Value and support working landscapes and their contribution to the stewardship of Nevada County's agricultural heritage.
- 3.6 Promote sustainable, productive agricultural lands.
- 3.7 Integrate agricultural and ecosystem objectives to provide for high-value habitat on working lands.
- 3.8 Increase appreciation and better understanding of working landscapes' role in food production and healthy lives in Nevada County.
- 3.9 Protect high-quality soils from erosion, maintain soil health, increase resilience, and improve carbon capture methods.

Continued on next page

The Vision & Road Map

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE, LAKES, & RIVERS (CONTINUED)

4. Build a stewardship ethic.

- 4.1 Engage youth to foster inspiration, respect for nature, and career pathways in natural and working lands.
- 4.2 Unite people by increasing relationship with nature; provide opportunities to connect with, enjoy and protect natural resources.
- 4.3 Expand the "Art in Public Spaces" program to open spaces.
- 4.4 Offer educational programs, workshops, and outreach initiatives to inform residents and users about sustainable practices.
- 4.5 Empower local stewardship initiatives such as community gardens, clean-up projects, and celebrations of positive efforts.

5. Increase resiliency to natural disasters and a changing climate.

- 5.1 Incorporate fuels reduction projects into planning and implementation of recreation and restoration projects.
- 5.2 Control invasive species.
- 5.3 Increase diversity of tree species to reduce susceptibility to insect attack and enhance forest health.
- 5.4 Reduce residential development on steep slopes in high fire risk areas.
- 5.5 Utilize low-water use native and adapted native plants and permeable materials to mitigate flooding.

6. Recognize and support the value of recreation as an economic opportunity.

- 6.1 Promote western Nevada County as a recreation and cultural destination; maintain eastern Nevada County's national and international position.
- 6.2 Provide a high-quality recreation experience to maintain competitiveness in key markets.
- 6.3 Communicate and connect people to Nevada County's many exceptional places, businesses, and adventures.
- 6.4 Prioritize respect for community needs.
- 6.5 Increase quality camping and lodging opportunities. Expand and enhance opportunities for camping. Renovate aging campgrounds. Support the development of new campgrounds and lodging. Consider code revisions to allow for low-intensity camping.
- 6.6 Diversify recreation offerings to combat seasonal local unemployment during off-seasons.
- 6.7 Support affordable and achievable housing strategies and policies to support local workforce.
- 6.8 Increase length of stay for recreation visitors.

7. Maximize public and private dollars for financial sustainability.

- 7.1 Package multi-benefit projects that can utilize funding from a variety of sources.
- 7.2 Continue to foster collaborative partnerships that broaden funding opportunities, enhance communication, and increase operational capacity.
- 7.3 Leverage governance structures to unlock access to capital, increase capacity, share resources, work across jurisdictional boundaries, and enable procurement of services.
- 7.4 Strengthen partnerships by collaborating in tourism development, economic development, and legislative advocacy.
- 7.5 Secure sustainable funding to build, operate, and maintain recreation resources.
- 7.6 Design facilities with maintenance and operations in mind.
- 7.7 Continue discussions at state and federal level to promote adequate staffing and funding for state and federal partners and to encourage partners to collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries and provide appropriate recreation facilities.

The Vision & Road Map

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | TRAILS

1. Improve mobility for residents and visitors by connecting destinations with a trail system.

- 1.1 Provide for safe routes to schools and safe routes for seniors. Connect all schools to adjacent neighborhoods and transit stops to nearby destinations by trail facilities.
- 1.2 Prioritize improvements that serve disadvantaged communities and that link community destinations such as parks, schools, and community facilities with a trail system.
- 1.3 Prioritize and address accessibility deficiencies.
- 1.4 Reduce the number of gaps in both paved and unpaved trail systems.
- 1.5 Create regional trails that connect communities throughout the county.
- 1.6 Reduce the level of stress and physical danger for bicyclists due to traffic by using separated pathways and trails as an active transportation system.
- 1.7 Provide for winter use of high priority trail connections.

Note: For projects and recommendations related to bike lanes, bike routes, and other on-roadway facilities, refer to the Nevada County Active Transportation Plan, 2019 and Town of Truckee's Trails & Bikeways Master Plan, 2015.

2. Accommodate diverse ranges of ages, abilities, and uses.

- 2.1 Provide trail systems to meet the needs of different trail users (e.g., equestrian, OHV, e-bike, mountain bike, hiking, Nordic). Prioritize the use of multi-purpose trails where appropriate. Develop single-use trails where needed.
- 2.2 Develop a series of multi-use stacked loop trail systems to accommodate needs of different skill levels and uses.
- 2.3 Adopt policies for use of e-bikes and other electric mobility options for all jurisdictions in Nevada County to address needs for people of all abilities to have appropriate access.
- 2.4 Create a consistent, uniform system of signage that communicates trail etiquette.
- 2.5 Where appropriate in areas of high equestrian use, incorporate a native surface side-path along regional Class I paved trail systems.

3. Provide a high quality trail network.

- 3.1 Keep trail networks well-maintained.
- 3.2 Restore trails in sensitive landscapes and eroding slopes.
- 3.3 Utilize consistent design standards that promote longevity and reduced maintenance.
- 3.4 Design trail systems for both recreation (overall experience) and transportation needs in mind.
- 3.5 Expand the "Art in Public Spaces" program to trails and trailheads.

Continued on next page

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES | TRAILS (CONTINUED)

4. Work with partner organizations to obtain funding to develop and maintain trail systems.

- 4.1 Continue support for community-based organizations that lead efforts for planning and prioritizing trail linkages, acquiring easements, designing, implementing, and maintaining trail systems.
- 4.2 Capture economic impacts and environmental gains of improved trail network to support grant and community funding requests.
- 4.3 Support trail maintenance endowment programs.





1

**PLAN CONTEXT &
PARTNERSHIPS**

The Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan (Plan or Master Plan) communicates a strategic short- and long-term vision of stakeholder and community priorities for recreation in Nevada County. It recognizes the important connection between the economic resilience of communities, the health of ecosystems, and tourism and recreation.

The unprecedented increase in recreation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the risk of catastrophic wildfire and drought due to a changing climate threatens the invaluable open spaces, trails, and community parks throughout the county. As a result of the work conducted by two Board of Supervisor ad hoc committees (Open Space & Trails and Parks & Recreation District

Programs and Services), extensive County staff collaboration, and staff review, in 2022 the Board of Supervisors responded to the increased demands and impacts and adopted a new objective for recreation.

The purpose of the objective was to promote recreation with County partners, enhance recreational access, improve health and safety, preserve natural resources, and support economic growth from jobs to tourism that all benefit from recreation. The development of the Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan was identified as a priority initiative established in support of the objective.

Working with stakeholders, partners, and community members, the Plan articulates community recreation needs and devises a long-term vision for addressing recreation needs and opportunities while offering short-term strategies and projects to advance the County's efforts toward meeting the four goals of the recreation objective.

This Plan is the result of a collaborative process with stakeholders and residents to evaluate individual community needs while addressing system-wide issues, challenges, and opportunities. A wide cross-section of recreation partners participated in the process, including local parks and public lands managers, community health and safety professionals, agency and community



Riverview Sports Park, Truckee

Figure 7: Recreation Objective Goals



partners at the local, regional, state and federal level and many others.

In addition to identifying recreation needs and articulating a long-term vision for managing open spaces and recreation resources, this plan's recommendations and projects integrate strategies that support Plan values of:

- community vitality
- safety and sanitation
- recreation access for all
- resiliency and conservation
- connectivity
- planning for the future

The following sections provide an overview of what makes up the system of recreation in Nevada County, a high-level summary of key components of recreation and open space

resources and facilities, and a recognition of the many partners who contribute to providing recreation in the county. More detailed information regarding each of the topics is found throughout the rest of the document.

Since the development of the recreation objective, Nevada County has made great strides in reaching their goals. For example, the South Yuba River Public Safety (SYRPS) Cohort has continued to address public safety issues related to stewardship, fire prevention, and responsible recreation. The Convene, Champion, and Catalyze (CCC) Group has coordinated strategies for enhancing the quality of life for locals during peak visitation periods. This Plan builds upon those successes and provides a framework for continued collaboration and project implementation.

Recreation Vision for Nevada County

Nevada County strengthens communities and safeguards nature through a connected and coordinated system of parks, open space, rivers, lakes, trails, and facilities. Working together, land managers, residents, volunteers, and users seek to enhance recreation access and opportunities while stewarding natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.

Plan Context

Environmental Review Considerations

The Master Plan is a planning study that provides an overall vision and recommendations for the system of recreation throughout Nevada County, including organized recreation; access to open space, lakes, and rivers; and trails. It includes a series of project recommendations and a list of opportunities for possible future actions which Nevada County has not approved, adopted, or funded. The Master Plan does not have a legally binding effect on later activities.

As such, the statutory exemption pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies is applicable. The exemption states that a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency has not approved or funded does not require preparation of an Environmental Improvement Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. Consistent with this exemption, the Master Plan provides data and recommendations for future policy decisions but does not commit the County of Nevada to later activities or any specific project.

Future work to implement projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment will require

environmental permitting and compliance with the CEQA. Should funding be pursued and obtained for projects, site specific environmental review would be required to develop detailed designs which would at that time require complete environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

The Master Plan makes recommendations for revisions to policies in the Nevada County General Plan. These recommendations are not binding on the County of Nevada. At the time updates to the Nevada County General Plan do occur, those revisions would require environmental review pursuant to CEQA. Plans involving federal lands or federal funding would also require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.



Kayaking the South Yuba River



Recreation equipment rental at the Truckee Library

Plan Context

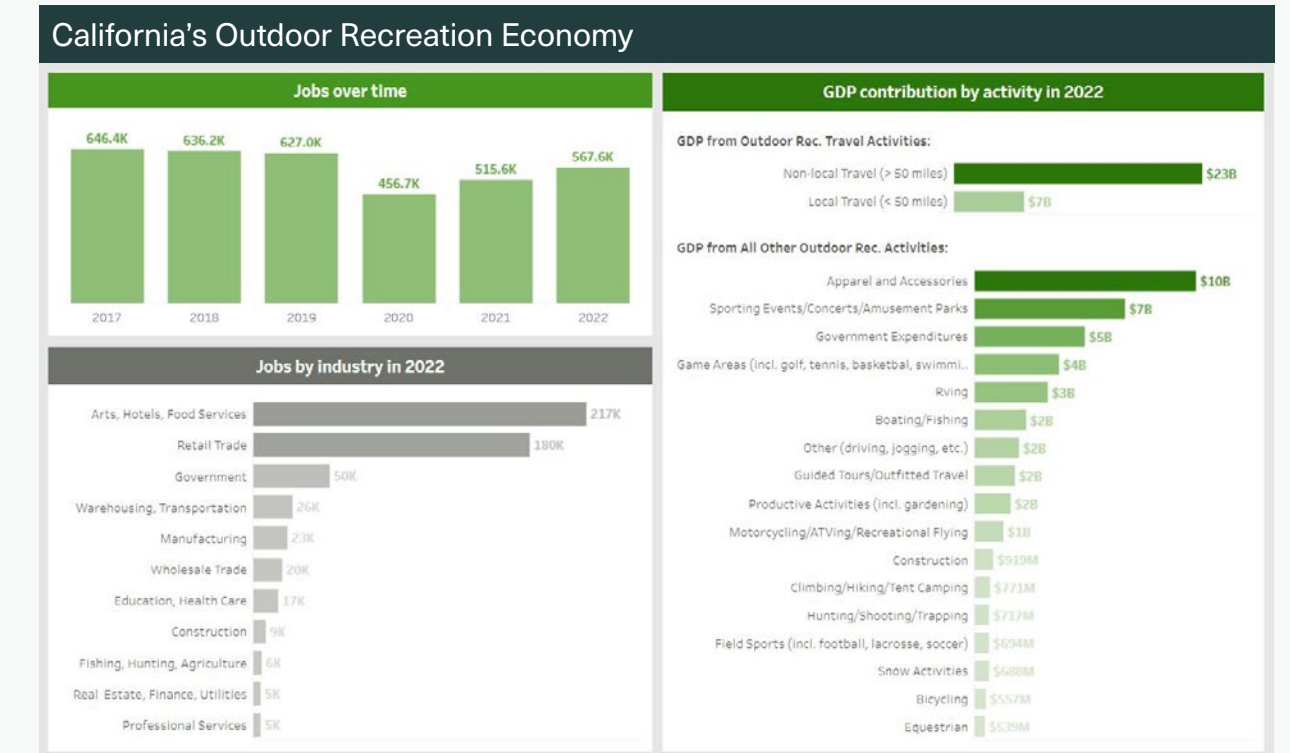
Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the economic impact of outdoor recreation continues to grow. In California, BEA estimates that the contribution of outdoor recreation to the state's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$73.8 billion in 2022. This is an increase of 13 percent from 2019 and represents approximately 2 percent of the state's overall economy. In comparison, research presented in the 2023-2027 Sierra Economic Development District (SEDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy indicated that 4.2 percent of occupations in the county were from arts, culture and recreation.

The outdoor recreation activity that has contributed the most to GDP was RVing at \$3.4 million. Boating and fishing contributed \$2.4 million and climbing/hiking/tent camping contributed \$770,932. Many of the other outdoor recreation activities that are high contributors to the state's GDP are popular in Nevada County (e.g., ATVing, hunting, snow activities, bicycling, and equestrian).

Headwaters Economics published a report in 2019 analyzing the impact of outdoor recreation specifically on rural communities. Trends showed that counties with outdoor recreation economies are more likely

Figure 8: California's Outdoor Recreation Economy



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account and Regional Economic Accounts (2022)

to attract residents with greater wealth than non-recreation counties. The 2023-2027 SEDD's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy summarized the takeaways from the research to be that "this may look like full-time, year-round employment that offers benefits in the tourism and recreation industries, and prioritizing recreation projects that offer economic benefits to communities in the SEDD with less visitor traffic. A particular takeaway from this analysis is the clear

alignment with the potential for new jobs at the intersection of forest management and outdoor recreation opportunities."

Trail Specific Economic Impacts

Numerous studies and research show the positive economic benefits of trails. Communities across the Sierras have invested in their trail systems as both a way to enhance the quality of life for their residents and as a way to generate tourism dollars

Plan Context



Views from Big Chief
Image Credit: Truckee Trails Foundation

that can provide financing for infrastructure and facilities that benefit local community members.

Investing in the development and upkeep of trails not only fosters employment opportunities in various sectors such as trail construction, guiding services, outdoor education, and hospitality but also significantly contributes to local economies. The proximity of residential areas to recreational trails can bolster property values, thereby increasing property tax revenues for local governments. Research conducted by Headwaters Economics (2016) indicates that trails can lead to a price premium of up to 10 percent for properties located nearby, as demonstrated by numerous studies across the United States.

Moreover, communities with popular recreational trails and trailheads located in or near town centers often witness thriving local businesses, including outdoor gear shops, gear rental and repair services, shuttle services, breweries, and restaurants, among others.

For more than 20 years, cities, towns, and organizations across the nation have been documenting the economic impacts of trails. In 2021, American Trails published a synopsis of the research conducted by others over the years. The following is a summary of a few case studies:

Plan Context

- Case Studies:
 - Rubicon Trail in El Dorado County, CA (2019 Study): \$57.4 million annually in direct spending and \$27.8 million annually in “spin-off activity” economic activity
 - Helena, Montana Trail System (2018 Study): \$4.3 million spent by tourists over a summer season despite the fact that 78 percent of recorded trail users were local residents from a town of 31,000 people. Tourism dollars resulted in 60 additional jobs annually, \$1.5 million in income, and over \$185,211 in local taxes
 - Great Allegheny Passage, Maryland 150-mile long distance hiking and biking path (2021 Study): estimated economic benefit of over \$121 million annually
 - Mono County, CA Visitor Economic Impact (2018 Study): 52 percent of overnight visitors staying in a hotel/motel hiked during their visit and 65 percent of people camping hiked during their visit

In many locations around the nation, communities have shown their support for trails by being willing to increase taxes to support trail development and maintenance. In Truckee in 2014, voters approved Measure R to establish a dedicated source of funding to expand, repair, and maintain the Town of Truckee trail system. In 2022, as part of a renewal of the sales tax, voters approved a dedicated sales tax increase of 1/2% to provide \$3 million annually for trails. Similar voter initiatives have passed in eastern Placer County and South Lake Tahoe, California.



Heart of Gold Gravel Race
Image Credit: Heart of Gold Gravel

Plan Context

Health & Wellness Benefits of Recreation

In addition to having access to healthcare, a community's health and wellness is inextricably linked to its physical environment, including housing, transportation, opportunities for positive social interactions, and access to parks and open spaces. California's Healthy Places Index (2022) includes these criteria as part of the metrics to evaluate a community's overall health. In Nevada County, of the 13 unincorporated and incorporated places mapped, only four had percentile scores greater than 50, indicating a healthier community. Grass Valley, Penn

Valley, Rough and Ready, North San Juan, Washington, Graniteville, Kingvale, Soda Springs, and Floriston had scores between 37 and 49 (on a scale of 0 to 100).

As documented in a study by Active Living Research, the odds of youth participating in physical activity increases by 20 percent with access to a park and youth with access to multiple opportunities for physical activity are twice as likely to be physically active than those with no access.

The Nevada County 2016 Community Health Assessment and subsequent 2017 Community Health Improvement Plan documented that the county was ranked

8th out of 57 counties by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2015 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. Access to open space, farmers' markets, good schools, recreational activities, a sense of community, and available services were described by residents as attributes that contribute to a desirable quality of life. More than half (55 percent) of respondents to the study's community health survey indicated that there are adequate health and wellness activities in the community for people of any age (Nevada County Public Health Department, 2017).

Although half the survey respondents provided favorable responses, the 2016 Health Assessment acknowledged that the county's extensive areas of recreational spaces are not easily accessible to those without transportation. The county has many wonderful opportunities and large tracts of undeveloped lands, but access from neighborhoods and homes is not easy.

Because people continuously engage with their surroundings, health and wellness is connected to environmental health. Studies have shown a strong relationship between the amount of open, undeveloped land that is accessible to the public and people's perceived general health (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015). The County's 2017 Improvement Plan summarized 13 goals in three objective areas. Several goals intersect with recreation, either through programming



Truckee Regional Park's "Slow Food Lake Tahoe" community garden

Plan Context

opportunities, places for people to exercise, connect and form relationships, or to develop sustainable incomes.

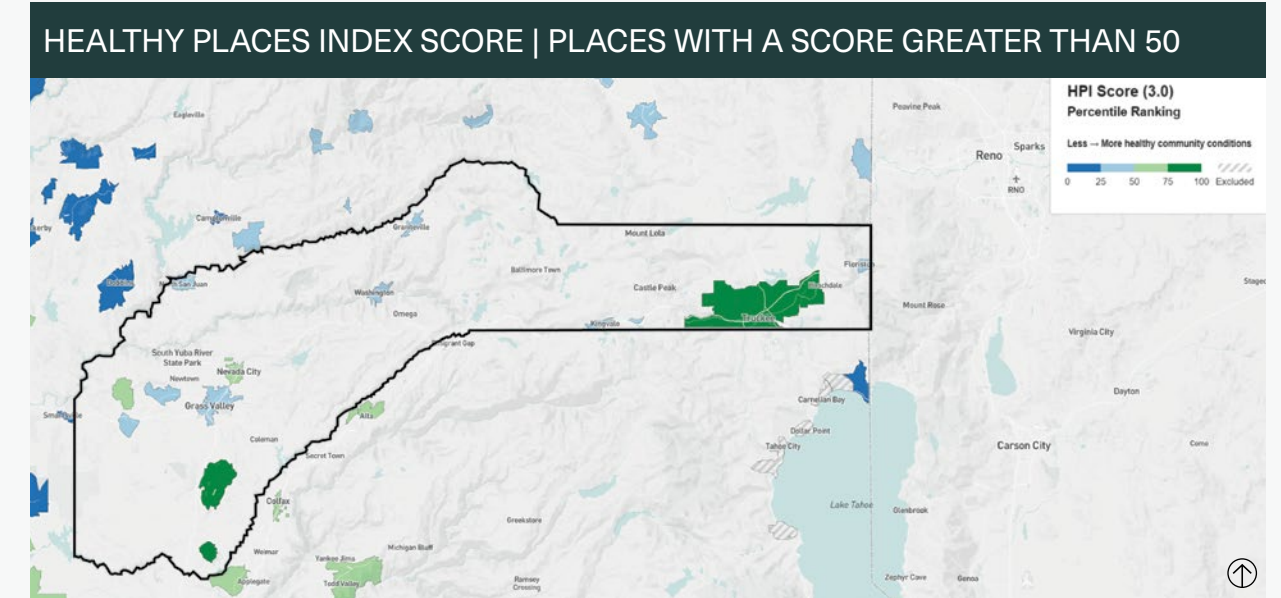
These goals include the following:

- Reduce the incidence of chronic disease
- Increase the percentage of people who report positive social supports and connectedness
- Increase social and civic engagement
- Decrease rates of depression
- Increase number of households with a sustainable income
- Increase percentage of youth reading proficiently at 3rd grade

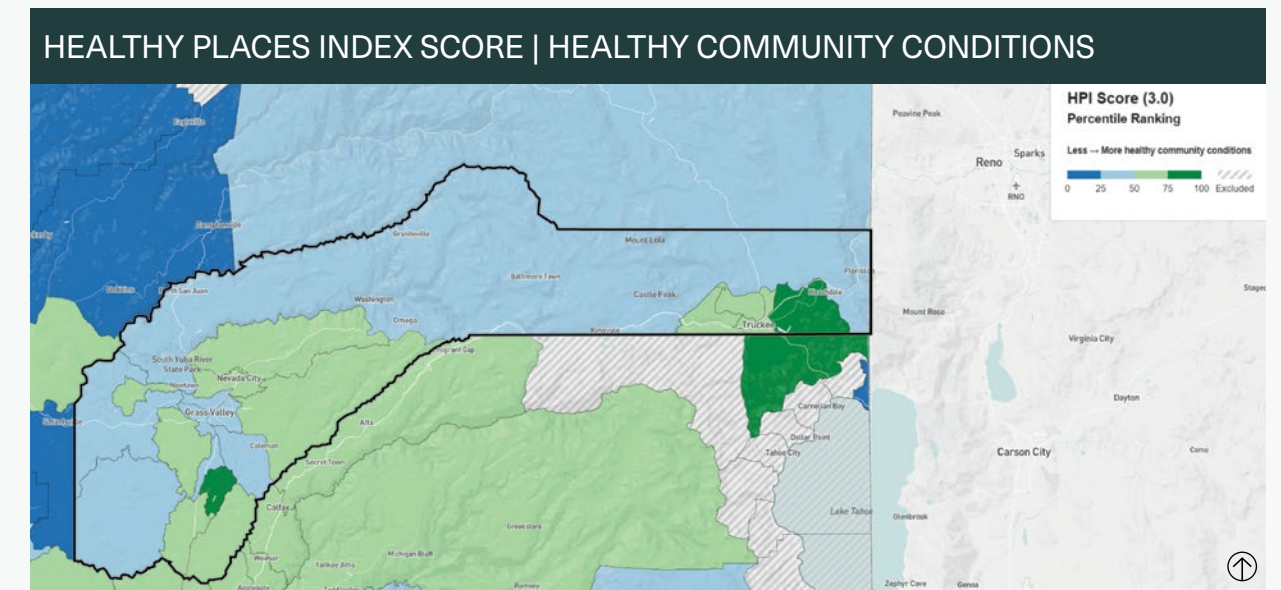
According to the Outdoor Industry Association's 2023 report, investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming have been shown to improve educational outcomes. Benefits also include lowering long-term individual and public health care costs by reducing stress and obesity rates, improving physical fitness and strengthening social bonds with families and friends.

For example, research has shown that moderately active retirees have significantly lower health care costs than sedentary retirees. And exercise has been shown to prevent chronic diseases as effectively as medication.

Nevada County General Plan (1995), updated (2014)



Source: California Healthy Places Index



Source: California Healthy Places Index (2022)

Recreation System Overview

Recreation System Overview

The term “recreation” has different meanings for different people. For the purposes of this Plan, recreation is viewed as a system and is organized into three categories:

- Local, community, and regional parks, facilities, & programs (also referred to as organized recreation)
- Access to open space, lakes, & rivers
- Trails

Local, Community, and Regional Parks, Facilities & Programs

Parks that offer amenities to support organized sports and play are an important part of a recreation system. People of all ages can build physical and social skills, improve health and fitness, and connect with the outdoors. These parks are most often provided by local jurisdictions, homeowner associations, schools, and other community groups such as faith-based organizations.

These may include playgrounds, ball fields, sports courts, disc golf, walking paths, gathering spaces, and many other types of amenities based on local community needs. In Nevada County, these types of parks are primarily provided by Recreation and Park Districts (RPD) and the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

Figure 9: What Makes Up Our System of Recreation



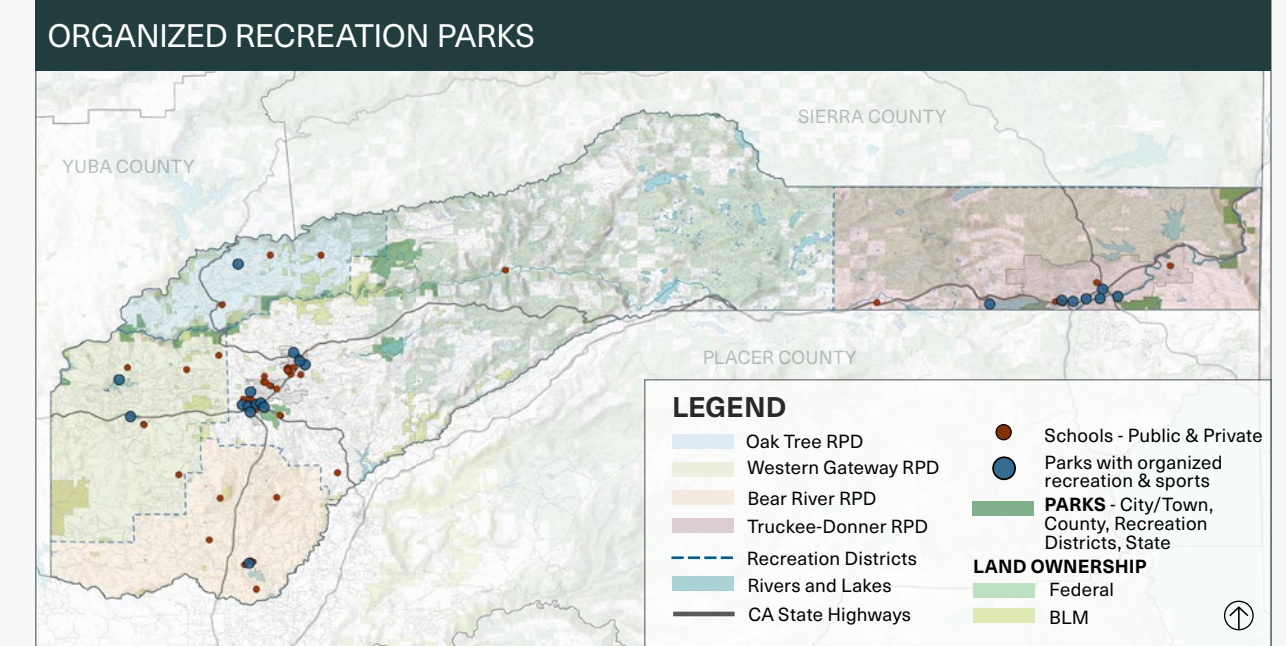
Four RPDs manage local and regional parks in the unincorporated portions of the county and in the Town of Truckee. From west to east they are:

- Western Gateway Recreation & Park District (shown in light green)
- Bear River Recreation & Park District (shown in light tan)
- Oak Tree Park & Recreation District (shown in light blue)
- Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District (shown in light pink)

These Districts work in conjunction with the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City and Town of Truckee to provide community and regional parks with sports fields, courts, playgrounds, and more. Leagues, nonprofits, and private organizations help provide recreational programming.

Public school facilities (shown as red dots on the map) provide important partnerships for recreation providers by creating opportunities for access to recreation and sports facilities on school properties through joint-use agreements. While these facilities are unavailable for use during school hours, residents and sport leagues can use them after hours and on weekends.

A more detailed summary of the existing and planned system of organized recreation in the unincorporated portions of the county is provided in Chapter 4.



Disc golf course in western Nevada County
Image Credit: Gold Country Disc Golf Association

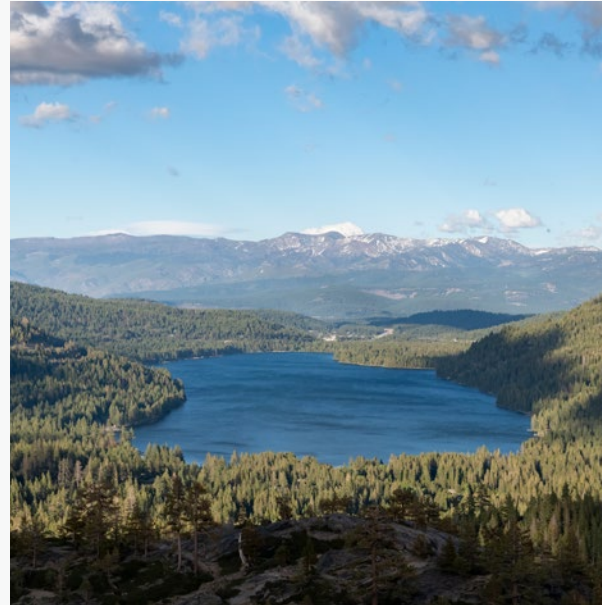
Recreation System Overview

Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

Nevada County has a significant amount of land in public ownership. Of the county's 974 square miles, 958 is land and 16 is water. The Tahoe National Forest stretches from Scotts Flat Reservoir east into the State of Nevada and covers approximately 265 square miles, or 27 percent of the county.

The county also has four state parks/recreation areas, and public lands owned, managed, or operated by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California State Parks (CSP), the United States Forest Service (USFS), Nevada Irrigation District (NID), and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). These public lands and natural resources offer a multitude of opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors.

A more detailed summary of the existing and planned system of recreation is provided in Chapter 5.



Donner Lake Area

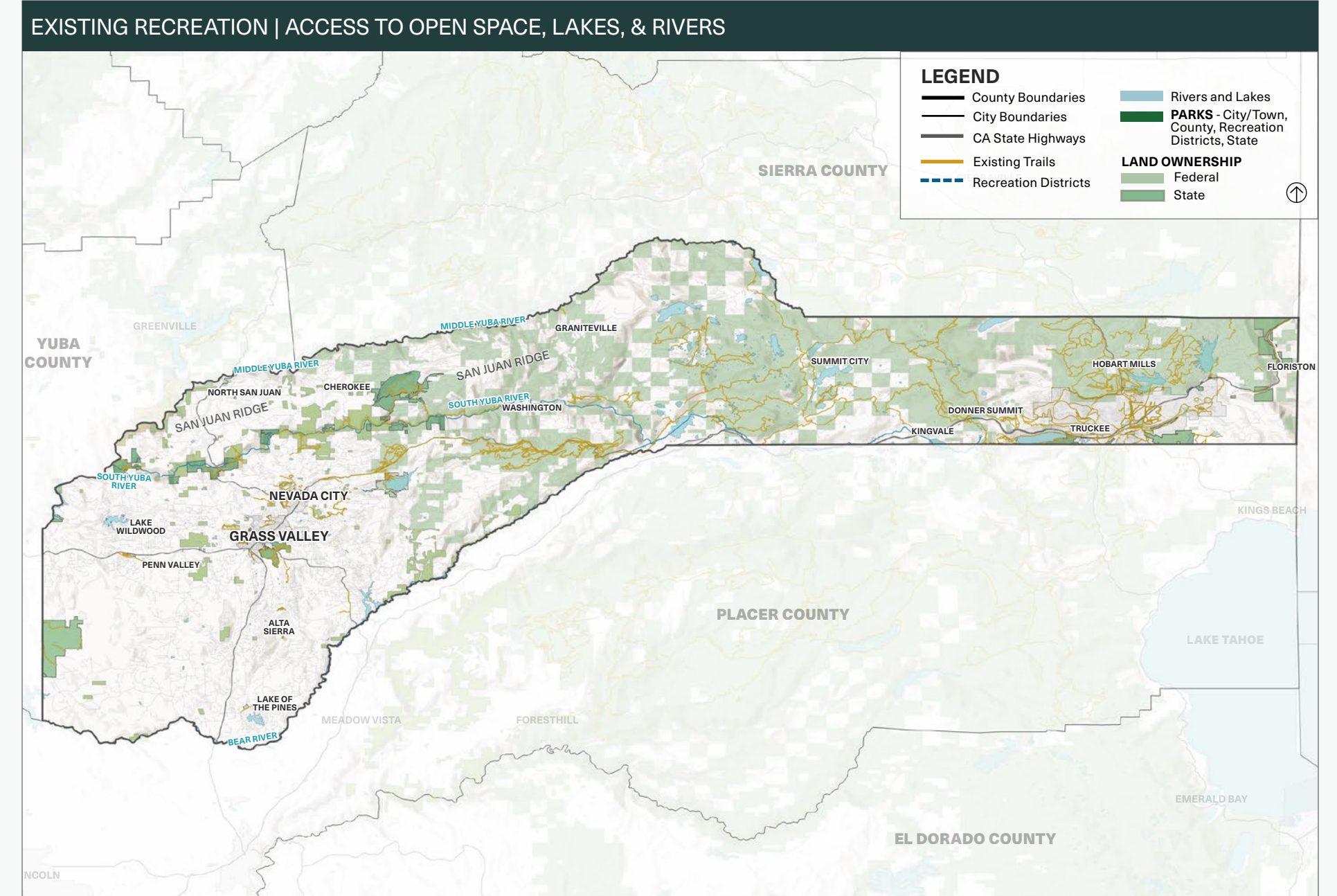


South Yuba River



Scotts Flat Reservoir

Recreation System Overview



Recreation System Overview

Trails

Nevada County's system of trails are a mixture of hard and soft surface facilities. Community planning efforts at the regional and local scale seek to connect destinations with off-road infrastructure. As such, trails provide both utilitarian and recreational purposes.

Existing trails are owned and maintained by a multitude of agencies and organizations including the County of Nevada, California State Parks, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, Town of Truckee, Bear Yuba Land Trust, Bicyclists of Nevada County, Gold Country Trails Council, Tahoe Pyramid Trail, Truckee Donner Land

Trust, and Truckee Trails Foundation. Some of the most popular trails include the historic Independence Trail, founded by Naturalist John Olmsted as the first wheelchair accessible wilderness trail in the country, Empire Mine State Park's trails, and Donner Summit Canyon trails.

The 2018 Nexus Study estimates 217 linear miles of maintained trails within western Nevada County. The existing linear miles of maintained trails was obtained by totaling the length of trail segments provided in the County of Nevada Trails GIS shapefile provided on its Open Data platform. The data reflects input from a variety of sources, including the Tahoe National Forest and

Grass Valley. This estimate includes maintained and accessible trails on state and federal property.

Within eastern Nevada County, Tahoe Donner Association currently consists of more than 60 miles of multi-use trails. The 2015 Truckee Trails and Bikeways Master Plan documents 101 miles of existing paved and dirt trails with an additional 67 miles proposed to provide connectivity and recreation opportunities. Trails are also located on federal and state lands as well as provided by area land trusts and resort operators.

A more detailed summary of the existing and planned trail system is provided in Chapter 6.



Tahoe National Forest

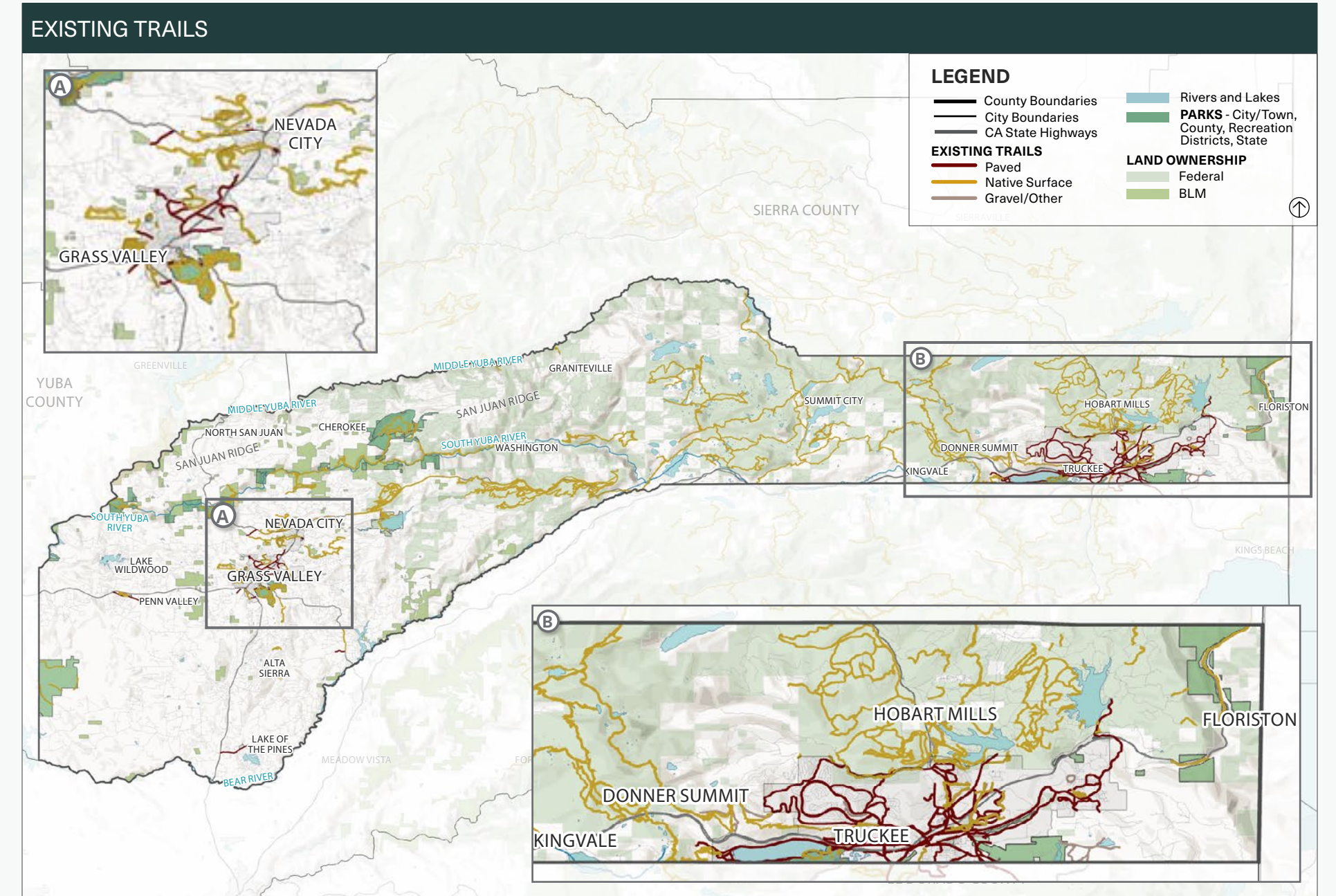


Pacific Crest Trail marker



Trails benefit a variety of user groups

Recreation System Overview



Recreation System Overview

Arts & Culture

The arts and culture scene is alive and vibrant in Nevada County. Visitors are drawn to the area through thousands of community-led events, annual festivals, street fairs, art walks, concerts and studio tours. A connected and thriving community of artists, musicians, makers, and creators contributes to the overall quality of life and creative spirit Nevada County is known for. The Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study (Americans for the Arts, 2024) provides evidence that the nonprofit arts and culture sector is

a significant industry in Nevada County. It generates an estimated \$66M in total economic activity, supports 1,359 jobs and generates \$13.2 million in local, state, and federal government revenue (2022).

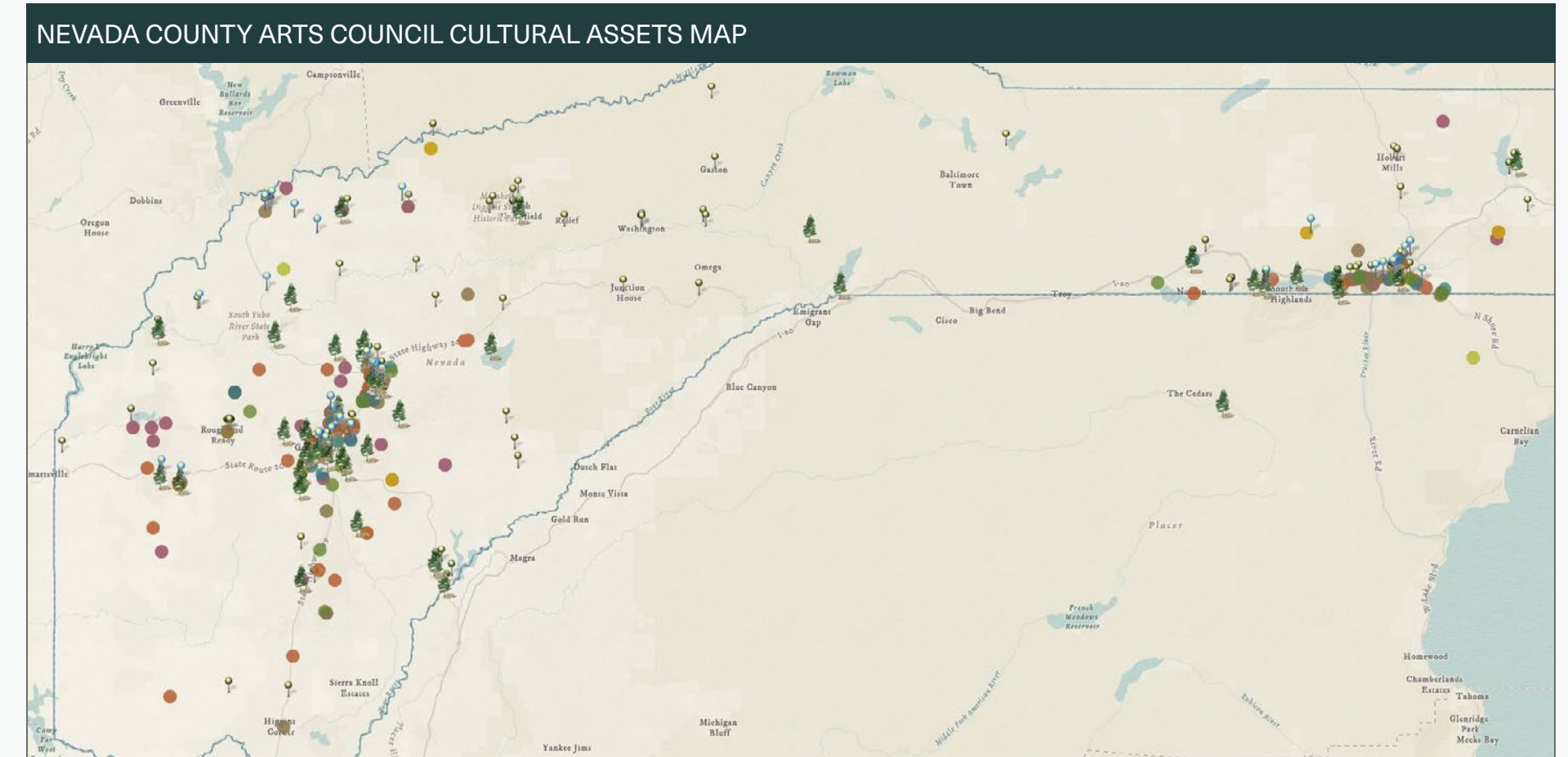
Just as access to nature and the outdoors has been shown to have positive economic and community wellness benefits, arts and culture have been shown to strengthen the economy and improve individual well-being. Nevada County Arts Council (NCAC) lists the following 10 economic and community benefits from the arts:

- Arts unify communities
- Arts improve individual well-being
- Arts strengthen the economy
- Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses
- Arts improve academic performance
- Arts spark creativity and innovation
- Arts have social impact
- Arts improve healthcare
- Arts enhance the health and well-being of our military
- Arts strengthen mental health



Flyer for Art in Public Places Program | “A Thousand Cranes” exhibit
Image Credit: Nevada County Arts Council

Recreation System Overview



Source: Nevada County Arts Council

LEGEND

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Public Art | Historic Landmarks |
| Walks and Trails | Fairs and Festivals |
| Preservation and Cultural Organizations | Arts Organizations |
| Galleries, Studios, Museums | Performance Spaces |
| Artisan Places to Eat, Drink and Stay | |
| Cultural Resources and Media | |



Movies Under the Pines
Image Credit: Kial James

Recreation System Overview

Throughout the planning process and stakeholder conversations, arts and culture were commonly mentioned as being the county's greatest strengths. The celebration of culture stretches across different communities and landscapes. Like all of California, the land within Nevada County is considered tribal ancestral home for many indigenous communities. Some of the tribal communities that hold space here today recognize Nevada County as having ancestral significance and consider the land as their home including the Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria, Tsi Akim Maidu Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. The relationship between their peoples and the land is enduring. Plan recommendations include preserving and ensuring the continuance of their culture in Nevada County.

Reflecting on tribal values can help inform methods to protect and restore the land, build an ethic of stewardship for the land, and support indigenous peoples to preserve and continue their traditions for generations to come.

Nevada County is unique in California as the only rural county home to two state-designated California Cultural Districts – the Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District and the Truckee Cultural District. From a historic and cultural preservation standpoint, approximately eight percent of Nevada



Grass Valley StoryWalk "May Your Life Be Deliciosa"

County has been surveyed for archeological artifacts, yielding the recording of approximately 1,490 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites (Nevada County General Plan Cultural Resources Chapter, 1995). Efforts to encourage the inventory, protection, and interpretation of the cultural heritage of Nevada County is strong, supported by efforts from the Nevada County, California State Parks, and many planning partners.

Nevada County's history of gold mining, mineral extraction, and agriculture; its varied environmental zones and geological characteristics; and the geographical position of Nevada County contribute to a cultural setting that is rich and diverse.

An "Art in Public Places" program has been established as a partnership between Nevada County and the Nevada County Arts Council (NCAC). As described by NCAC, the "program is about providing a thoughtful space of belonging for all residents of Nevada County, expressing community values, heightening our awareness, and helping us question our assumptions. Art in Public Spaces acknowledges both our California Cultural Districts, and communities that populate our diverse landscapes. It is for everyone, a form of collective community expression, reflecting our society and opening our civic spaces."

Recreation System Overview

Truckee has a Public Art Master Plan that was adopted in 2019 and a Public Art Commission that was established in 2020 that identifies priority projects, funding needs, and maintenance. Since the time of their formation, examples of the commission's work includes developing a donation/gifting policy, inventorying public art, identifying a list of opportunity sites for art installations, and guiding the development of the Brockway Road Wall Art Project.

Examples of public art in Truckee include interior and exterior temporary and permanent installations. Located in both

more urban settings and in open spaces and along trails, public art as defined in the plan, includes any media such as sculptures, paintings, murals, live performances, or performing art, drawings, and photographs. The artworks express the Town's character and enrich the community.

NCAC's cultural asset map represents the first step toward developing a Cultural Plan for the county and inspires residents and visitors to connect with the outdoors through a cultural lens. An example of investment in the arts is the new performing arts center being developed by InConcert Sierra. These

programs, and others, can be leveraged and expanded throughout the county.

Opportunities to elevate the integration of arts and culture into outdoor spaces and recreation programming brings deeper connection to place and people. It can also build an ethic of stewardship and respect for the places people are recreating. Past and present stories can be communicated about the diverse populations and experiences that have shaped Nevada County. The current programs in the county can continue to be expanded into outdoor recreation areas, such as community parks, trails, and open spaces.



Mural in Truckee



Mekdela Maskal, Prayer Flags, Celebration of Trails 2023, Art in Nature Installations
Image Credit: Kate Gazzo BYLT

Nevada County at a Glance



Mill Street, Grass Valley

Nevada County at a Glance

Nevada County is a rural county located in the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountain range in Northern California. With 101,242 residents (California Department of Finance 2022 population estimates), the county sits at the Nevada state line and lies north of Placer County and Lake Tahoe. Sierra County and Yuba County are located to the north and northwest, respectively. Within the county's 958 square miles, it is the county's diversity of landscapes, people, and culture that create

what is referred to as the "spirit" of Nevada County – it is that invigorating and tenacious spirit that helps to make Nevada County a special place to live, work, and play.

Diversity of Landscapes

As a whole, the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains exist within the Sierra-Cascade, California's primary watershed, which accounts for 60 percent of California's animal species, 75 percent of California's drinking water supply, and 50 million recreation visit-days per year (Sierra Nevada Conservancy,

2024). Nevada County exemplifies the overall region's depth of diversity and critical importance to the state's ecological well-being.

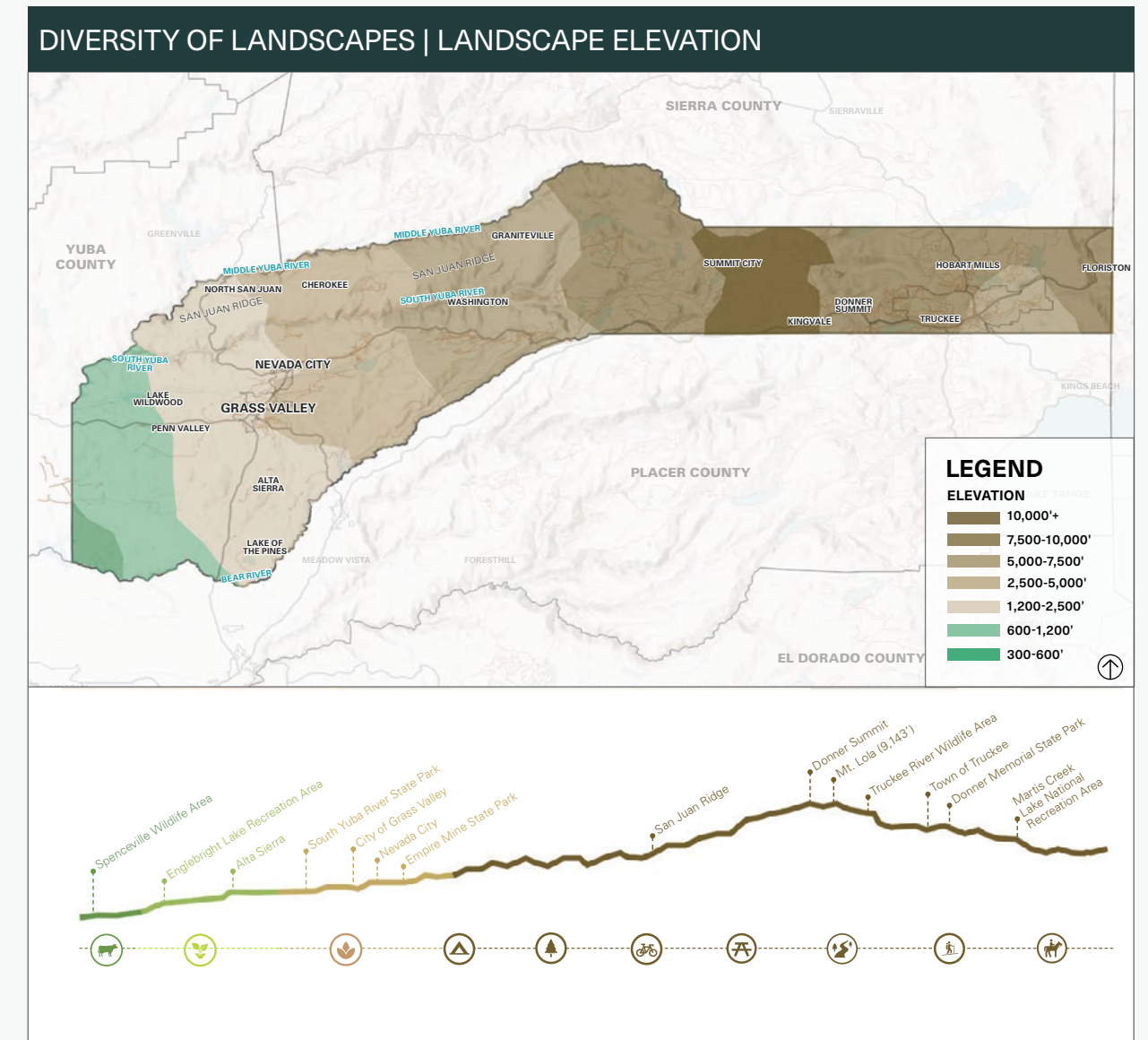
The diversity of landscapes in Nevada County are largely influenced by the geologic substructure of the county and can be categorized into three broad groups: the rolling blue oak woodlands of the "Western Foothills," the "Central" forested, upper mountainous area, and "Eastern" Nevada County in the high Sierra mountains. The elevation of Nevada County climbs from

the Sacramento Valley at 300 feet to Mount Lola's 9,143 foot peak north of Donner and Truckee.

Agricultural resources of timber and soils support an abundant supply of orchards, grazing, vineyards, and cannabis. Mineral resources, such as lode gold, placer gold, chromite, barite, sand, and gravel attracted settlers to the area in the 1800s. Some mines are active today. Others present new opportunities for restoration, economic diversification, and recreation.

Land & Water

Nevada County has a significant amount of land in public ownership, including four state parks and federal recreation areas. Parks, open spaces, and recreation areas are managed by public agencies, cities, towns, land trusts, public utilities, and special districts (including four recreation and park districts). The county is home to many recreational lakes and waters originating and conveyed from the headwaters of Bear, Yuba and Truckee Rivers. The Yuba and Bear Rivers have been developed for irrigation and power and the county hosts many lakes and reservoirs. The snow and water from the mountains, rivers, and streams provide significant recreational resources for winter and summer activities.



Nevada County at a Glance

Our People

The people of Nevada County are one of its greatest resources. Volunteerism is the backbone of the recreation system and residents exhibit a strong appreciation for the outdoors. Due to the vastness and diversity of landscapes, each rural community also has its own unique character and sense of identity.

As Nevada County analyzes their current population and anticipated growth, it is important to understand characteristics of the community and expected changes to ensure an equitable recreation system serves all members of a community. Using this information, Nevada County and its partners can work to analyze their current services and understand where to allocate specific resources to better serve the Community, Cities, Towns, & Census Designated Places.

Residents of outlying communities may travel up to 30 minutes to reach “town.” This rural character means that driving is often required in order to access parks, facilities, and services that offer organized sports activities, creating a barrier to participation for a range of ages and user groups.

The largest population centers in Nevada County are in the incorporated cities and towns of Nevada City, Grass Valley, and Truckee.

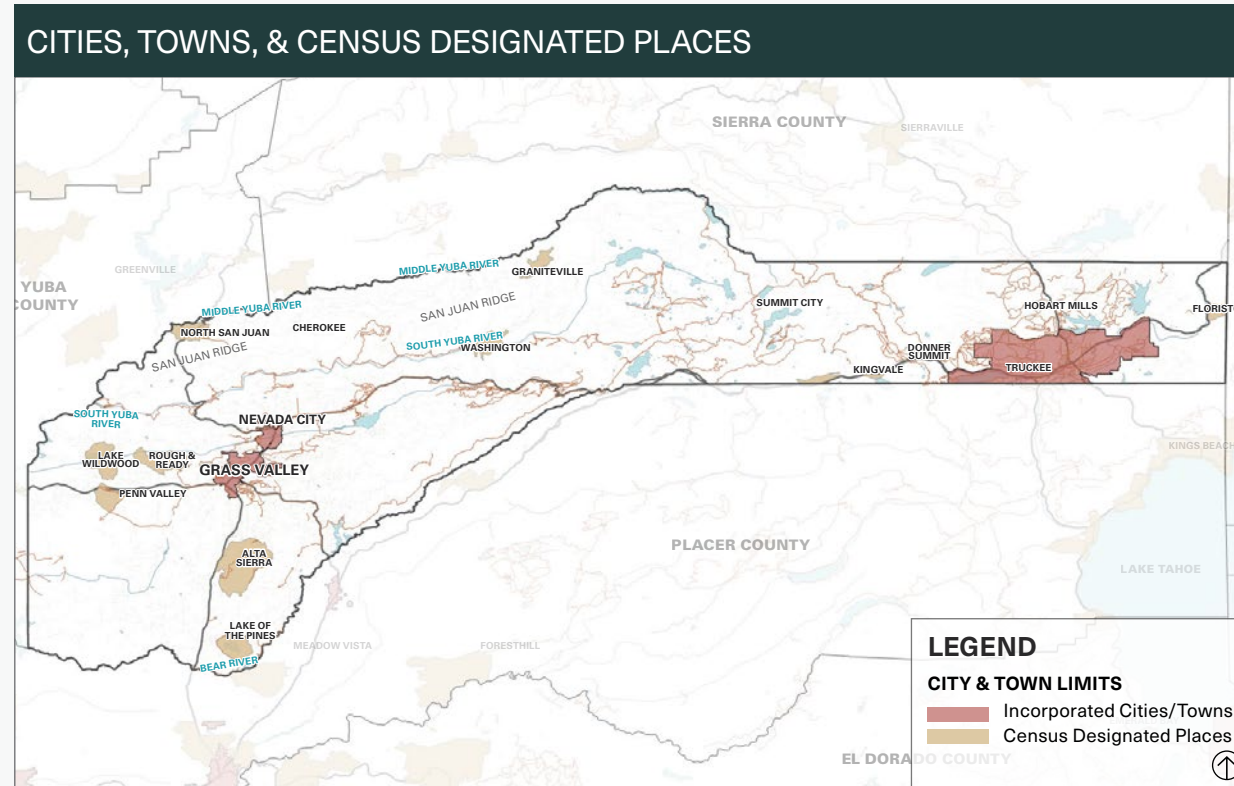


Table 1: Demographic & Economic Profile for Nevada County and Cities in Nevada County

| Demographic & Economic Profile | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| | Nevada County | Truckee | Grass Valley | Nevada City |
| Median Household Income | \$60,610 | \$89,154 | \$35,157 | \$43,614 |
| Poverty Rate | 12.1% | 6.9% | 26.3% | 22.4% |

Nevada County at a Glance

According to the California Department of Finance (DoF) population projections, 101,242 people resided in Nevada County in 2022. Thirty-four percent of the population is found in its three incorporated cities and town. The remaining 66 percent lies in the unincorporated areas of the county. Between 2021 and 2022 the county saw a decline in growth of 0.7 percent. This decline is higher than the 0.3 percent population dip experienced statewide, and is an increase from the 0.3 percent decline seen in Nevada County between 2020 and 2021. However, it is an increase over 2010 estimates of 98,764.

The unincorporated portions of Nevada County contain 11 census-designated places (CDP). These are locations that have a concentration of population as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and are used for organization and statistical purposes. Residents also live outside of the 11 CDPs and three cities/towns.

In the next 20 years, although the overall Sierra Nevada mega-region (the 27-county area extending from Northern California to Nevada) will see population growth, some communities will see a steady or slight decline in population due to the high percentage of residents over 65, economic loss in industries related to mining, logging, and timber and the lack of affordable housing due to fire insurance rates and real estate inflation. Other towns are anticipated to grow.

Table 2: Nevada County Community Populations

| Community Populations | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| City, Town, or Census Designated Place | Estimated 2022 Population ¹ | Estimated 2020 Population (DoF) | Estimated 2010 Population (DoF) | Estimated Future Annual Growth Rate ² |
| Lake Wildwood | 5,198 | 5,158 | 4,991 | 0.48% |
| Penn Valley | 1,579 | 1,593 | 1,621 | 0.00% |
| Rough & Ready | 919 | 905 | 933 | 0.67% |
| North San Juan | 243 | 245 | 243 | 0.08% |
| Grass Valley (City) | 13,617 | 13,670 | 13,617 | 0.18% |
| Nevada City (City) | 3,334 | 3,386 | 3,349 | 0.01% |
| Alta Sierra | 7,150 | 7,204 | 6,917 | 0.06% |
| Lake of the Pines | 4,334 | 4,301 | 4,483 | 0.31% |
| Washington | 99 | 101 | 95 | -0.20% |
| Graniteville | 14 | 14 | 14 | 0.00% |
| Kingvale | 126 | 128 | 120 | -0.32% |
| Soda Springs | 92 | 94 | 88 | -0.22% |
| Truckee (Town) | 17,100 | 17,035 | 16,776 | 0.01% |
| Floriston | 79 | 80 | 75 | 0.06% |

Notes:

¹ Population estimates for incorporated cities and town are from California Department of Finance

² Projected population growth rate from Esri Business Analyst Jan. 2023 data compiled from U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography

Population numbers are acquired from different data sets, utilized for comparison only, and do not include residents living outside of the above places

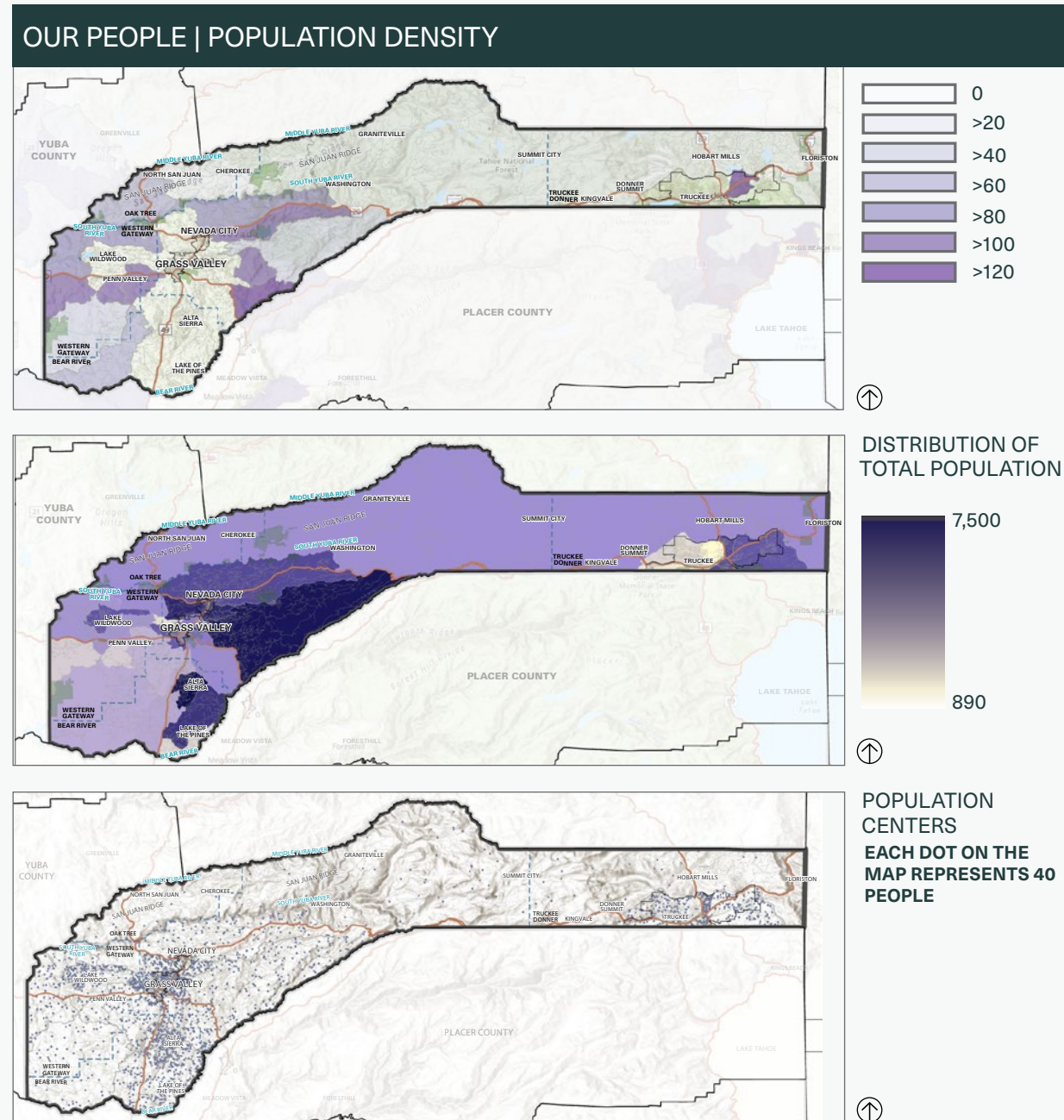
Nevada County at a Glance

Community Profiles

Nevada County's communities have both similarities and significant differences. Truckee's median age is significantly lower than the rest of the county and its median household income is significantly higher. Several communities have a high percentage of vacant homes which are also primarily used for seasonal ownership. Graniteville, Kingvale, Soda Springs, Truckee, Washington, and Floriston are examples. Penn Valley, Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Graniteville have the lowest median incomes. Overall, the county's median income is lower than the statewide average.

As a rural county, the population is dispersed across its landscape. With the central portion of the county primarily comprised of federal lands and the Tahoe National Forest, residents live primarily either in the western or eastern portions of the county. The highest concentration of residents are typically located around the three incorporated cities/town with other areas of concentrated populations in Lake Wildwood, Penn Valley, Alta Sierra, Lake of the Pines, and Cascade Shores.

According to the County's 2016 Community Health Assessment, residents of outlying communities may travel up to 30 minutes to reach "town." This can be difficult for a variety of reasons, including lack of a personal vehicle, absence or limited



Nevada County at a Glance

public transportation, and dark, narrow mountain roads which can be challenging for inexperienced drivers. Although the county is replete with natural open space, its rural character means that services and parks that offer organized sports activities require driving instead of walking or biking to a neighborhood playground, field, or sports court.

Recreation systems contribute to a sense of well-being, more developed social connections, and offer equitable enjoyment of the outdoors to people from all socio-economic backgrounds. The extent to which recreation infrastructure, programming, and access to open spaces engages all people is an important trait of a resilient park system. People from all backgrounds, regardless of race, color, national origin, language, religion, physical ability, or income must have access and feel welcome.

Reviewing demographic characteristics helps Nevada County and its partners remove barriers so all people have equal access to parks and recreation opportunities. These groups are intersectional, meaning they are not mutually exclusive, and individuals can belong to some or all of these groups.

Table 3: Nevada County Community Profiles

| Community Profiles | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|---|
| City, Town, or Census Designated Place | Median Household Income | Median Age | Average Household Size | Percent Vacant Homes & Percent Vacant is Seasonal Owned |
| Lake Wildwood | \$75,622 | 59.9 | 2.27 | 15% 0% |
| Penn Valley | \$41,324 | 45.9 | 2.52 | 16% 0% |
| Rough & Ready | \$72,475 | 53.7 | 2.26 | 28% 48% |
| North San Juan | \$76,843 | 50.2 | 2.00 | 23% 100% |
| Grass Valley (City) | \$41,890 | 47.5 | 2.03 | 9% 33% |
| Nevada City (City) | \$49,162 | 50.7 | 2.00 | 10% 34% |
| Alta Sierra | \$84,657 | 53.4 | 2.45 | 6% 29% |
| Lake of the Pines | \$88,645 | 54.3 | 2.37 | 11% 64% |
| Washington | \$81,289 | 45.7 | 1.79 | 45% 100% |
| Graniteville | \$39,681 | 48.43 | 1.48 | 86% 100% |
| Kingvale | \$80,198 | 46.7 | 1.82 | 84% 100% |
| Soda Springs | \$77,513 | 45.4 | 2.05 | 87% 100% |
| Truckee (Town) | \$110,300 | 39.7 | 2.55 | 56% 96% |
| Floriston | \$75,000 | 46.0 | 2.14 | 56% 100% |
| Nevada County | \$76,173 | 50.9 | 2.34 | 24% 80% |
| California | \$88,930 | 37.7 | 2.86 | 7.8% 34% |

Notes:

Projected population growth rate from Esri Business Analyst Jan. 2023 data compiled from U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography

Percent vacant homes: First number shows percent of homes vacant. Second number indicates the percent of vacant homes that are for seasonal use.

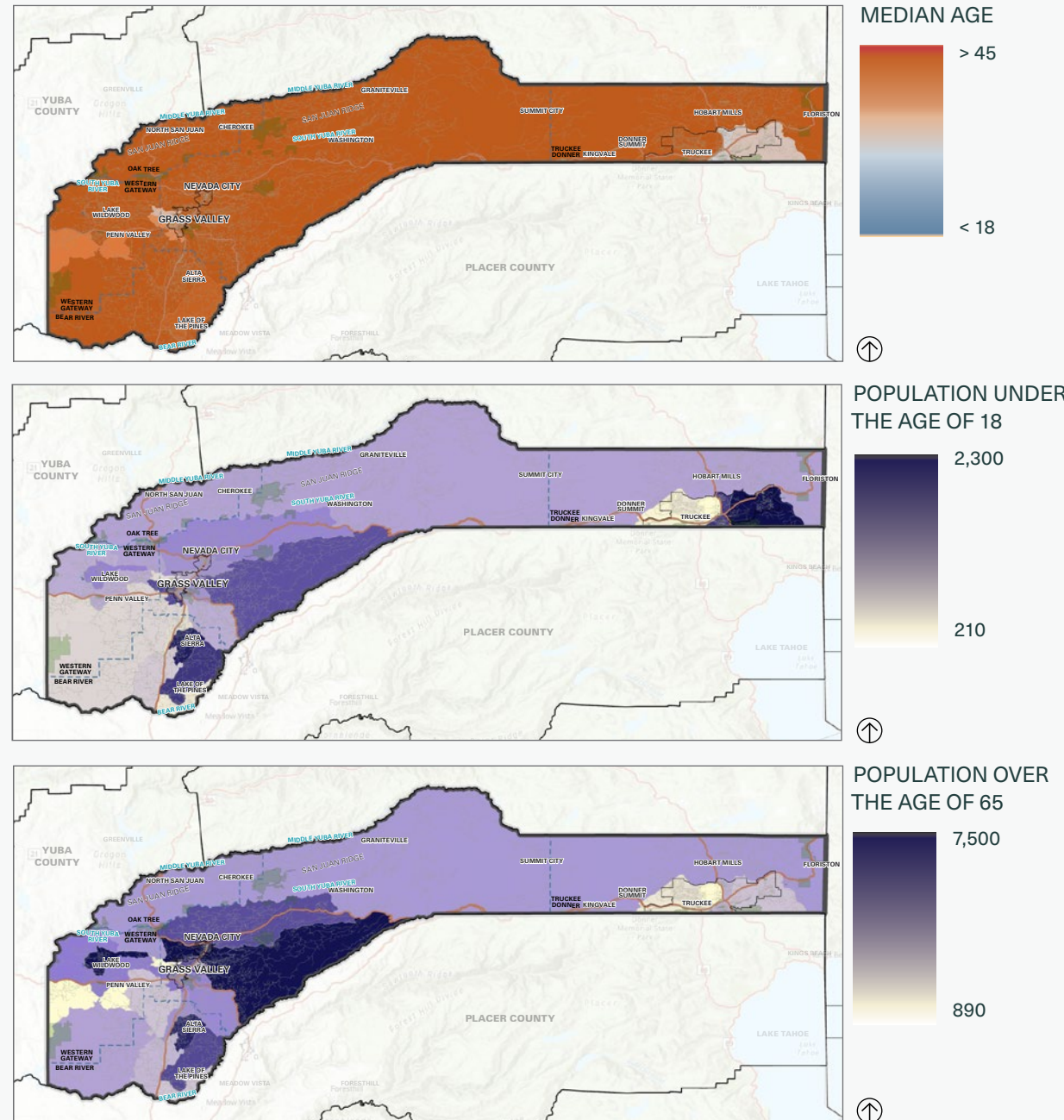
Nevada County at a Glance

Older Adults

A disproportionately high percentage of the population is over age 65. In Nevada County 28.5 percent of residents are over 65, whereas the State of California is 5.2 percent. In general, the median age of county residents is higher than the statewide average by 13 years. Trends show continued growth in the percent of residents 65 and older. Portions of the county do have more families with children under the age of 18. Truckee and Lake of the Pines are two examples. Penn Valley and the census tract between and around Grass Valley and Nevada City have the highest volume of residents over the age of 65.

When it comes to parks and recreation planning, it is important that amenities and programs are designed to accommodate individuals of all abilities and include recreation geared toward an aging population. It should also be recognized that older community members have high rates of volunteerism and share their knowledge and expertise to better their communities.

28.5%
of residents
are over 65

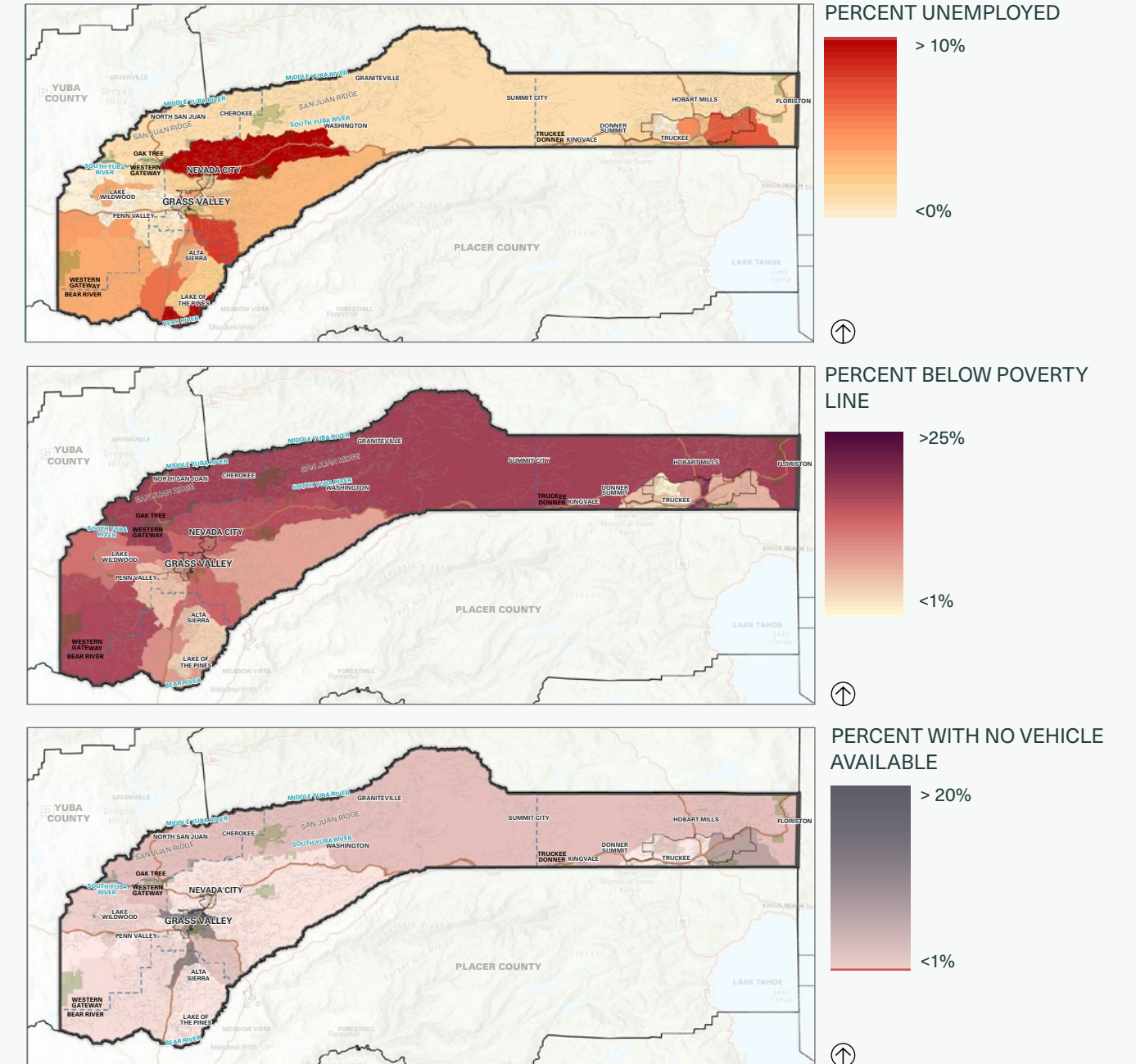


Nevada County at a Glance

Low-income Populations

Median income and poverty rates are both indicators for the county's economic vitality and residents' ability to afford basic needs. The median income in Nevada County is \$76,173, lower than the statewide median income of \$88,930. The poverty rate is 12.1 percent, slightly below the statewide average of 12.3 percent. However, it is important to note that the median income and poverty rates of Nevada County varies significantly throughout the county. Truckee has a significantly lower percent of population living below poverty when compared to the rest of the county. The communities with the highest population living in poverty exist in the rural and unincorporated communities throughout the county.

550 people per year are expected to access housing services while experiencing homelessness



Nevada County at a Glance

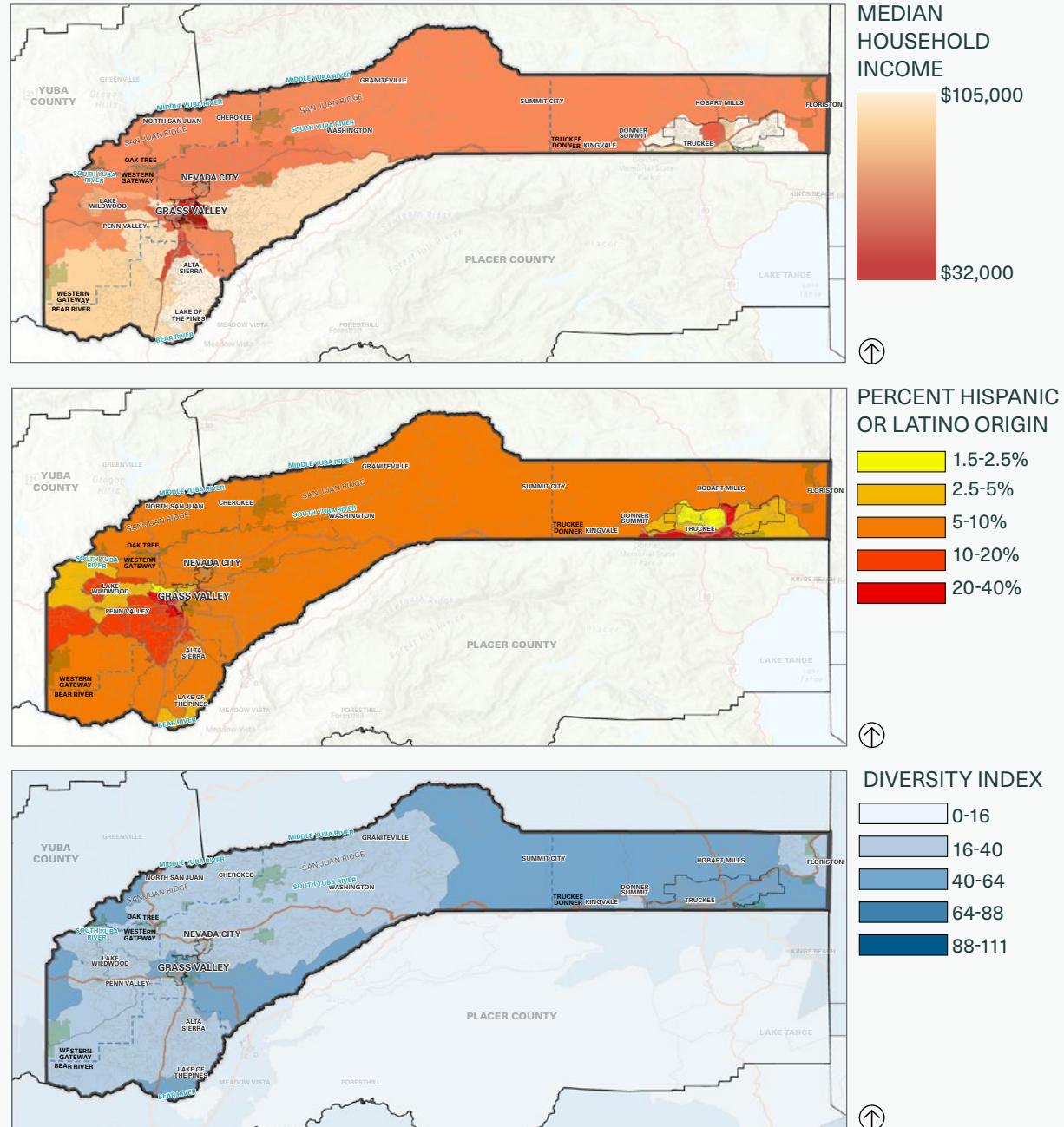
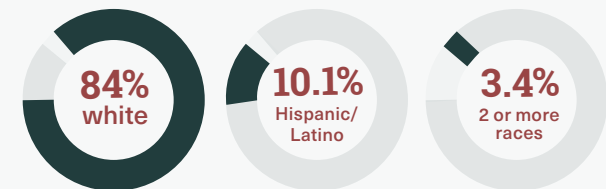
Ethnic Populations

Overall, Nevada County is less racially diverse than California. The majority (84 percent) of the population is white, with 10.1 percent estimated to be of Hispanic or Latino origin.

Diversity Index describes the likelihood that two people chosen at random within a given area belong to different race or ethnic groups. The highest diversity is mapped to be in the eastern portion of the county, with other pockets in and around Grass Valley and at the borders of Yuba County and Placer County. These areas also have a higher percentage of people that are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

People with Disabilities

According to a report by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (2015), 14.2 percent of Nevada County's population had a disability. Disability status among residents in Nevada County is much higher than the state average of just 10.2 percent, perhaps correlating with the county's higher-than-average elderly population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that almost half of adults with disabilities get no aerobic physical activity. Together these two factors emphasize the need



Nevada County and Continuum of Care Joint Homeless Action Plan (2022), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) (2023-2027)

for accessibility of outdoor spaces and specialized programming.

Lack of High-speed Internet Access

Nevada County's goal is to become a digital leader in broadband and telecommunications connectivity through prioritizing inclusive connectivity for all residents and future-proofing infrastructure to ensure reliable broadband at the highest feasible speed. Access to high-speed internet is particularly difficult for rural areas in Nevada County. These areas are not only a spot growing in population size, but are also home to many of the outdoor recreation opportunities across the county. This is particularly important as access to high-speed internet is essential for emergency response. Lack of access in remote recreation areas also impacts the ability for recreation providers to provide messaging related to recreation stewardship throughout the county.

Nevada County was allotted \$75 million from California's SB-156 allocation for deploying last-mile infrastructure by internet service providers through a competitive grant application process. As Nevada County continues to evaluate its broadband needs and opportunities, it is important to include parks and recreation facilities as sites in need of technological investment.

Regional Growth

The greater Nevada County region provides for a desirable way of life, including an

abundance of recreation for an active lifestyle which has attracted new members to the community. According to the Nevada County General Plan, the unincorporated areas of Nevada County are yielding the largest growth in population throughout the county.

The Sierra Economic Development District (SEDD) is comprised of five counties: El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, and Sierra. The 2023-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) projects that some Nevada County communities will see a slight decline in population due to the county's high density of an aging population and the high cost and low availability of housing relative to the median average household income.

However, when considering the anticipated population growth for the five county region, the region is projected to have a population increase of more than 30 percent in the next 20 years. While this growth is anticipated throughout the region, it will certainly impact Nevada County through increased visitation demands.

It should be noted that although a slight decline in the full-time population is expected in the coming years, the County of Nevada anticipates an increase in tourism throughout the county. This increased focus on a tourism-based economy will result in an increase to park and recreation use and will require necessary infrastructure and planning to accommodate this growth.



Strawberry Music Festival at the Nevada County Fairgrounds

Nevada County at a Glance

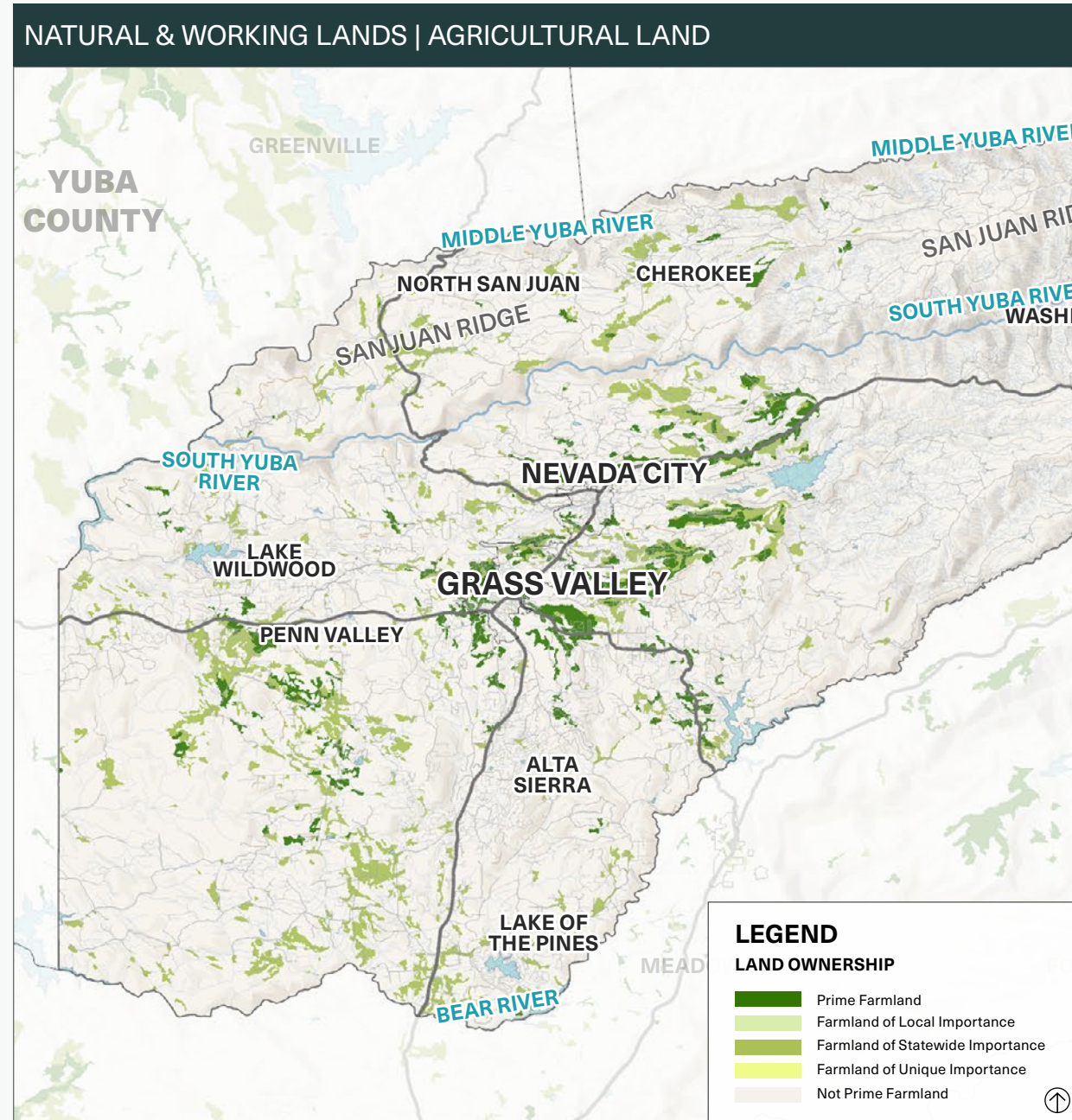
Natural & Working Lands

Agricultural resources of timber and soils support an abundance of farms, ranches, orchards, grazing, vineyards, cannabis, and logging. The map to the right shows the location of prime farmlands and farmlands of local, statewide, and unique importance as mapped by the National Cooperative Soil Survey Geographic Database.

Mineral resources, such as lode gold, placer gold, chromite, barite, sand, and gravel attracted settlers to the area in the 1800s. Some mines are active today. Others present new opportunities for restoration, economic diversification, and recreation.



Mountain Bounty Farm, Nevada City, CA



Nevada County at a Glance

Our History & Culture

Indigenous People

Like all of California, the land within Nevada County is considered tribal ancestral homeland for many across California and Nevada County, alike. Tribal communities that recognize Nevada County as holding ancestral significance and consider the land as their home include the Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria, Tsi Akim Maidu, and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.

Other tribal interests and cultural heritage are promoted and protected through regional tribal communities like the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) located south of Nevada County at the Auburn Rancheria. Cultural artifacts and oral history show that indigenous cultures go back thousands of years and remain an important cultural and social foundation in Nevada County today.

Cultural Heart of the Sierras

Nevada County is affectionately referred to as the “cultural heart of the Sierras” - a micropolitan area in a rural setting. Points of interest include the Independence Trail, Nevada City’s Chinese Monument honoring the Chinese community’s engagement in mining; and Truckee’s First Log Cabin to serve traffic over Donner Pass. Home to two of California’s 14 Cultural Districts, its arts and culture scene reflects the traditions, history,

Figure 10: The Cultural Heart of the Sierras

The Cultural Heart of the Sierras



Cultural Districts

- Two of 14 California Cultural Districts are located in Nevada County:
 - The Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District and the Truckee Cultural District
 - Districts highlight one-of-a-kind places throughout California that inspire residents and visitors alike

Arts & Culture

- Generates **\$66 million in total economic activity**
- Supports **1,359 jobs**
- Creates **\$13.2 million in local, state, and federal government revenue (2022)**

and stories of its indigenous people, pioneer and mining history, agriculture, recreation, and much more. The districts highlight thriving cultural diversity and unique artistic identities. These communities are noted



Health & Wellness

- **Robust and thriving food system** connects farms, schools, businesses, residents and tourists
- High concentration of **wellness or nature-based businesses, practices and activities** contribute to quality of life and sense of place

for catalyzing and inspiring art and culture through their numerous events, annual festivals, street fairs, art walks, and studio tours.

Partnerships and Collaborations

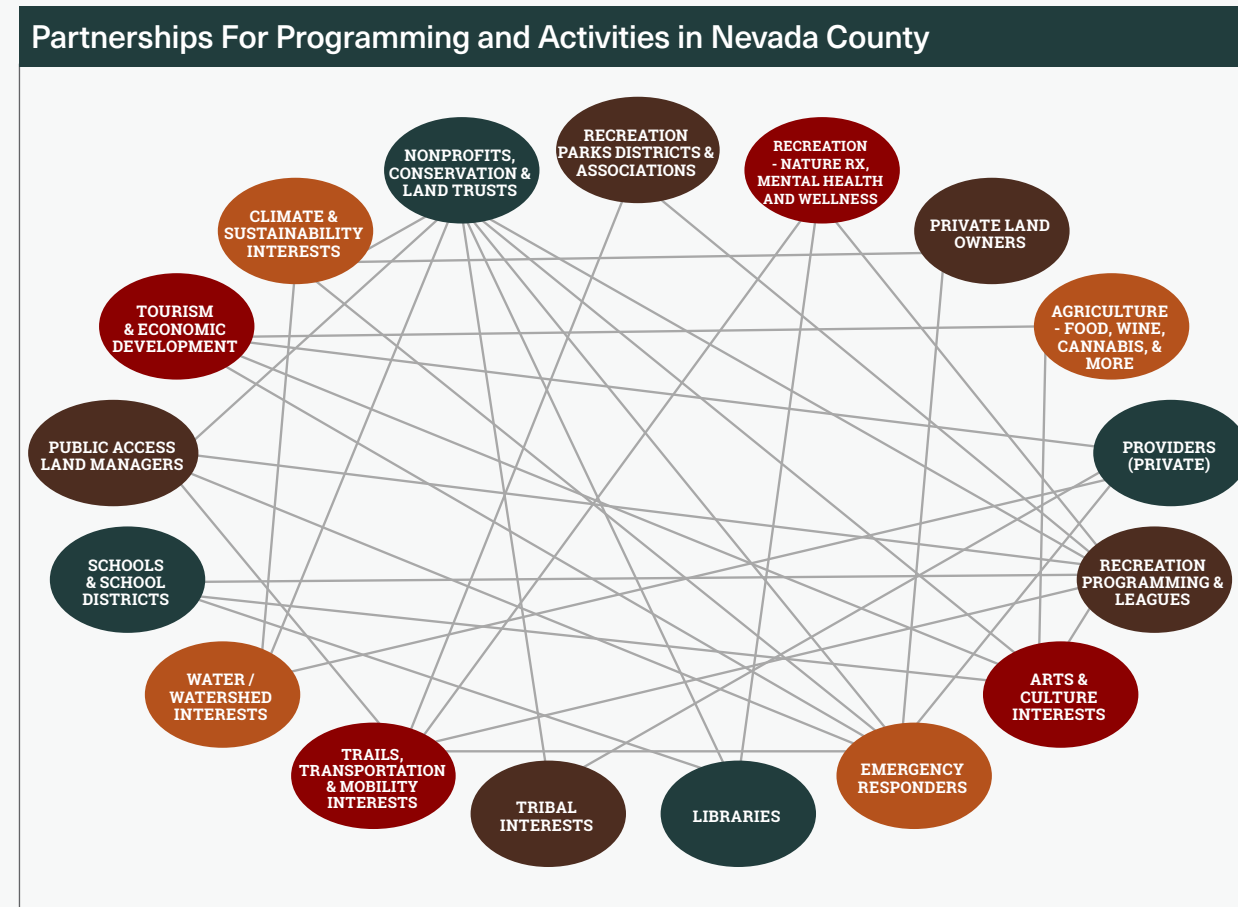
Partners Providing Recreation

The recreation system throughout Nevada County is provided through an ecosystem of federal, state, regional, and local partners and volunteers. These entities provide access to open space and natural resources, parks with organized sports, trails, and recreation programming to the greater community and those who visit.

The County of Nevada does not own, maintain, or operate parks and recreation facilities as an entity. Their role as a convener and facilitator of recreation partnerships leverages the power of organizations throughout the county to offer recreation opportunities specific to their community needs.

In December 2023, the County of Nevada was recognized by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) with its prestigious challenge award for leading collaborative solutions for visitor safety and outdoor recreation management. The County of Nevada has served as convener for the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort, first established by Board Supervisors, and has invested in a variety of solutions from call boxes to public safety campaigns. It also has a dedicated Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund which has provided nonprofits and others grant funding for programs and infrastructure

Figure 11: Partnership For Programming and Activities in Nevada County



investments at high-use and high risk destinations.

The award acknowledges the many community partners in Nevada County who are working together to advocate, share resources, coordinate messaging, and develop projects that address impacts to the

county's rivers, lakes, trails, and open spaces in order to improve safety and the outdoor experience for all to enjoy.

A more detailed description of the facilities provided by the recreation and park districts is provided in Chapter 4. A more detailed description of the facilities provided by

federal, state, and local recreation entities is provided in Chapter 5.

Recreation and Park Districts:

There are four Recreation and Park Districts in Nevada County that provide recreational facilities to the community. The districts (from west to east) are:

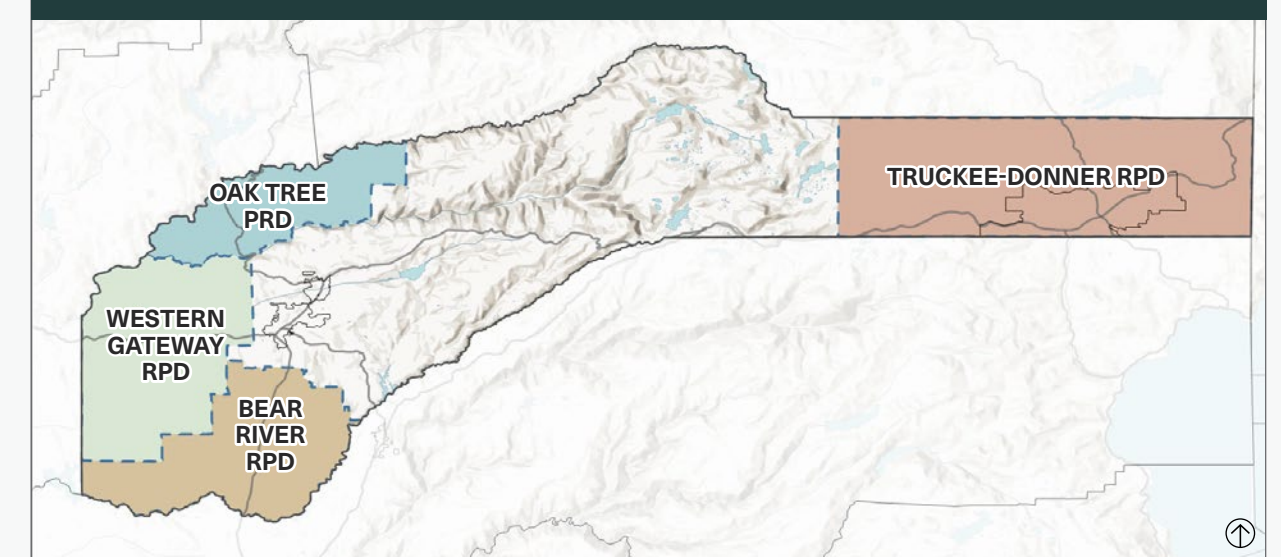
- Western Gateway Recreation & Park District
- Bear River Recreation & Park District
- Oak Tree Park & Recreation District
- Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District

These districts work in conjunction with local municipalities, federal and state governmental organizations, and nonprofit and private organizations to provide recreational opportunities including recreational programming, local parks, specialty parks, regional parks, and a small amount for campgrounds and beaches.

Schools

Public school facilities, including Sierra College, are important partners as recreation providers that create opportunities for access to recreation and sports facilities through joint-use agreements. While these facilities are unavailable during school hours, residents and sports leagues use some of these facilities after hours and on weekends. Relationships with Sierra College, school districts, and individual schools can advance efforts to provide a higher level of service.

RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICTS IN NEVADA COUNTY



Memorial Park, Grass Valley

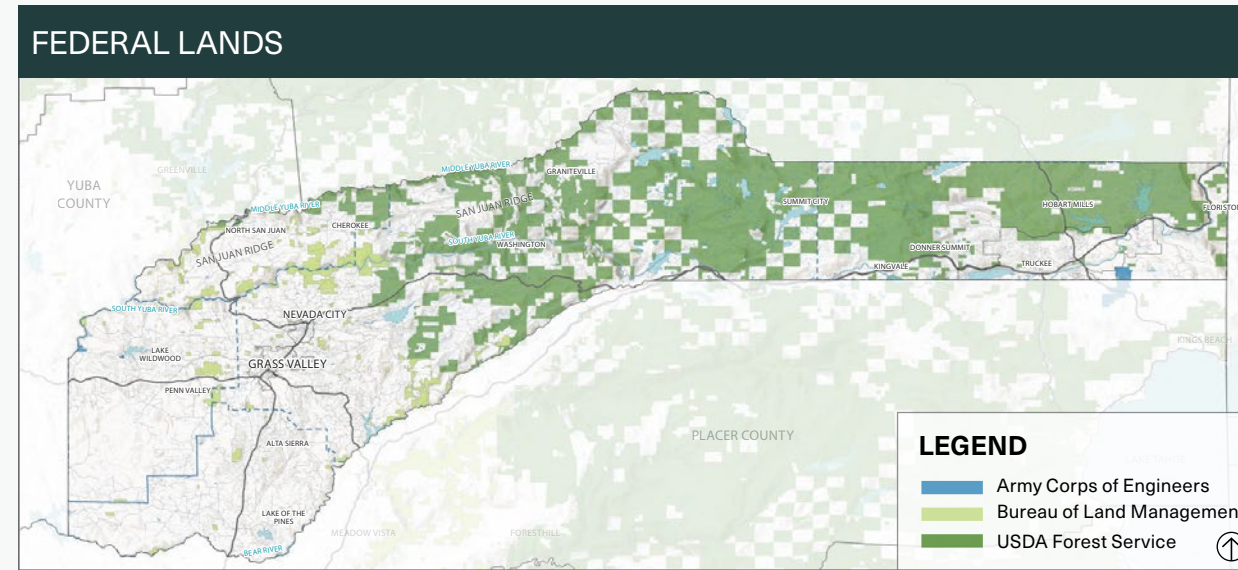
Partnerships and Collaborations

Additionally, opportunities exist to expand workforce development through career technical education.

Libraries

Public libraries are another form of essential community-based institutions that provide resources, programs, and educational opportunities related to recreation and parks throughout Nevada County. As the County explores potential ways to enhance parks and recreation services throughout the community, they may consider ways to partner with local libraries and associated “friends” groups. A list of public libraries throughout Nevada County are listed below:

- Bear River Library
- Doris Foley Library
- Grass Valley Library
- Madelyn Helling Library
- Penn Valley Library
- San Juan Ridge Community Library
- Sierra College-Nevada County Campus Library
- Sierra College Tahoe-Truckee Campus Library
- Truckee Library
- Friends of the Nevada County Library
- Friends of the Truckee Library
- Nevada County Library Foundation



Federal

Out of Nevada County’s 958 square miles, 314 of those are federally owned lands. Three federal agencies own and manage these lands as described below.

USDA Forest Service

USFS operates the Tahoe National Forest which covers approximately 265 square miles of land in Nevada County. While there are portions of contiguous National Forest lands, there are also areas where the ownership has a checkerboard pattern and is mixed with private lands. This is especially true west of Tahoe Donner and around Washington.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Bureau of Land Management’s patchwork of lands are primarily located in the western portion of the county. The South Yuba Wild & Scenic River Recreation Area stretches along portions of the South Yuba River and abuts State Parks and National Forest lands. Camping, river access, picnicking, fishing, cultural learning, and trails are examples of recreation offerings.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

USACE’s Sacramento District covers part of eight western states. In Nevada County, it offers boat-in camping and water play at Englebright Reservoir which is located on the border of Yuba County and Nevada County, west of Lake Wildwood. In the eastern part

Partnerships and Collaborations

of the county, Martis Creek Lake offers camping, kayak/canoeing, picnicking, fishing, swimming, hiking, and nature viewing. In the winter, facilities are closed, but cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are permitted. Winter parking space is limited.

State

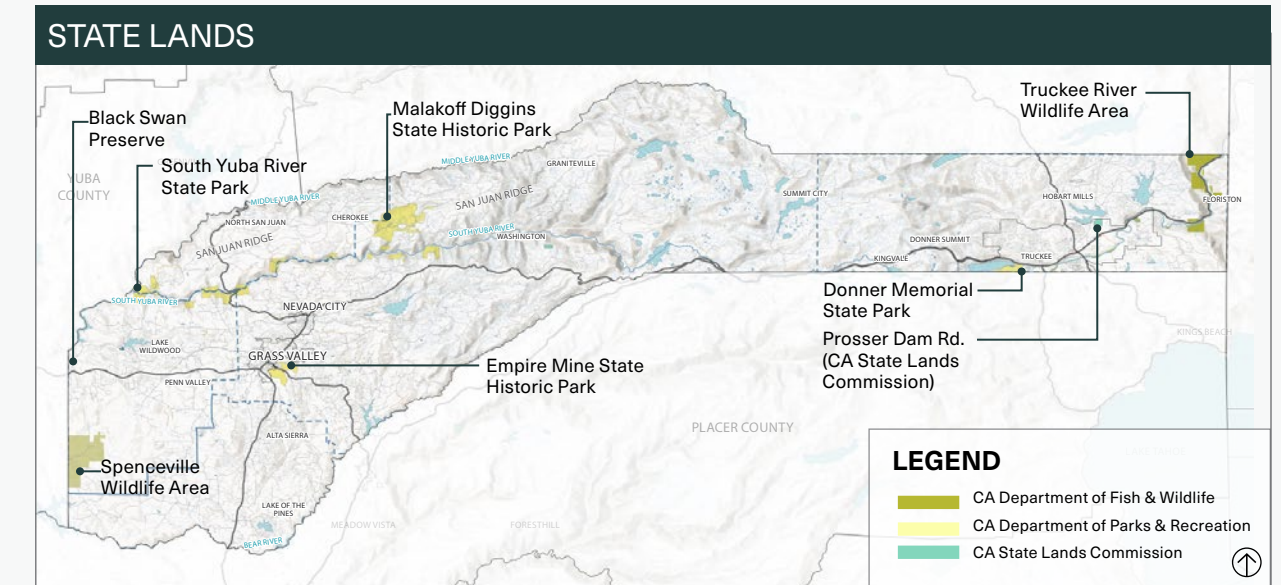
The State of California provides several facilities for residents’ recreational enjoyment. These facilities are often owned and operated by California state agencies and departments. The major state lands providers in the county include California State Parks and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. California State Lands Commission also owns land in the county.

California Department of Parks and Recreation (CSP)

State Parks owns and manages four state parks and recreation areas in the county:

- South Yuba River State Park
- Empire Mine State Historic Park
- Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park
- Donner Memorial State Park

The South Yuba River State Park follows 20 miles of the scenic river and provides access points for a variety of recreation activities.



California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

CDFW manages three recreation and conservation sites. The Spenceville Wildlife Area crosses between Nevada County and Yuba County, Black Swan Preserve is near the confluence of Deer Creek and the Lower Yuba River, and the Truckee River Wildlife Area is located on the opposite side of the county at the Nevada state line.

Utility Providers with Recreation Facilities

Water and utility providers such as the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) also play a role. They manage reservoirs in the foothills and Sierra Nevada Mountains and partner with nonprofits to offer recreational opportunities

such as hiking, camping, boating, fishing and swimming. NID works with organizations like the Bear Yuba Land Trust to help provide public access for trails, such as the trail along the NID Cascade Canal and the trail system surrounding Scotts Flat Reservoir. Recreation opportunities are located in the following locations:

- Rollins and Scotts Flat reservoirs (NID)
- Combie Reservoir (NID)
- Campgrounds in the Bowman Reservoir areas (NID)
- Jackson Meadows Reservoir (NID)
- Aspen, Faucherie, and Silvertip Group Campground (NID)
- Sterling Lake Campground (PG&E)
- Spaulding Reservoir Campground (PG&E)
- Bear Valley Campground (PG&E)

Partnerships and Collaborations

- Blue Lakes Dispersed Campground (PG&E)
- Rucker Lake Dispersed Campground (PG&E)
- Carr Feeley Lake Trailhead and Camping (PG&E)
- Lower Lindsey Lake Dispersed Campground (PG&E)
- Meadow Reservoir Campground (PG&E)

Land Trusts and Special Districts

Land trusts and entities like the Resource Conservation District conserve land and provide many public benefits like clean water, wildlife habitat, and trail and recreation connections. Examples of organizations operating in Nevada County include:

- Bear Yuba Land Trust
- Truckee-Donner Land Trust
- Trust for Public Land
- Nevada County Resource Conservation District

Additional Partners

Hundreds of organizations have provided input for this Plan as showcased on pages 80-81. The following list outlines additional stakeholders that actively contribute to recreation and resiliency. These organizations representing various interests can provide knowledge, resources, funding, and capacity that can contribute to Plan recommendations and future implementation.

Tribal Interests

- Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria
- Tsi Akim Maidu Tribe
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- United Auburn Indian Community – Auburn Rancheria
- Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- Colfax-Todds Valley Tribe

Collaboratives, Councils & Commissions

- Climate Transformation Alliance
- Convene, Champion, and Catalyze (CCC)
- Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship (DIPS)
- Donner Summit Association
- Nevada County Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative/Mobility Action Partners Coalition
- Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Nevada County Recreation Coalition
- Nevada County Transit Services Commission
- Nevada County Transportation Commission
- Nevada County Fish & Wildlife Commission
- Nevada County Historical Society
- Nevada County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
- Nevada County Wildfire Stakeholder Group
- Nevada County Youth Commission
- Penn Valley Area Municipal Advisory Council

- South County Area Municipal Advisory Council
- South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort
- Yuba Forest Network

Districts & Agencies

- California Highway Patrol (CHP)
- CAL FIRE – Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit
- Nevada County Consolidated Fire District
- Nevada County Resource Conservation District
- North San Juan Fire Protection District
- Town of Washington Fire Department
- Truckee Fire Protection District

Nonprofits & Service Organizations

- Bright Futures for Youth
- Center for Nonprofit Leadership
- Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
- Firewise Communities of Nevada County
- FREED
- Friends of Western Gateway Dog Park
- Gold Country Senior Services
- Nevada County Sheriff’s Office Search & Rescue (SAR)
- Nevada County Woods Riders
- Rotaries, Elks & Lions Clubs
- Sierra Gold Parks Foundation
- Sierra State Parks Foundation
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of Nevada County

Partnerships and Collaborations

Tourism & Economic Development

- Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Nevada City Chamber of Commerce
- Nevada County Airport
- Nevada County Association of Realtors
- Nevada County Contractors Association
- Nevada County Economic Resource Council
- Truckee Chamber of Commerce
- Truckee Downtown Merchants Association
- Visit Truckee-Tahoe

Agriculture, Agritourism & Cannabis

- Food Bank of Nevada County
- Interfaith Food Ministry
- Nevada County 4-H
- Nevada County Cannabis Alliance
- Nevada County Food Policy Council
- Nevada County Farm Bureau
- Sierra Harvest

Arts, Culture & Creativity

- Curious Forge
- In Concert Sierra
- Miners Foundry Cultural Center
- Music in the Mountains
- Nevada City Film Festival
- Nevada County Arts Council
- Nevada County Fairgrounds
- Nevada County Historical Society

- North Columbia Schoolhouse
- The Center for the Arts
- Wild & Scenic Film Festival (SYRCL)

Environmental

- Friends of the Bear River
- Gateway Mountain Center
- Mountain Area Preservation Foundation
- Sierra Avalanche Center
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Sierra Streams Institute
- South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)
- The Sierra Fund
- Trout Unlimited
- Truckee River Alliance
- Truckee River Watershed Council
- Wolf Creek Community Alliance
- Yuba Watershed Institute

Health & Wellness

- Alta California Regional Center
- Connecting Point
- Dignity Health
- Family Resource Centers (Penn Valley and San Juan Ridge)
- Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital and Foundation

Trails, Transportation & Mobility

- Bicyclists of Nevada County (BONC)
- Donner Party Mountain Runners

- Gold Country Trails Council
- Sierra Buttes Trails Stewardship
- Sierra Express Bicycle Club
- Sierra Trailblazers
- Tahoe-Pyramid Trail
- Truckee Bike Park
- Truckee Dirt Union
- Truckee Trails Foundation
- Youth Bicyclists of Nevada County

Recreation Affinity Groups, Clubs & Leagues

- American Whitewater
- Auburn Ski Club
- Swim Clubs
- Western Nevada County Recreation Services
- YMCA of Superior California
- Youth and Adult Sports Clubs & Leagues

Private Sector

Throughout Nevada County, private businesses contribute to recreation by selling gear or clothing or by providing educational resources, lodging, activities, or services. Additionally, resorts and lodging contribute transient occupancy taxes and a direct way to communicate with visitors. Homeowners Associations exist throughout Nevada County as recreational communities and provide a range of private amenities with large populations that still access public amenities in Nevada County.

Recreation & Resort Business Leaders

- Boreal Mountain Resort / Woodward-at-Tahoe
- Donner Ski Ranch
- Soda Springs Mountain Resort
- Sugar Bowl Resort

Homeowners Associations

- Alta Sierra (voluntary)
- Cascade Shores (voluntary)
- Glenshire
- Martis Camp
- Lahontan
- Lake of the Pines
- Lake Wildwood
- Tahoe Donner
- Serene Lakes
- Sierra Meadows



Tahoe Donner

2

FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT RECREATION

Intersection of Recreation & Resiliency

Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress)

Recreation & Resiliency in Nevada County

Nevada County is a place with incredible variety, both in its landscapes and living creatures who make it their home. From its base in the Sacramento Valley at an elevation of 300 feet to the 9,143-foot peak, Mount Lola, at the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Nevada County offers diverse recreational landscapes of foothills, mountains, and water. This varied natural environment also creates inherent risks to community.

Between 1950 and 2017, Nevada County issued 22 flood, wildland fire, severe cold, economic, or drought-related disaster and/or emergency declarations of sufficient magnitude to warrant declarations of a State of Emergency by the Governor of California. Over half of these declarations have progressed to a Presidential Disaster Declaration (Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2017). Today, CAL FIRE mapping indicates that almost all of Nevada County is considered to be in the “very high” category of wildland fire severity.

The Nevada County Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan seeks to comprehensively integrate resiliency adaptation measures as part of planning for parks, trails, open spaces, and cultural programming and offerings. The unprecedented increase in visitation that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic,



South Yuba River

coupled with the risk of catastrophic wildfire and drought due to changes in climate, threatens the county’s invaluable parks, open spaces, and trails. Inherent to this planning effort is identifying recreation investments that provide co-benefits of creating places for physical activity that serve as tools for community response in times of emergency.

What is Resiliency?

The capacity of any entity (a community, an organization, an individual, or a social or natural system) to maintain its essential function and identity while bouncing back from shocks and stresses or adapting and learning from a disruptive experience.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan (2019-2024)

Intersection of Recreation & Resiliency

Climate-related factors such as warming temperatures, increased drought, reduced snowpack, and widespread wildfires, are projected to change the recreation landscape. For Nevada County specifically, where most recreation occurs outside in natural settings, the risk of catastrophic wildfire with resultant smoke, potential flooding, landslides, trail erosion, and generally altered ecosystems pose substantial risk.

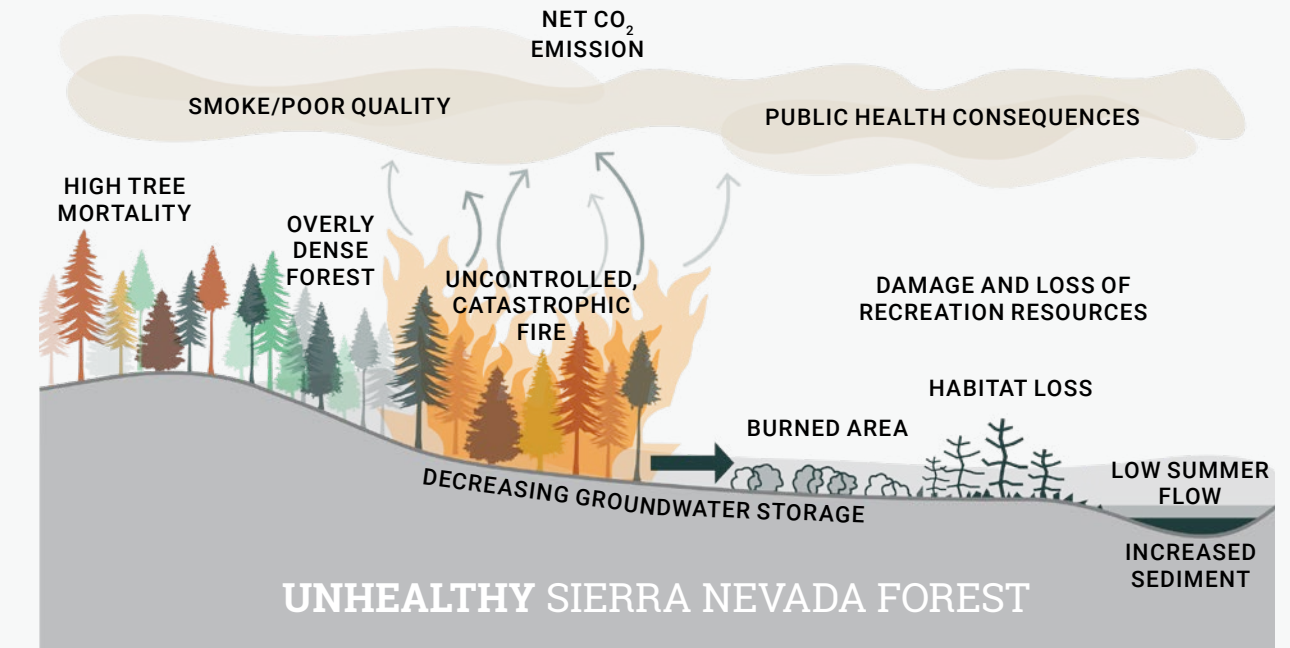
Identifying potential impacts and changes for both landscape systems and communities is a core part of recreation planning. The introduction of climate resiliency into a recreation system is therefore of critical importance.

Addressing potential changes and hazards as part of the recreation system creates opportunities to find solutions that promote community health, safety, economic development, environmental stewardship, and resilience.

Cascading Effects of Threats and Hazards

It is important to acknowledge that climate impacts have cascading effects. One impact is likely to influence one or more other hazards and/or impacts caused by hazards. For example, wildfires can set the stage for dangerous landslides from heavy rains

Figure 12: Unhealthy Sierra Nevada Forest



Graphic Derived From Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan

unlikely to trigger such an event otherwise. As depicted in the graphic above from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Strategic Plan, high tree mortality resulting from unhealthy, overgrown forests, drought, and subsequent insect epidemic leads to increased probability of catastrophic wildfires that create poor air quality and public health impacts.

The habitat loss and poor air quality from the wildfires decreases recreation and negatively impacts local economies where recreation is a key driver. Additionally, poor air quality

resulting from wildfires is more widespread than the immediate burn areas (SNC, 2019).

The effects of a changing climate have the potential to impact the frequency and severity of hazardous conditions.

System Threats & Opportunities

Threats Facing Nevada County

Threats and hazards that face Nevada County create risks and disruptions that are likely to impact future recreation use, access, safety, sustainability, and economic conditions.


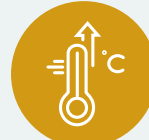






Many of the environmental threats facing the county are exacerbated by the effects of long-term shifts in weather patterns. These effects include, but are not limited to, changes in temperature and the quantity and distribution of precipitation. Impacts that are already being observed include increasing and more severe wildfires, increasing average temperatures, more extreme precipitation events, less precipitation falling as snow, and earlier snow runoff periods.

Human-related threats include unprecedented increases in recreation demand that was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of broadband connectivity, and high housing prices and insurance costs that make it increasingly difficult for community members to reside in Nevada County and for recreation organizations to find staff.



Bridgeport covered bridge crossing the South Yuba River

Figure 13: Threats Facing Nevada County

| Threats Facing Nevada County | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
|  WILDFIRE |  TEMPERATURE CHANGE |  HEAT WAVES |  PRECIPITATION |
|  EXTREME WEATHER |  UNSUSTAINABLE VISITATION |  RECREATION SITE COMMUNICATIONS |  HOUSING AVAILABILITY & AFFORDABILITY |

Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress), Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2022)

California's increasing megafires and lengthening wildfire season means that residents and visitors of Nevada County now anticipate smoky skies for much of the summer and fall. For example, in 2021, three of the region's major fires were considered megafires, resulting in over 200 days of burning.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has estimated the length of the fire season has increased by 75 days across the Sierra Nevada region, and data from Cal-Adapt estimates this figure will continue to grow in the region by 48% on average during the middle of the century from 2035-2064 (SBC, 2022).

Due to extreme increase in temperature, the Sierra Nevada region is predicted to continue to experience scenarios ranging from extreme precipitation to extreme drought. These conditions will continue to impact regional snowpack and wildfires (SBC, 2022). The hazards, both acute shocks and chronic stressors, are of key significance in Nevada County and have been described in both the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Table 4 lists the hazards and their significance.

According to SBC's 2022 Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment, the top three climate crises currently facing the

Table 4: List of Hazards and Significance

| Hazard | Significance |
|--|--------------|
| Agricultural Hazards: Severe Weather/Insect Pests | High |
| Avalanche | Low |
| Climate Change | High |
| Dam Failure | Low |
| Drought and Water Shortage | Low |
| Earthquake | Low |
| Flood: 100/500-year | Medium |
| Flood: Localized/Stormwater | Medium |
| Hazardous Materials Transportation | Low |
| Landslide, Debris & Mudflows | Low |
| Levee Failure | Low |
| Severe Weather: Extreme Cold, Snow, Freeze | Medium |
| Severe Weather: Extreme Heat | Medium |
| Severe Weather: Heavy Rains and Storms | High |
| Subsidence | Medium |
| Volcano | Low |
| Wildfire (smoke, tree mortality, conflagration) | High |

Note: Significance - Low: Minimal potential impact, Medium: Moderate potential impact, High: Widespread potential impact

System Threats & Opportunities

region are drought, wildfire and snowpack decline. These short-term, severe events (shocks) and long-term pressures or chronic stresses that can severely impact a community's capacity to adapt to changes, along with other indicators, will have far-reaching impacts on recreation, environment, local economies, and public health and wellness. The groups often vulnerable to climate impacts include individuals in poverty, people of color, seniors, California Native American tribes, and the disabled community. Across the Sierra Nevada region, the greatest climate impact to vulnerable populations is wildfire.

It is equally important to recognize the reciprocal relationship between shocks and stressors. For example, an event like wildfires, which is an acute shock, can lead to chronic stresses, such as degraded air quality and increased carbon dioxide emissions leading to public health impacts and global temperature increases.

The California Energy Commission (CEC) alongside the University of California - Berkeley Geospatial Innovation Facility (GIF) released Cal-Adapt in 2011 as a resource to highlight climate change research and future climate change projections for specific regions throughout the state (Cal-Adapt, n.d.). Nevada County resides within the North Sierra Region, and climate projections for this region are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Threats and the Associated Predicted Ranges of Change in Future Years

| Effect | Range |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Temperature Change, 1990-2100 | Increase in January average temperatures between 2.5°F to 4°F by 2050 and 6°F to 7°F by 2100. The largest changes are observed in the southern part of the region. |
| | Increase in July average temperatures between 4 °F to 5°F by 2050 and 10°F by the end of the century, with the greatest change in the northern part of the region. (Modeled average temperatures; high carbon emissions scenario) |
| Precipitation | Precipitation decline is projected throughout the region. The amount of decrease varies from 3 to 5 inches by 2050 and 6 inches to more than 10 inches by 2100, with the larger rainfall reductions projected for the southern portions of the region. (CCSM3 climate model; high carbon emissions scenario) |
| Heat Waves | Heat waves are defined as four consecutive days over 83 °F to 97°F depending on location. By 2050, the number of heat waves per year is expected to increase by two. A dramatic increase of eight to ten annual heat waves is expected by 2100. |
| Snowpack | Snowpack levels are projected to decline dramatically in many portions of the region. In southern portions of the region, a decline of nearly 15 inches in snowpack levels - a more than 60 percent drop - is projected by 2090. (CCSM3 climate model; high carbon emissions scenario) |
| Wildfire | Wildfire risk is projected to increase in a range of 10 to 10.5 times throughout the region, with the highest risks expected in the northern and southern parts of the region. (GFDL climate model; high carbon emissions scenario) |

Source: (County of Nevada, 2017) Table 4-20 of Nevada County LHMP, 2017

System Threats & Opportunities



WILDFIRE

Wildfire risk is projected to increase in a range of 10 to 10.5 times throughout the region, with the highest risks expected in the northern and southern parts of the Sierra Nevada region. (GFDL climate model; high carbon emissions scenario)

Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress)

Wildfire

Wildfire is arguably the most significant hazard impacting recreation and recreational resources in Nevada County. It leads to direct and indirect impacts such as smoke exposure and poor air quality, access restrictions and closures and recreational infrastructure damage. Post-fire impacts include the prevalence of hazard trees, landslides, and debris flows.

In many areas of the county, widespread fire suppression, certain logging practices, livestock grazing, and introduced plants and pathogens have combined to significantly alter current forestland conditions from historic environments (Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2017). Most forests in the county resemble multi-layered, dense forests with heavy fuel loads (FSCNC, 2016). When wildfires do occur, they are more likely to deviate from historical conditions and burn

at greater severity over larger acreages due to increases in fuel availability and a greater likelihood for extreme fire weather. Other factors contributing to increased wildfire hazard listed in the County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) include:

- Overstocked forests and severely overgrown vegetation;
- Lack of defensible space around structures;
- Excessive vegetation along roadsides and hanging over roads, fire engine access roads, and limited evacuation routes;
- Drought conditions leading to increased beetle infestation or kill in weakened and stressed trees;
- Nature and frequency of lightning ignitions; and
- Increasing population density leading to more ignitions.

Fire History

There have been 226 recorded wildfires in Nevada County (CAL FIRE, 2022)¹. Of these fires, 67 have burned an area of 500 acres or greater, with the largest fire (1960 Donner Ridge Fire) burning 43,374 acres. A list of notable wildfires within the county is provided below (LHMP, 2017).

- Donner Ridge Fire (1960): Burned a total of 43,374 acres resulting in 27 injuries and threatened Downtown Truckee coming within 2.5 miles of the Town
- 49er Fire (1988): Burned 33,500 acres and destroyed 148 homes and 358 additional structures
- Trauner Fire (1994): Burned 536 acres and destroyed 12 homes and 21 additional structures
- Martis Fire (2001): Burned 14,126 acres and destroyed 2 homes and 3 vehicles
- Yuba River Complex Fire (2008): A complex of 13 fires which burned a total 3,590 acres leading to multiple health issues reported from smoke exposure
- Lowell Fire (2018): Burned 2,304 acres resulting in 3 injuries and extensive evacuations

1-1 Fire history data is based on the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) fire perimeter data (FRAP 2021). The fire history record is from 1878 to 2021, however the first record of fire in Nevada County is 1900.

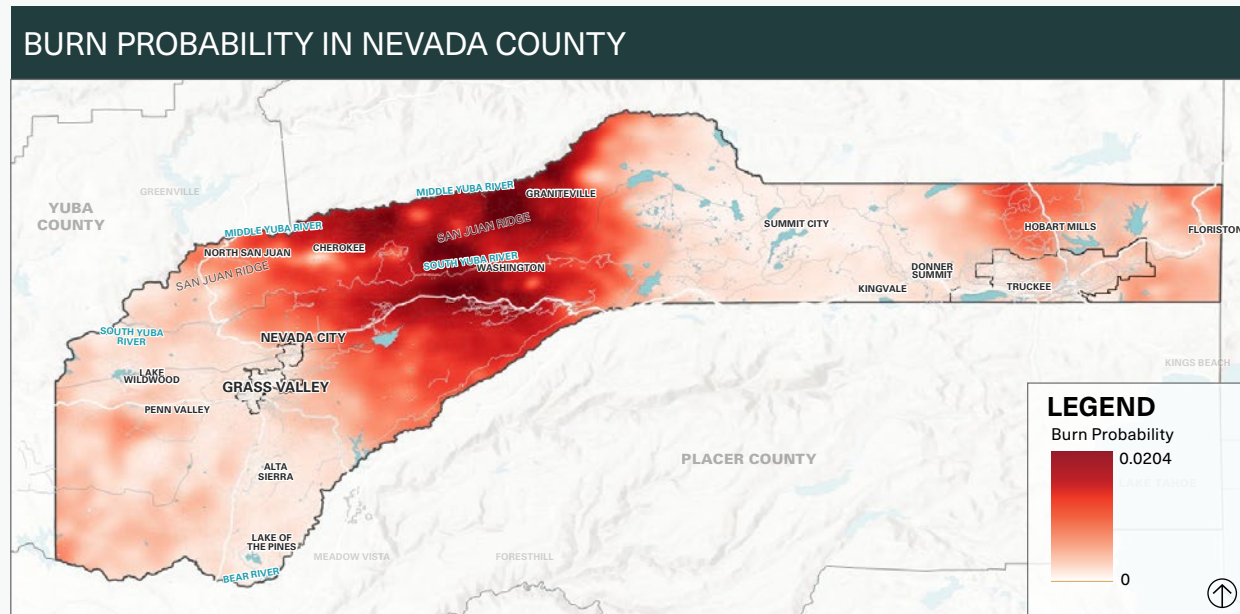
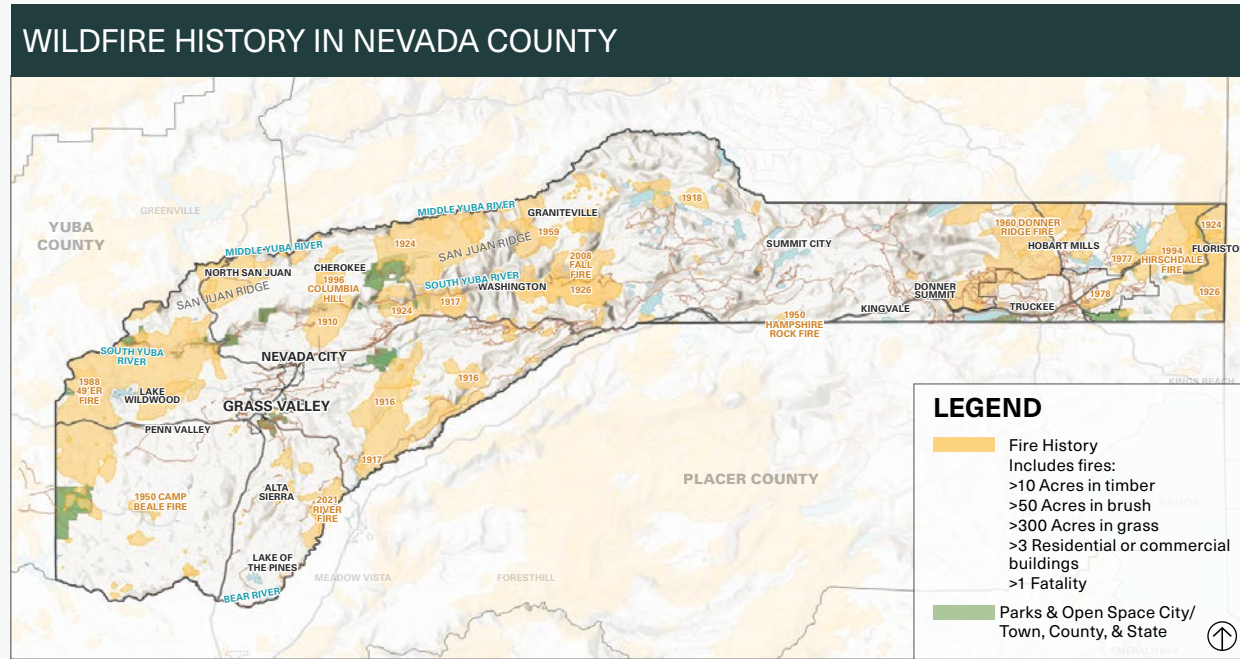
System Threats & Opportunities

Burn Probability

Burn probability translates to the annual probability of a wildfire occurring every year in a specific location and is a useful tool for identifying areas likely to experience wildfires. Burn probability data was derived from the USFS Wildfire Risk to Communities Spatial Dataset and clipped to the Plan area. (USFS, 2020). The highest burn probabilities in the county were observed in the central portion, within the South Yuba River drainage. A burn probability of 2 percent means that there is an annual 2 percent chance an area will experience wildfire. A 2 percent burn probability is considered high for the Sierra Nevada.

Burn probability is similar in counties adjacent to Nevada County and throughout the western slope of the Sierras that have equivalent elevations. The burn probability is slightly lower in Nevada County compared to regions further north. For reference, the highest burn probabilities in the state are 9 percent according to this dataset. Many of these areas are in southern California where the fire return interval is shorter compared to that of the Sierra Nevada.

Recreational resources in the South Yuba River drainage are likely to be impacted by wildfire more frequently than other areas of the county. The western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, encompassing the central region of the county, creates conditions



System Threats & Opportunities

favorable for fire occurrence including productive forests and heavy fuel loads, steep and variable terrain, and many potential ignition sources (natural and human-caused).

Forest Health

Forest health plays a large role in influencing wildfire hazard and public safety. Tree mortality creates both hazardous fuel conditions and threatens recreational resources through the increased likelihood of falling trees (FSCNC, 2016). Tree mortality is largely driven by prolonged periods of drought as trees become stressed and susceptible to forest pests and pathogens, or when trees are damaged from wildfires. Bark beetles attack weakened trees and continue to be a large driver of tree mortality throughout the Sierra Nevada and in Nevada County (LHMP, 2017). Areas experiencing an increase in tree mortality have been mapped by CAL FIRE within the California High Hazard Zones Tier 1 and Tier 2 data sets. The Tier 1 Hazard Zones identify areas designated by state and local governments as being in greatest need of dead tree removal for the threats they pose to public safety. Nevada County contains 44,480 acres of Tier 1 Hazard Zones. Tier 2 Hazard Zones define tree mortality by watersheds that have significant tree mortality as well as significant community and natural resource assets. Work conducted in Tier 2 Zones addresses the immediate threat of falling trees, increased fire risk, and supports

broader forest health and landscape level fire planning efforts.

Smoke Exposure

Nevada County residents are often exposed to wildfire smoke during summer and early fall months from wildfires burning within the county or from wildfires burning in other regions of the state (LHMP, 2017). It is not uncommon for air quality to well exceed air quality standards for PM2.5 concentration, the leading pollutant within wildfire smoke. During the summers of 2013 and 2014, heavy smoke from wildfires in Northern California, including Nevada County, increased fine particulate matter levels 100 times greater than air quality standards (LHMP, 2017). Wildfire smoke not only leads to health concerns, but also can limit recreational opportunities and cause recreation-based

business and economies to suffer from decreased utilization.



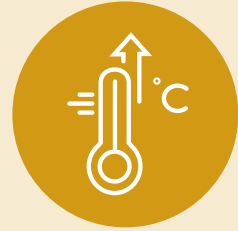
Note: Numbers based on CAL FIRE from 2023. Acreage located in Very High Severity designations may have increased in mapping released April 2024.

Wildfire Projections Due to Climate Change

Effects of climate change include increased temperatures, higher likelihood of severe weather events including heat waves and dry lightning storms, and reduced precipitation. These factors are expected to increase wildfire severity in the Plan area. Overall, the region is expected to become dryer, reducing fuel and air moisture content over longer periods of time. This is likely to exacerbate wildfire severity as conditions become more favorable to extreme wildfire behavior. Reduced precipitation is also expected to increase tree mortality in the region which would lead to even greater accumulation of hazardous fuels.

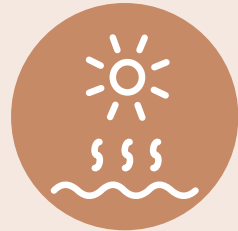
Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress)

System Threats & Opportunities



TEMPERATURE CHANGE

Increase in January average temperatures between 2.5°F to 4°F by 2050 and 6°F to 7°F by 2100. The largest changes are observed in the southern part of the region. (CCSM3 climate model; high carbon emissions scenario)



HEAT WAVES

Heat waves are defined as four consecutive days over 83 °F to 97°F depending on location. By 2050, the number of heat waves per year is expected to increase by two. A dramatic increase of eight to ten annual heat waves is expected by 2100.

Heat Waves

During 1960-1990, Nevada County experienced 0-1 heat waves on average per year. Up to 4-5 heat waves are projected to occur a year during 2036-2065.

Heat waves are defined as four consecutive days of extreme heat. For Nevada County, this means four consecutive days where

temperatures exceed 92 degrees. When heat waves occur, it will be difficult for people to cool their homes when over 35% of Nevada County residents do not have household air conditioning (SBC, 2022).

Temperature Change

Average annual temperatures have risen significantly in the last three decades. Heat events are projected to become more frequent and last longer. Natural features found at higher elevations such as snowpack, glaciers, alpine lakes, meadows, and forests will experience noticeable change as a result of these higher temperatures. Human populations are at risk of heat-related illnesses and deaths in extreme heat events. This is especially acute for those that are more vulnerable such as older populations and those with underlying health conditions (SBC, 2022).

According to Cal-Adapt, Nevada County's daytime heat "threshold temperature" is 92.2 degrees (this metric is averaged over the entire county). Daily temperatures that exceed this threshold are considered "extreme heat." Climate forecasters predict that during the mid-century (2036 to 2065) Nevada County may experience on average an additional 19-21 extreme heat days per year depending on elevation (Cal-Adapt).

System Threats & Opportunities



PRECIPITATION

Precipitation decline is projected throughout the region. The amount of decrease varies from 3 to 5 inches by 2050 and 6 inches to more than 10 inches by 2100, with the larger rainfall reductions projected for the southern portions of the region. (CCSM3 climate model; high carbon emissions scenario)

Precipitation

Annual precipitation in Nevada County is projected to increase up to 4%, whereas extreme precipitation is anticipated to increase up to 9% during the mid-century (2036 - 2065). Extreme precipitation is defined as a 3-day maximum precipitation event. These events, especially rain-on-snow events, can influence flooding. As Nevada County experiences warmer temperatures throughout the year, it is anticipated that precipitation will more likely fall as rain than snow and the snowfall will be much wetter (SBC, 2022).

While the average annual precipitation totals are not expected to change significantly in California in the next 50-75 years, precipitation is likely to come in more intense storms and within a shorter duration of time (Cal-Adapt). This shift strains infrastructure to handle large influxes of precipitation at

once and impacts natural systems that have been accustomed to absorbing water over a broader span of time.

Today, California receives 50% of its annual precipitation between December and February, mostly as snowfall. This snowpack is used throughout the Sierra Nevada region and beyond for drinking water, irrigation, and industry. As higher temperatures lead to greater rates of evaporation, an increase in precipitation does not necessarily equate to an increase in ground water or water levels in lakes, rivers, and streams.

Flooding

Flooding has been identified within the Nevada County LHMP as among the most frequent hazards occurring in the county (County of Nevada, 2017). Types of flooding likely to occur include riverine flooding, flash flooding, localized/stormwater flooding,

and dam failure flooding, all which have the capacity to impact recreation and recreational resources. Many rivers, streams, and associated watersheds including the Truckee River, Upper Bear, and Upper Yuba watersheds are in Nevada County (County of Nevada, 2017). Excess rain and snow combined with a steep decline in elevation from the eastern to western portion of the county create conditions highly susceptible to flooding. The western portion of the county is more likely to experience severe flooding due to urbanization which increases the number of impermeable surfaces resulting in greater amounts of runoff. Flood hazard data for the county can be derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Hazard Layer, California Department of Water Resources Best Available Maps (BAM).

Flooding can also occur following dam failure (County of Nevada, 2017). It is possible for prolonged periods of rainfall and flooding to exceed the design requirements of dams leading to failure and downstream flooding. The county includes 48 dams constructed for flood control, water storage, power generation, and recreation. The California Department of Water Resources (Cal DWR) Division of Safety of Dams quantifies hazard ratings for large dams within California. According to their hazard designations, in addition to data derived from the County of Nevada and the California Office of

Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017, with update in progress)

System Threats & Opportunities

Emergency Services, six dams are rated as high hazard, seven as significant hazard, 29 as low hazard, and six are not rated. A list of these dams and their corresponding hazard is provided in Table 4-21 of the Nevada County LHMP.

Avalanche

Avalanches are known to occur in Nevada County and present hazards to winter recreationalists. Areas of highest hazard

are often on high mountain slopes at an elevation above 7,000 feet located in eastern Nevada County (County of Nevada, 2017). Avalanches are most likely to occur shortly after storms. In addition to dangers for skiers, snowboarders, and winter hikers who utilize backcountry areas, avalanches have the capacity to damage structures, forests, and cause road closures. The Sierra Avalanche Center has identified areas of high avalanche hazard across the Sierra Nevada. Areas of high avalanche hazard in Nevada County include areas surrounding Donner Lake, Tahoe Donner, and Soda Springs (Sierra Avalanche Center, n.d). Most of the county has no avalanche data reported. The historical record identifies 10 avalanche events in the county since 1993 resulting in a total of seven deaths and five injuries (County of Nevada, 2017).

Landslides and Debris Flows

Landslides refer to a wide range of geological processes that result in the downward and outward movement of soil, rock, and vegetation. Landslides and the variety of forms they take (e.g., slumps, rockslides, debris, lateral spreading, debris avalanche, earth flow, and soil creeps) are triggered by both human-caused and natural environmental changes that create slope instability. Natural events that lead to increased landslide and debris risk include flooding, wildfires, or earthquakes,

while human-caused triggers may include mining, construction, or changes to surface drainage areas. A map illustrating landslide susceptibility in Nevada County is provided by the California Geological Survey.

Areas of high landslide susceptibility identified in the County's LHMP include:

- I-80, east of Hirschdale to county line
- Highway 49, 4 miles north of Nevada City to county line
- Area south of Grass Valley to Combie Road
- Areas along Washington Road
- Cascade Shores Area

It should be noted that areas identified as low hazard for landslide may quickly become high hazard areas following wildfire. Ground vegetation and canopy coverage, which normally protects the soil surface, is often lost to combustion following wildfire. The exposed soil surface becomes susceptible to erosion and mass movements due to reduced soil water absorption capacity. Post-fire landslide and debris flow hazards are often exacerbated by increased wildfire severity, slope steepness, and intense rainfall. The county's steep drainage areas create favorable conditions for landslides and debris flows following high severity wildfires. This leads to increased landslide and debris flow hazards for people recreating in areas impacted by wildfire.

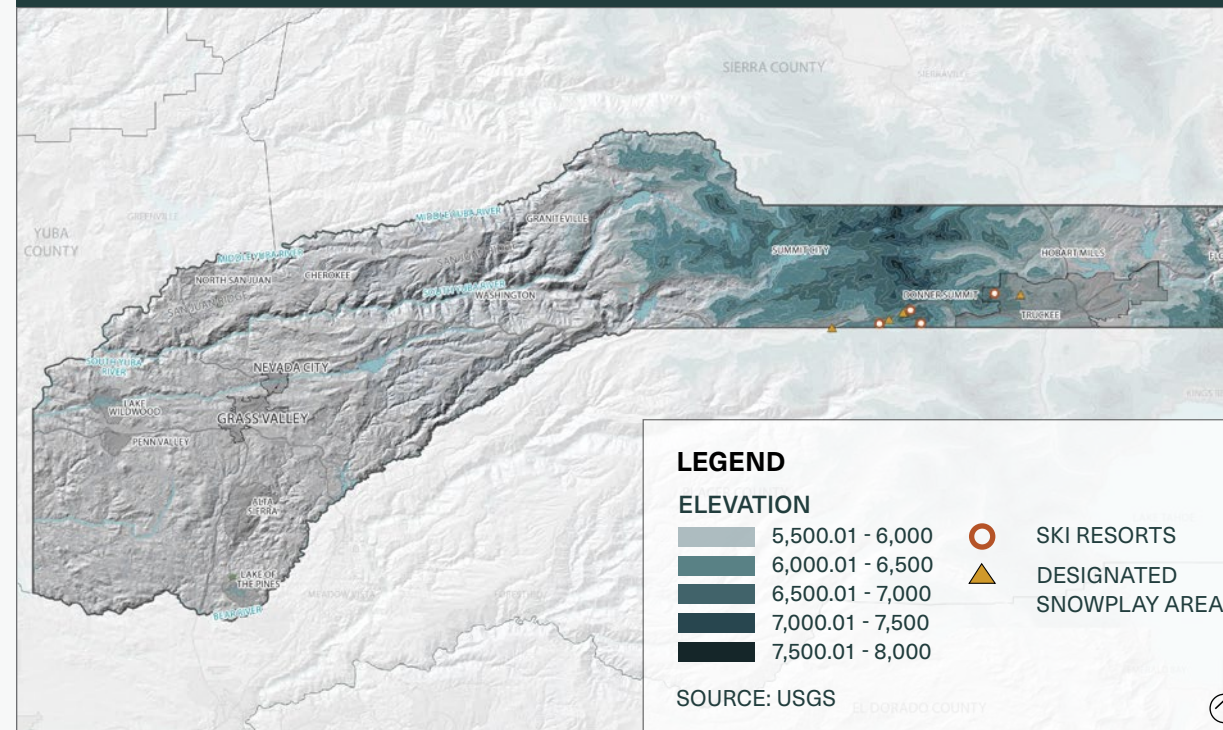
System Threats & Opportunities



EXTREME WEATHER

Snowpack levels are projected to decline dramatically in many portions of the region. In southern portions of the region, a decline of nearly 15 inches in snowpack levels - a more than 60 percent drop - is projected by 2090. (CCSM3 climate model; high carbon emissions scenario)

ANTICIPATED CHANGES IN SNOW LEVELS



Extreme Weather

Using January 1 as an average benchmark, (a common date when ski resorts must have the minimum 20 inches of snow to operate) Nevada County, on average, is expected to experience a 55% reduction in snow cover by 2036 - 2065. As snow levels retreat to higher elevations, locations such as nearby Lake Tahoe at 6,000 ft, are anticipated to have no snow by 2099 (SBC, 2022).

The landscape would be increasingly susceptible to very severe fire damage due to cumulative impacts of (1) water supply reducing by half; and (2) acreage burned by wildfires increasing by over 50 percent. The lack of water for recreation and wildfire impacts like smoke and forest closures are likely to affect the tourism industry, which makes up 27 percent of jobs in the county today.



Snow Event, Clair Tappaan Lodge (7,000' elevation)



Extreme Flooding Event

System Threats & Opportunities

Housing Availability & Affordability

Many community members in the county experience cost of living challenges as the region has a lack of affordable workforce housing (SBC, 2023). In recent years, insurance costs have been on the rise due to wildfire threats or has been canceled altogether. This has been identified as a top threat to the county's livability and relates to attracting and retaining staff in the recreation, arts, culture, wellness, and natural resource industries.



HOUSING AVAILABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability has been identified as a top threat to the county's livability and relates to attracting and retaining staff.

Unsustainable Visitation

Nevada County draws people from near and far with access to the outdoors and inspiring art and culture. High use recreation areas have limited infrastructure, including parking, restroom facilities, trash collection, carrying capacity, and the roadways that lead to these places. Large impacts have been seen along river crossings and other natural areas and threaten the county's invaluable parks, open spaces, and trails.



UNSUSTAINABLE VISITATION

Nevada County has seen rising visitation along river crossings, trails and other natural areas that lack necessary infrastructure and facilities causing health, safety and environmental threats.

Recreation Site Communications

Topography, population density, and affordability impact high-speed internet access for much of the county and its residents. Cellular service can also be limited in remote recreation locations. This lack of service makes it challenging to give real-time information to recreation users and to communicate during emergency situations, such as wildfire evacuations.



RECREATION SITE COMMUNICATIONS

Lack of service makes it challenging to give real-time information to recreation users and to communicate during emergency situations.

System Threats & Opportunities

Economic Development

The Sierra Nevada region is a destination for both winter and summer recreation, with robust access to ski resorts, nationally recognized trails, and popular rivers and recreational lakes. Communities in Nevada County are also noted for having significant industry strength in nonprofit arts and culture sectors (Americans for the Arts, 2024), and are recognized as providing inspiring art and culture through thousands of events, annual festivals, street fairs, art walks, and studio tours (SBC, 2023). Close proximity to Sacramento and San Francisco and the I-80 highway and rail corridor connect the region to large population centers and commerce.

Nevada County has long been defined as a resource-reliant economy, with a base in timber, mining, and logging industries. Recent job loss has occurred due to the decline of production in these industries, with some jobs transitioning to the service sector and some leaving the county entirely.

Recent job growth in the county has been in healthcare, construction, agriculture, tourism-related activities, and government-related services. The tourism, arts and retail industries currently provide 26.1 percent of jobs in the county (SBC, 2023). Lower elevations in the region, specifically the southwestern portion of Nevada County and the communities of Nevada City, Grass Valley

Economic Impacts from Natural Disasters

A connection exists between the economic resilience of a community, the health of ecosystems, and tourism and recreation, and the opportunity to support community health, safety, economy, environment, and resilience. The most vulnerable industry to climate hazards in the Sierra Nevada is likely tourism and recreation. Within Nevada County, agriculture is also at risk to be negatively impacted.

Lack of water for recreation and increasing wildfire impacts like smoke and forest closures will likely impact the tourism industry, which makes up 27 percent of jobs in the county. Drought, in particular, increases well drilling costs and impacts agriculture through higher irrigation costs, slow crop growth, and severe crop loss. Impacts to water infrastructure and lower reservoir levels also effect power generation, drinking or raw water supply, and recreation access.

Workers in these industries will be heavily impacted by reduced visitation. These careers offer the lowest pay in the Sierra Nevada Watershed, indicating this group of workers will have less capacity to adapt to climate hazards, as well as reduced work opportunities. This may lead to a mass out-migration of the working class. Visitation numbers may be reduced due to wildfire, either directly or indirectly by smoke. United States Forest Service data shows that when recreation opportunities are disrupted due to climate change, visitors choose a different destination entirely, rather than postponing their trip to the Sierra – this behavior may be heightened with snow drought and shorter ski seasons predicted to come by mid-century (Sierra Business Council (SBC), 2022).



Pollinator Garden, Adam Ryan Preserve
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)

System Threats & Opportunities

and Penn Valley, contain prime farmland and several small family farms and ranches (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2021).

As stated in the Sierra Economic Development District's 2023-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), relying on a single predominant industry, like tourism, is seen as one of the three biggest threats to economic resiliency in the region. Natural disasters,

such as flood or wildfires, are also on the list of threats to economic resiliency (SBC, 2023).

It should be noted that jobs in the agriculture and tourism/service sector generally provide lower wages with seasonal work. Employees in these industries likely experience cost of living challenges as the region has a reported lack of affordable workforce housing (SBC, 2023). The county's economic development health is also challenged with an aging demographic; the largest age group is 60-65 (ACS, 2020) which reduces the employee



Smoke from a fire in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range

base as people reach retirement. However, it does add to the strong volunteer base that supports recreation activities throughout the county.

Opportunities to Reduce Risk Through Recreation Planning and Design

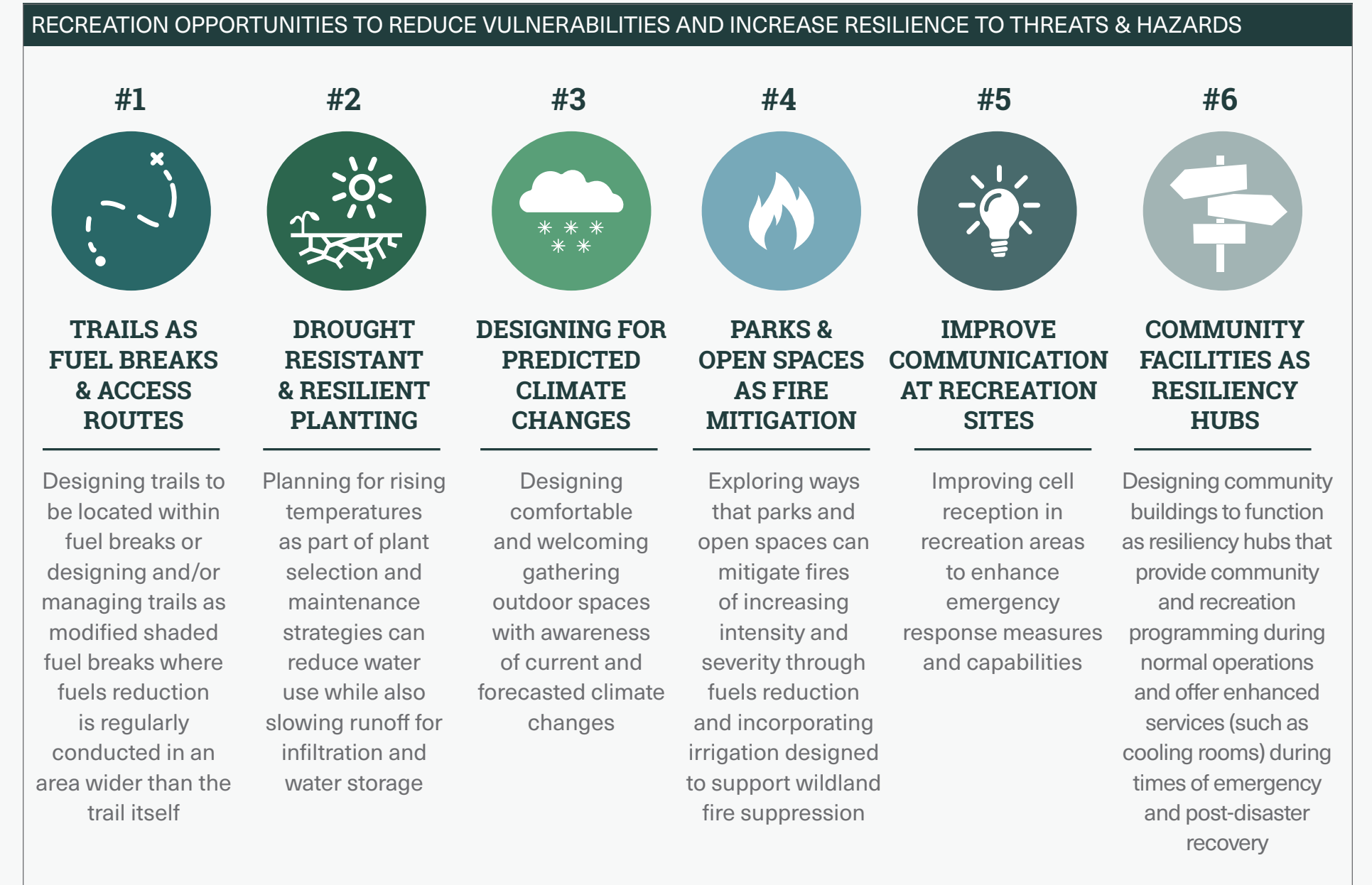
As described in *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*: "Preparing for a changing climate requires accounting for different future conditions. However, building resilience is not just about planning for a different future. Planning itself must change. To that end, building resilience has two important components: planning for a different and changing future; and making planning, operationalization, and implementation decisions differently." (The Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2018)

Embedded in the Plan's recommended strategies and projects are a suite of methods and best practices that provide multiple benefits. They both address a recreation need and build resiliency either by reducing risks or increasing the ability of the county's ecological, social, or economic systems to better absorb the change or disruption and bounce back.

The examples of multi-benefit projects shown and described on the following page reflect a few of the opportunities presented and described in more detail in the Plan.

System Threats & Opportunities

Figure 14: Recreation Opportunities to Reduce Vulnerabilities and Increase Resilience to Threats & Hazards





3

CONNECTING THE THREADS: COMMUNITY INPUT

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

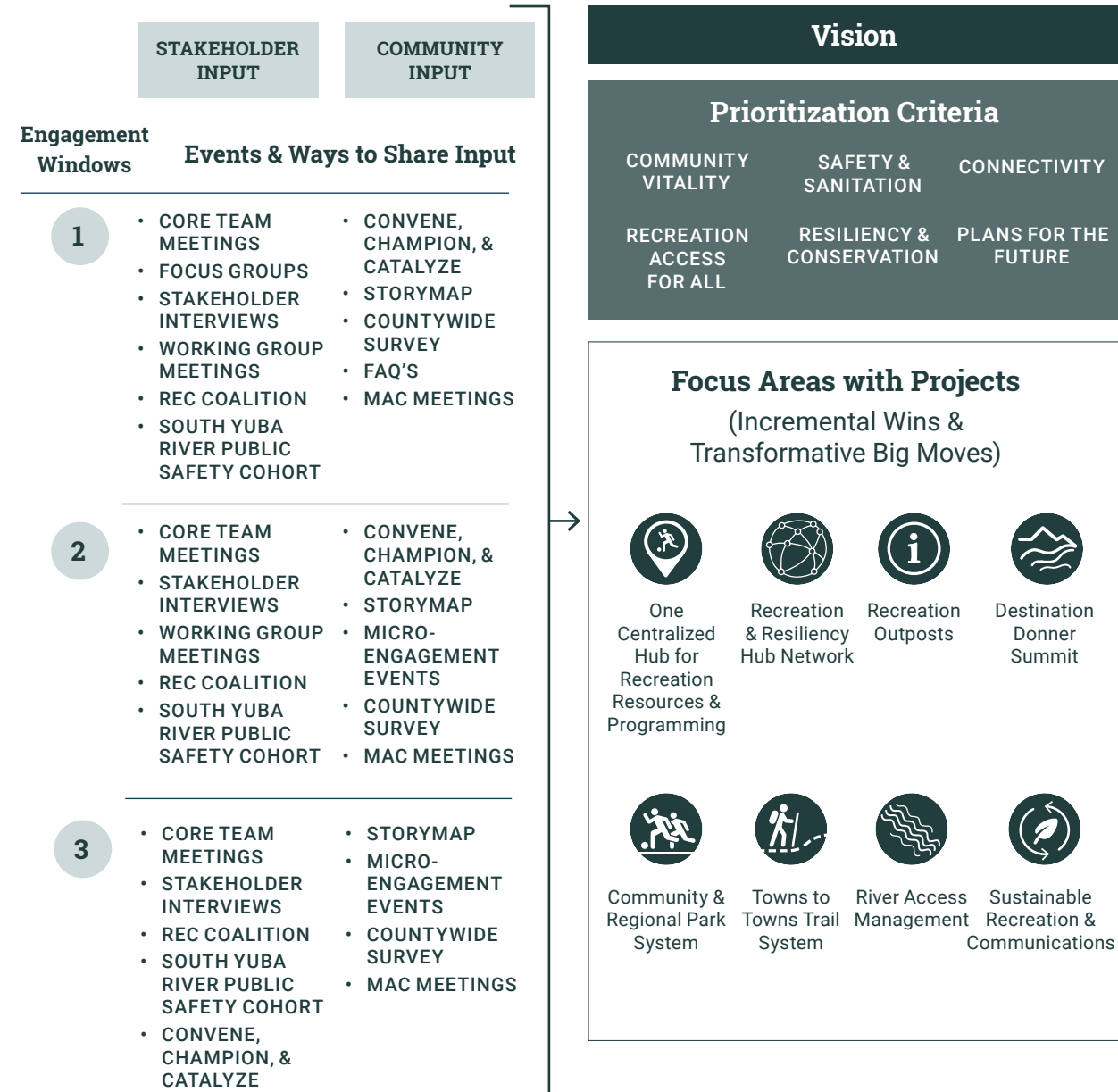
The Nevada County Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan is community-driven, prioritizing residents and the many needs and desires of communities countywide. In order to comprehensively understand the system's existing conditions, planned improvements, and aspirations for the future, outreach opportunities and community engagement was conducted over the span of 18 months throughout the planning process.

Residents, County staff, local organizations, special interest groups, and others helped steer the Plan's vision, priorities, focus areas, and project recommendations. Overall, the County of Nevada's robust community engagement strategy was designed to align the future of the recreation system (i.e., organized recreation, access to open space, lakes and rivers, and trails) with community needs.

Opportunities for Input

Nevada County is home to many active organizations, leagues, and groups that contribute to parks, recreation, trails, public health, recreation, land conservation, and stewardship. Multiple opportunities were provided for stakeholder and broad community input. Stakeholder input was gathered through a variety of avenues: Core Team meetings, Working Group meetings, Focus Group meetings, interviews, and participation in existing community group

Figure 15: Engagement Informed the Plan



meetings such as the Recreation Coalition, South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort, and the Convene, Champion, & Catalyze meetings. In addition to agency representatives, the Plan's stakeholder group included volunteers and residents of the county who know the recreation system well and understand needs from a community perspective. An Ad Hoc Committee with two County Supervisors was also established, where both would participate in Working Group meetings and Recreation Coalition meetings to stay

informed on the process, share insights, and to report back to the Board during regular Board of Supervisor meetings.

Broader countywide feedback and direction was collected through surveys and micro-engagement events. Interested residents and recreation users were able to stay informed using an interactive project StoryMap online. Updates were also regularly provided to the Board of Supervisors and at Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) meetings.



Stakeholder meeting

Core Team

The Core Team consisted of representatives from different County departments to identify efficiencies and resources, as well as align opportunities for program or staff participation and community engagement. The Core Team guided the overall project and helped refine Plan content and the approach to broader community input.

Stakeholders

Over 90 recreation and resiliency organizations were invited as stakeholders to join a Working Group, participate in Focus Group conversations, and to share insights during one-on-one or small group interviews. The stakeholders were engaged throughout the process as part of virtual and in-person meetings.

The first series of stakeholder focus group meetings were organized into the below session topics:

1. Recreation, Access, Tourism, Agriculture, and Economic Development
2. Organized Sports and Youth Recreation
3. Conservation, Trails, and Open Space
4. Health, Wellness, Arts, and Culture

Each focus group was asked a series of questions to prompt discussion. Using an online brainstorming tool, participants provided their perspective on the state of

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Figure 16: Focus Groups and Organizations Invited to Participate

- Alta California Regional Center
- Alta Sierra Homeowners Association
- American Whitewater
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Auburn Ski Club
- Backcountry Hunters
- Bear River Recreation & Park District
- Bear Yuba Land Trust
- Bicyclists of Nevada County
- Boreal Mountain Resort / Woodward-at-Tahoe
- Briar Patch Co-op
- Bright Futures for Youth
- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz)
- CAL FIRE – Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit
- California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP)
- California Highway Patrol (CHP)
- California State Parks (State Parks)
- Caltrans
- Cascade Shores Homeowners Association
- Center for Nonprofit Leadership
- Climate Transformation Alliance
- CoHousing Solutions
- Connecting Point
- Convene, Champion, and Catalyze (CCC) Members
- County of Placer – Agriculture, Parks & Natural Resources
- Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship (DIPS)
- Donner Party Mountain Runners
- Donner Ski Ranch
- Donner Summit Association
- Eskaton Village in Grass Valley
- Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
- Folk Trails Hiking Club
- FREED
- Friends of Purdon
- Friends of the Bear River
- Friends of Western Gateway Dog Park
- Gateway Mountain Center
- Gold Country Disc Golf Association
- Gold Country Senior Services
- Gold Country Soccer League
- Gold Country Trails Council
- Gold Country Welcome Club
- Gold Country Yacht Club
- Gold Crush Climbing Gym
- Goldmine Wrestling Club
- City of Grass Valley
- City of Nevada City
- Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Grass Valley CoHousing
- Grass Valley Pickleball Club
- Grass Valley School District
- Harmony Ridge Market
- Hiking for Good
- Hipcamp
- Hirschdale Recreational Planning Stakeholder Group
- InConcert Sierra
- Inntown Campground
- Lake of the Pines
- Lake Wildwood Association
- League of Women Voters of Nevada County
- Live, Work, Thrive Nevada County
- Mammoth Lakes Trails & Public Access
- Miners Foundry Cultural Center
- Mountain Area Preservation Foundation
- Music in the Mountains
- Nevada City Chamber of Commerce
- Nevada City CoHousing
- Nevada City Film Festival
- Nevada City School District
- Nevada City School of the Arts
- Nevada County 4-H
- Nevada County Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative/Mobility Action Partners Coalition
- Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Commission
- Nevada County Airport
- Nevada County Arts Council
- Nevada County Association of Realtors
- Nevada County Cannabis Alliance
- Nevada County Consolidated Fire District
- Nevada County Contractors Association
- Nevada County Economic Resource Council
- Nevada County Fairgrounds
- Nevada County Farm Bureau
- Nevada County Fish & Wildlife Commission
- Nevada County Historical Society
- Nevada County Horsemen
- Nevada County Recreation Coalition Members
- Nevada County Resource Conservation District
- Nevada County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
- Nevada County Transit Services Commission
- Nevada County Transportation Commission
- Nevada County Youth Commission
- Nevada County Woods Riders
- Nevada Irrigation District

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

- Nevada Joint Union High School District
 - Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria
 - North Columbia Holdings
 - North Columbia Schoolhouse
 - North San Juan Fire Protection District
 - North San Juan Taxpayers Association
 - Oak Tree Park & Recreation District
 - Pacific Gas & Electric
 - Penguin Swim Club of Nevada County
 - Penn Valley Area Municipal Advisory Council
 - Penn Valley Community Rodeo Association
 - Rotaries, Elks & Lions Clubs
 - RV Resorts
 - San Juan Ridge Community Library
 - San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center
 - Sierra Swim Club
 - Sierra Buttes Trails Stewardship
 - Sierra College
 - Sierra Commons
 - Sierra Express Bicycle Club
 - Sierra Flyfishers
 - Sierra Gold Parks Foundation
 - Sierra Harvest
 - Sierra Nevada Alliance
 - Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital and Foundation
 - Sierra Pacific Industries
 - Sierra State Parks Foundation
 - Sierra Streams Institute
 - Soda Springs Mountain Resort
 - Sierra Trailblazers
 - South County Area Municipal Advisory Council
 - South Yuba Club
 - South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)
 - South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort (SYRPS Cohort)
 - Sugar Bowl Resort
 - T-5 Boxing and Fitness
 - Tahoe Donner Association
 - Tahoe-Pyramid Trail
 - Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers
 - The Center for the Arts
 - The Sierra Fund
 - The Union
 - Three Forks Bakery & Brewery
 - Town of Truckee
 - Town of Washington
 - Trout Unlimited
 - Truckee Bike Park
 - Truckee Chamber of Commerce
 - Truckee Dirt Union
 - Truckee Donner Land Trust
 - Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District
 - Truckee Donner Senior Citizens Apartments / Senior Services
 - Truckee Downtown Merchants Association
 - Truckee Fire Protection District
 - Truckee River Cohousing
 - Truckee River Watershed Council
 - Truckee River Alliance
 - Truckee Stewardship Plan Advisory Council
 - Truckee Trails Foundation
 - Tsi Akim Maidu
 - Twin Ridges School District
 - United Auburn Indian Community – Auburn Rancheria
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development
 - USDA United States Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest (Truckee / Yuba Districts)
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of Nevada County
 - Visit California
 - Visit Truckee-Tahoe
 - Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
 - Western Gateway Recreation & Park District
 - Western Nevada County Recreation Services
 - Wolf Creek Community Alliance
 - Youth Bicyclists of Nevada County
 - YMCA of Superior California
 - Yuba Forest Network members
 - Yubanet
 - Yuba River Charter School
 - Yuba Trails Stewardship
 - Yuba Water Agency
 - Yuba Watershed Institute
- And various businesses representing a wide variety of interests including agriculture, retail, services, lodging, health, wellness, and leisure.
- County of Nevada Agencies & Departments:*
- Board of Supervisors Office
 - County Executive Office
 - Community Development Agency
 - Health & Human Services Agency
 - Information & General Services (incl. Facilities Management)
 - Nevada County Library
 - Office of Economic Development
 - Office of Emergency Services
 - Sheriff's Office and Search & Rescue

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

recreation today, challenges, opportunities, and visionary ideas for the future of recreation and resiliency in Nevada County.

Understanding the successes, challenges, and priorities of Nevada County's organizations began to paint a picture of needs and priorities. Results from these focus groups informed the development of a countywide survey. Shared values were identified and refined during the first working group meeting to inform future Plan development. A complete list of Focus Group participants and others invited to share feedback can be found in Figure 17.

Recognizing the established social networks and reach of the stakeholder groups, the planning team also plugged into stakeholders' regularly occurring meetings to bring awareness to the project and garner input.

Community Input

In order to shape the planning team's understanding of current recreation use, needs, and project priorities, community members shared their opinions through online surveys and more than 25 micro-engagement events at locations across the county. Results from these engagements fed directly into Core Team meetings and Working Group activities.

Community members were directed to an interactive StoryMap online which described the project's purpose and goals along with an overview of the recreation inventory. A series of frequently asked questions were developed to clarify the project's intent and foster awareness.

Plan updates and notifications, with an option to sign up online, were managed via the County of Nevada Recreation website, with links to the StoryMap. Website users were invited to sign up for email notifications of opportunities to participate in the planning process. The website was also advertised in conjunction with survey windows.



Hirschdale community meeting to discuss Truckee River access



Input during micro-engagement event

Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Countywide Engagement Opportunities

Three countywide surveys were conducted to understand how and where people recreate currently, existing barriers to participation, and what types of projects community members hope to see implemented by the County or its partners in the future. Survey questions asking both how people recreated, why they recreated, and what barriers to recreation existed revealed the values, hopes, and concerns regarding future recreation opportunities.

The surveys and input opportunities were widely promoted through press releases, radio interviews, and advertisements on

social media, digital newspapers, and Nevada County newsletters. An email campaign was spread through stakeholders' database networks to drive additional responses, and printed materials were left at libraries, community centers, trailheads, parks, and post offices. Promotional materials and the survey were provided in both English and Spanish. Extra efforts were made to reach historically underrepresented groups including but not limited to the Spanish-speaking community, youth and families, and people experiencing disabilities.

The first survey was open from March 27 through April 16, 2023. The second

survey and micro-engagement events were conducted between June 1 and July 11, 2023. The third survey was open from March 12 - 24, 2024.

Micro-engagements refer to outreach that was conducted at in-person public events such as Municipal Advisory Council meetings, park and trailhead pop-ups, or other previously planned community events. Members of the Working Group and County staff hosted interactive kiosks at more than 25 community events across Nevada County.

Working Group members set up at farmers' markets, art festivals, MAC meetings, the Cherry Festival, and more to discuss the



Micro-engagement event conducted during Bear Yuba Land Trust's Celebration of Trails street party

Themes & Priorities

Plan's goals, collect project ideas from the public, and encourage community members to participate via the online survey. Volunteers received training for facilitating conversations with the public using guided prompts.

Overall, the first survey window received 1,773 responses. The second survey and micro-engagements received over 800 responses. The third survey received over 720 responses. The survey asked respondents to identify the location of their primary residence so responses could be cross-tabulated by area in order to more accurately understand recreation needs throughout the diverse county.

What We Heard

Many voices were heard throughout the extensive community engagement process. Key takeaways from conversations, meetings, and surveys are summarized in the following section. Additional findings are referenced throughout the Plan where they relate to particular recommendations.

Recreation Across the County

Nevada County's varied landscapes and scenic beauty make it a world-class recreation destination for many different activities. Net promoter scores is a common way to measure how an activity, resource or company is perceived by its users.

Countywide Surveys and Micro-Engagements

Figure 17: Summary of Survey Participation

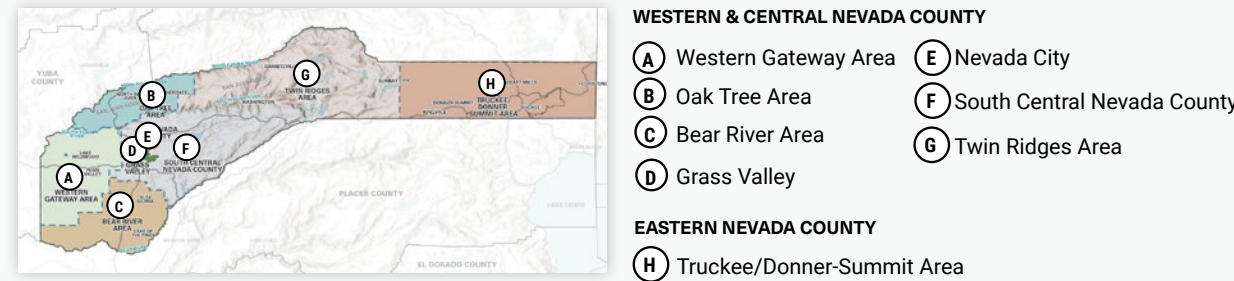
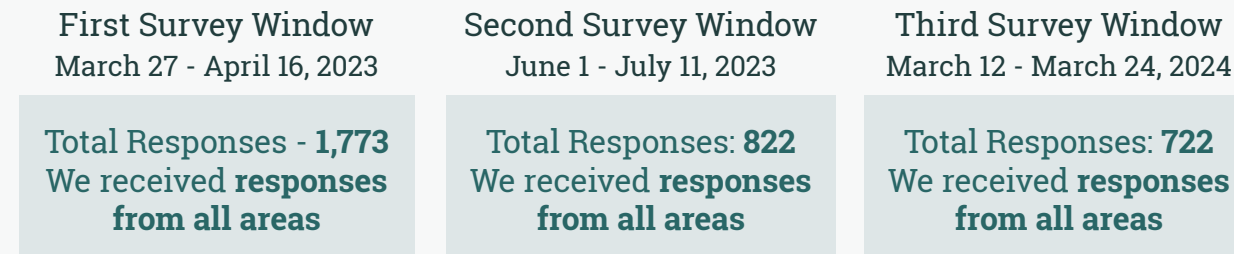


Figure 18: Survey 1 Responses | Recreation Recommendations

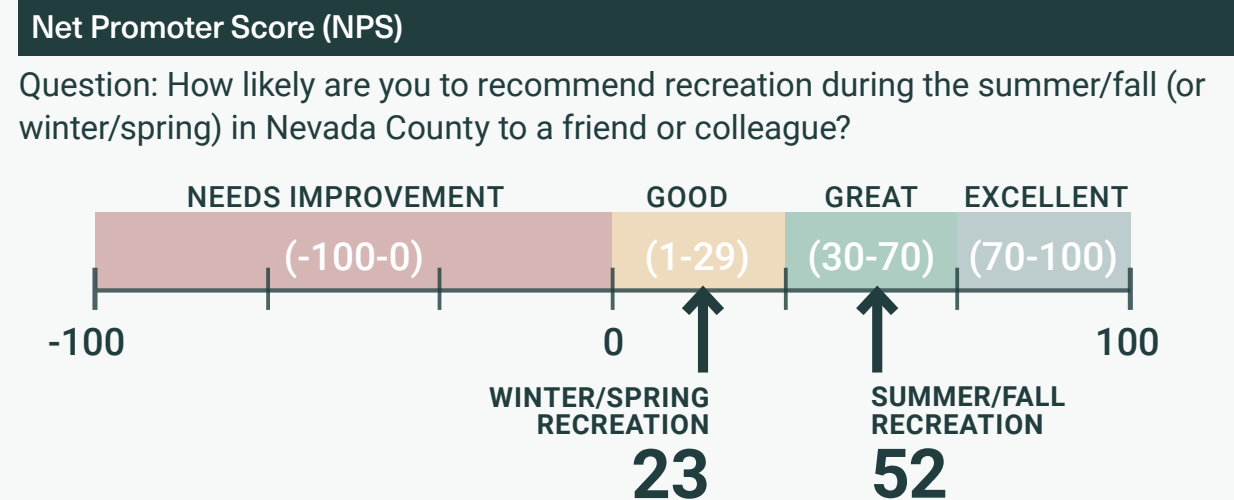


Figure 19: Survey 1 Responses | Recreation Activities and Potential Participation

Top Recreation Sites (Overall Countywide Responses)

Question: What are the top five recreation sites that you visit the most in Nevada County during the summer/fall or winter/spring?



Respondents were asked to share how likely they are to recommend recreation to a friend or colleague. The question was asked related to recreation in summer/fall and in winter/spring.

Responses related to summer/fall recreation were more positive than winter/spring recreation. It should be noted that the survey was released during March of 2023

which was after a winter of record-breaking snowfall and rain which may have influenced responses. Overall, responses show room for improvement.

Survey takers were asked where they recreate, why they recreate where they do, and how their recreation experience could be improved in both summer/fall and winter/spring. Recreation hot spots typically related

with where people lived. Popular sites identified for all season included the South Yuba River, Western Gateway Park, and Truckee/Donner-Summit.

Summer and Fall

In summer and fall, the three most popular locations for recreation are the South Yuba River and its crossings, Tahoe National Forest, and Scotts Flat Reservoir. Survey respondents were drawn to these locations for their natural beauty, ease of access, and facilities for hiking, biking, and lake and river recreation.

When asked how their recreation experience could be improved during summer and fall, respondents identified parking solutions, better access, litter cleanup, fewer crowds and more park facilities and trails.

Winter and Spring

In winter and spring, the three most popular locations for recreation are the South Yuba River and its crossings, Empire Mine Historic State Park, and the Deer Creek Tribute Trail. Survey respondents were drawn to these locations for their natural beauty, ease of access, and facilities for hiking, skiing, biking, and play.

When asked how their recreation experience could be improved during summer and fall, respondents identified better access,

Themes & Priorities

maintenance, parking solutions, traffic management, more trails and addressing trail maintenance and conflicts.

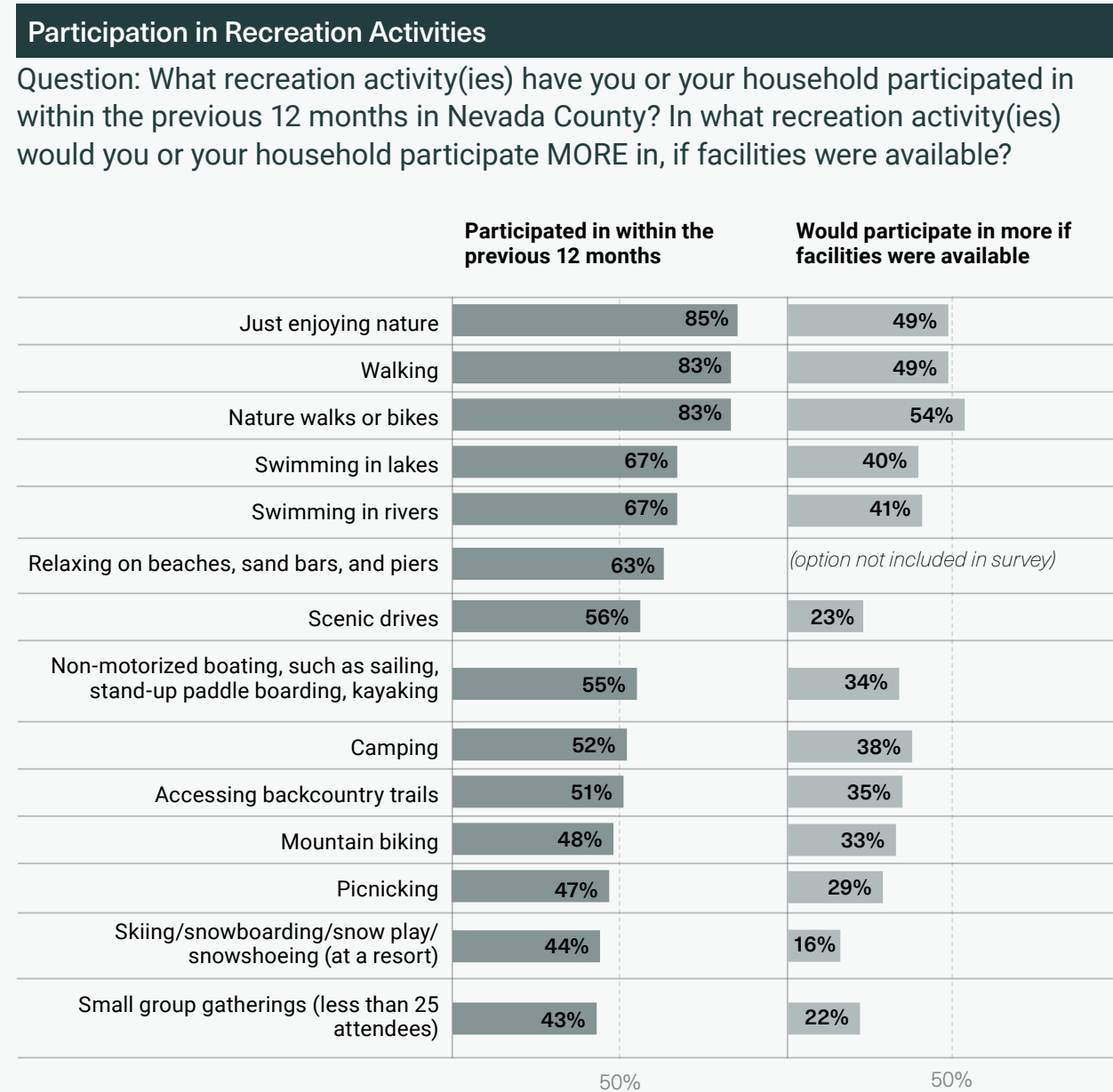
Recreation in Western, Central, and Eastern Nevada County

Access to parks, trails, and open spaces was important to respondents from both western and central Nevada County because it allows for the quiet enjoyment of nature and preserves and promotes stewardship of sensitive landscapes. Respondents in central Nevada County indicated that they travel outside of central Nevada County to recreate.

In addition to recreation being important because it allows for the quiet enjoyment of nature and it preserves and promotes stewardship of sensitive landscapes, respondents from eastern Nevada County noted the importance of recreation providing greater connectivity and opportunities for walking and biking.

The most popular recreation sites for respondents from eastern Nevada County in the summer and fall were Donner Lake West End Beach, the Truckee River Legacy Trail, Tahoe National Forest, Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District facilities, and Donner Summit and Truckee-Donner areas. The most popular recreation sites in the winter and spring were Donner Summit ski areas and the Truckee River Legacy Trail.

Figure 20: Survey 1 Responses | Participation in Recreation Activities and Potential Participation



Themes & Priorities

Figure 21: Survey 1 & 2 | Summary of Desired Organized Recreation & Play Projects

Project Recommendations
 Questions: What would improve your recreation experience? What facilities are needed?



Out of the above project categories, identify your top three.



*Percent of respondents who selected a project type as one of their top three priorities for organized recreation and play in Nevada County

Participation in Recreation Activities

When asked which recreation activities they or their households participated in during the previous year, the most common answers across the county included just enjoying nature, walking, nature walks or bike rides, and swimming in lakes and rivers. When asked which recreation activities their household would participate in more if facilities were available, the five most common responses were nature walks or bike rides, just enjoying nature, walking, swimming in rivers, and swimming in lakes, as seen in Figure 21. The same five activities appear on each of these lists, indicating that survey respondents feel the existing facilities for their favorite activities are insufficient.

Project Recommendations

Project ideas collected during the first survey were organized into two categories, "Organized Recreation & Play" and "Outdoor Recreation". During the second survey, respondents were asked to prioritize the project types collected in each category.

As an outcome of the second survey, respondents identified pickleball courts as a top priority for "Organized Recreation & Play". A number of projects are already underway to address this need throughout the county. Respondents also prioritized updating and maintaining fields and facilities and increasing neighborhood park space.

Themes & Priorities

Comments mentioning a recreation center and a skate or bike park represented almost a fifth of all write-in survey responses.

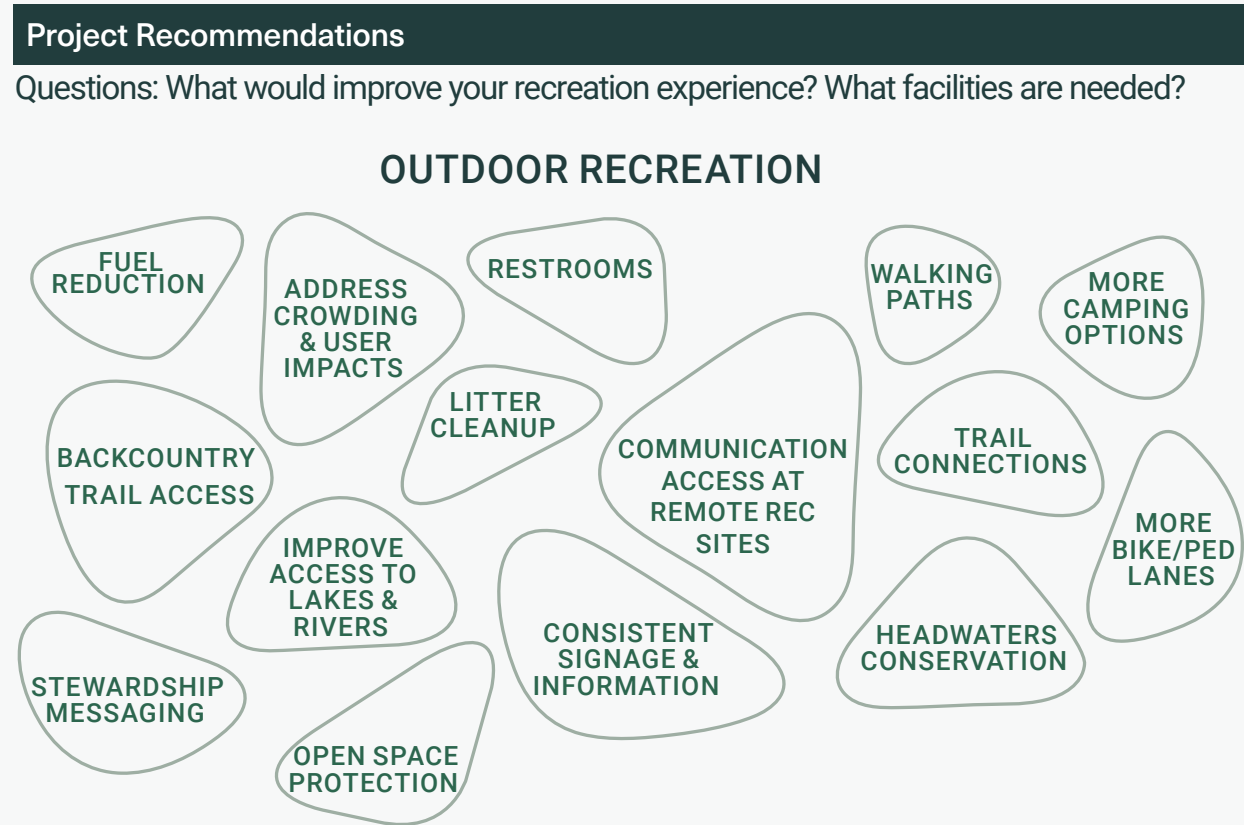
When asked to prioritize projects related to “Outdoor Recreation,” survey respondents identified the need for increased bike and pedestrian connectivity. Creating trail connections and overall connectivity was a priority for 39 percent of survey respondents. The most common trail or connection types requested include bike and pedestrian lanes and ADA-accessible shared-use or walking paths.

Access and Communication

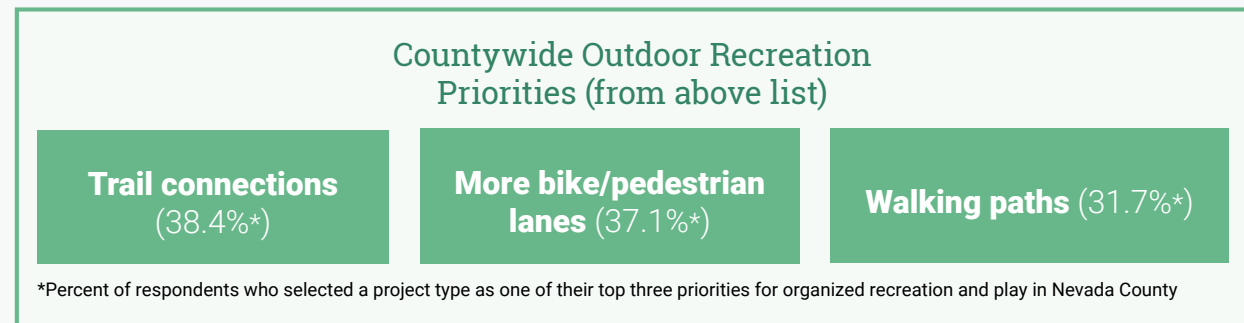
Access and Barriers to Recreation

Trails were identified as the most accessible type of recreation facility in Nevada County, with 53 percent of survey respondents sharing that a trail is easy to walk or bike to from their home. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents said they can easily access a natural area or natural open space by walking or biking from their home. The most challenging facilities to walk or bike to were libraries (accessible to 16 percent of residents) and community centers (accessible to only 7 percent of residents). A third of responses noted that none of the listed facilities were easy to walk or bike to from their home.

Figure 22: Survey 1 & 2 | Summary of Desired Outdoor Recreation Projects



Out of the above project categories, identify your top three.



Themes & Priorities

The top five barriers or detractors from using parks, trails, rivers, lakes, or open spaces more often were lack of available parking, crowding, resource degradation, and lack of restrooms. Parking was identified as a more significant issue in winter and spring than in summer and fall. Other barriers to recreation cited by survey respondents included poor trail networks (“trails don’t connect to where I want to go”), lack of enforcement, feeling unsafe, facilities being too far from home, or user conflicts on trails.

Information and Communication

Digital tools were identified as the top sources for information related to recreation.

Survey respondents cited internet search tools, websites, mobile applications, and social media as the top four methods of finding information. Other less common sources of information include talking to community members in public settings, printed maps and brochures, and newspapers. While 59 percent of respondents found it very or somewhat easy to find information about recreation, there is room for improvement as over a third of survey respondents said getting information is challenging.

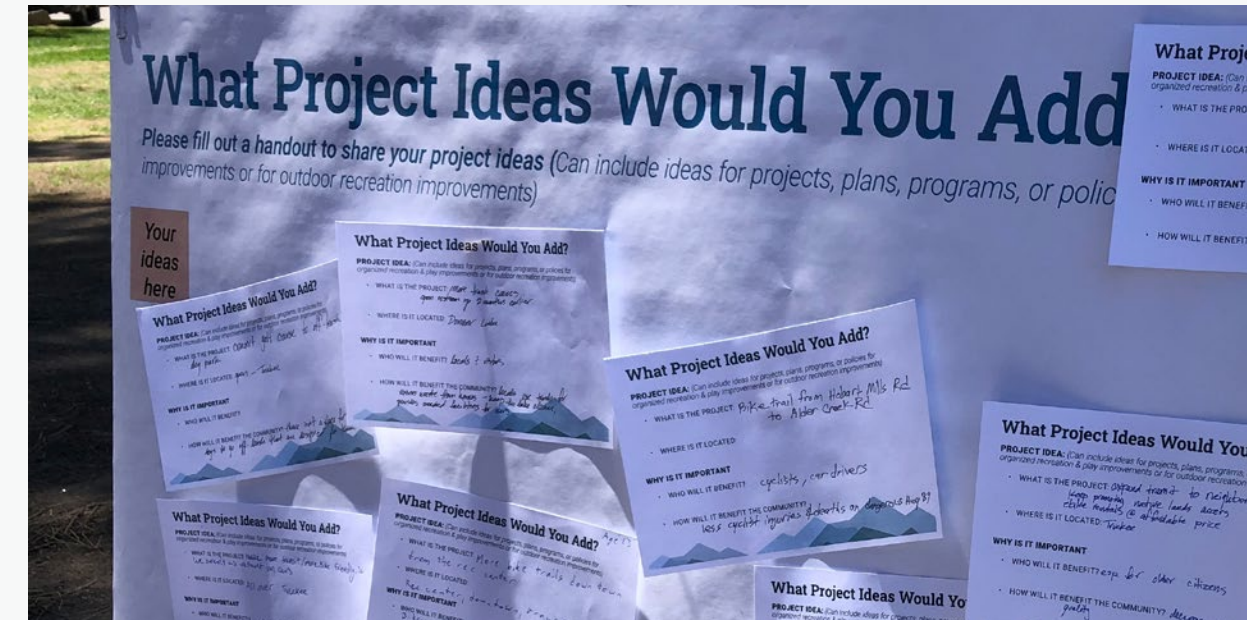
When asked the reasons that prevent survey takers from using parks, trails, rivers, lakes,

or open spaces more often, 18 percent of respondents said they were unfamiliar with what recreation is available and 14 percent referenced a lack of user guides or trail maps. This indicates a need to balance digital and physical resources to suit the preferences of facility users.

Emerging Project Types

As input from the Core Team, stakeholders, and residents was reviewed and organized, a refined list of projects and common themes began to emerge. Values, or prioritization criteria, described by the Working Group and by the Core Team were used as a filter to assess the projects and organize them into common themes. Insights from the professional assessment of the park facilities, inventory, and needs were layered into the assessment along with consideration of future conditions and threats.

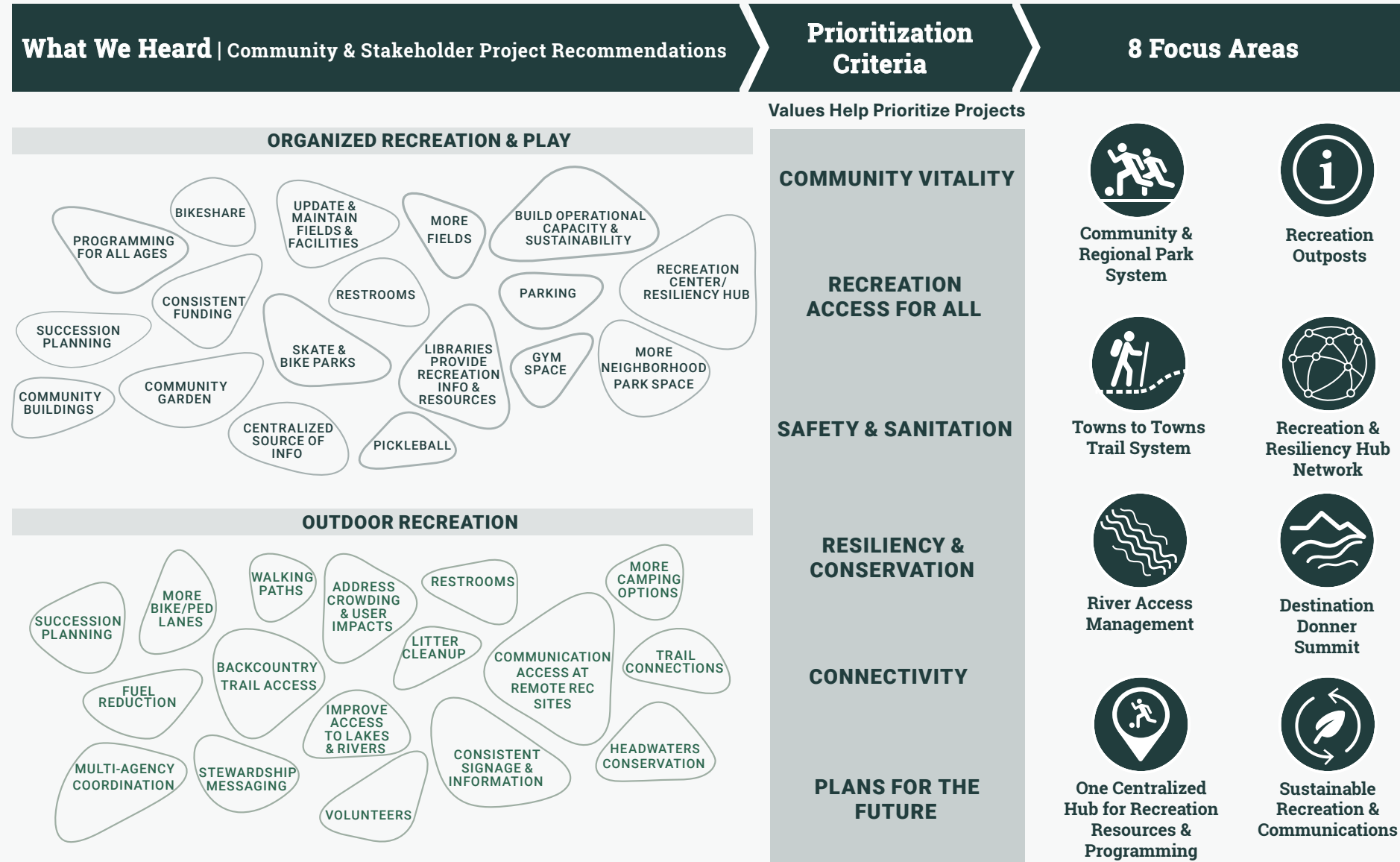
The full suite of projects was filtered through this lens to develop a recommendation for eight focus areas. Each of these areas includes a set of strategies, actions, projects and funding recommendations which are described in more detail in Chapter 8.



Truckee Day Micro-engagement event conducted during survey window 2

Themes & Priorities

Figure 23: Values Prioritize Projects into Focus Areas



Themes & Priorities

Review of Focus Areas and Project Recommendations

The third survey gathered feedback on the eight focus areas that were identified following the second survey. Survey three respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities as well as the focus area they thought was the primary priority. The review of recreation district specific facilities and programs were also included on the survey, aiming to gather information on where survey respondents go to recreate, how often they recreate at indoors and outdoor facilities, and what additional facilities are needed.

As an outcome of the third survey, respondents identified River Access Management, Towns to Towns Trail System, and Community & Regional Park System as top priority focus areas. There was an overwhelming majority of respondents that thought it was important or very important to add additional community park space in their district.

Figure 24: Survey 3 | Top 3 Priorities out of the 8 Focus Areas

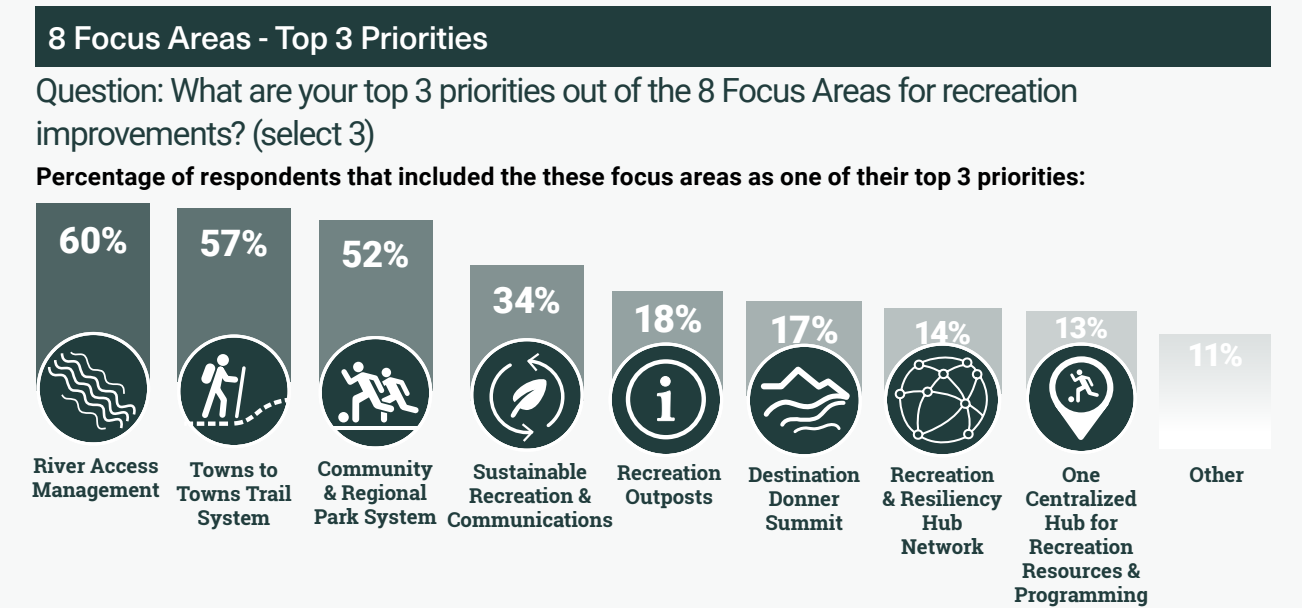
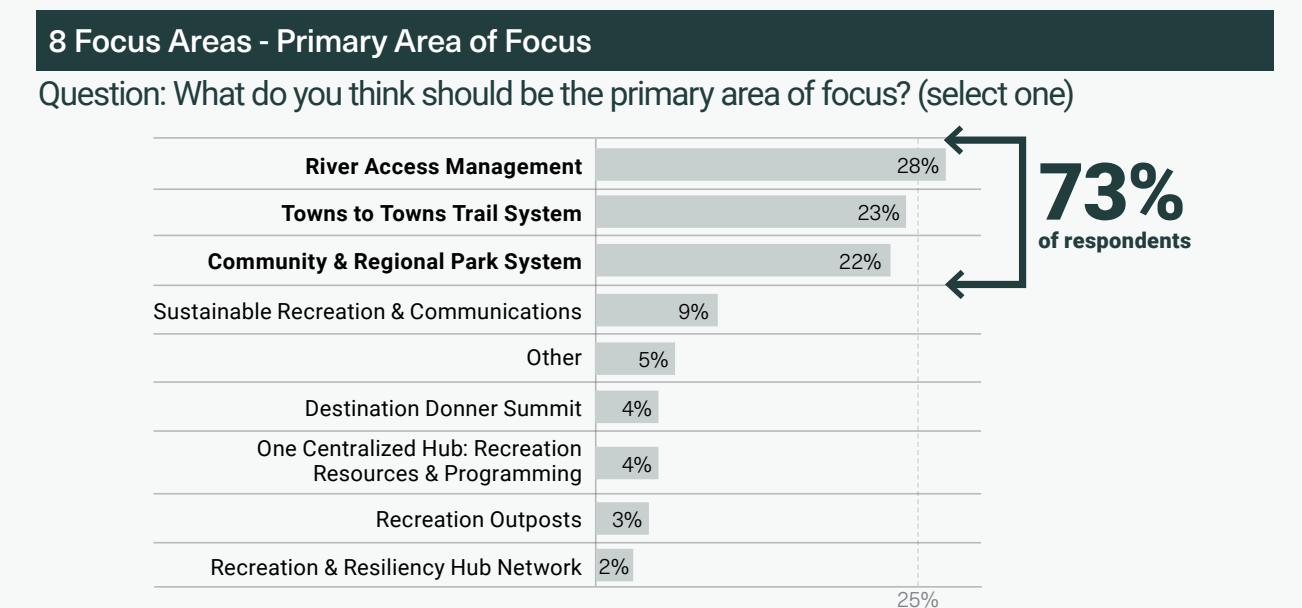
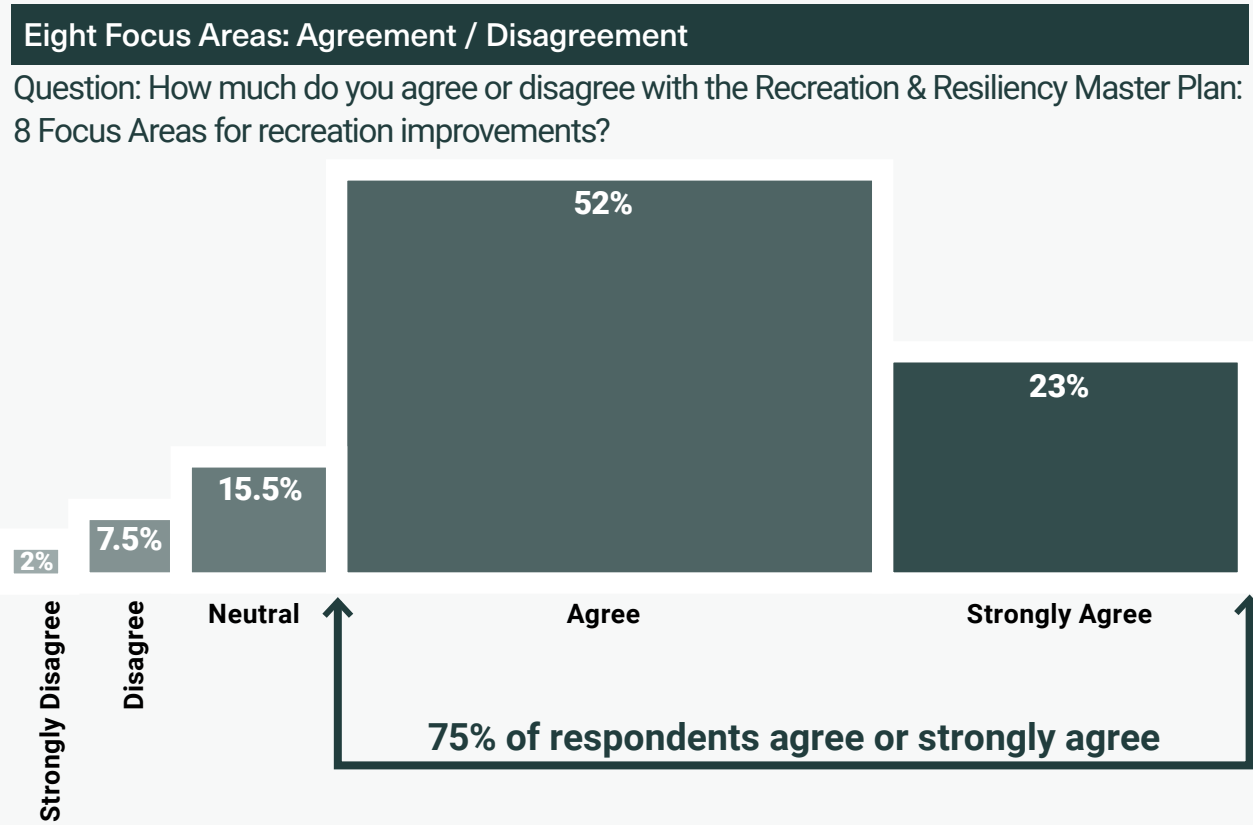


Figure 25: Survey 3 | Primary Area of Focus



Themes & Priorities

Figure 26: Eight Focus Areas: Agreement / Disagreement



What specific project(s), if any, do you feel should be a top priority?

Top responses from the open ended question:

- River access management
- Safety on trails, in parks, and in parking lots of recreation facilities
- Connecting communities with bike and trail connectivity
- Park and trail maintenance
- Facilities and programs for all ages
- Fire management

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 3



Truckee Day Micro-engagement event conducted during survey window 2



Oak Tree Community Park design charrette site walk