

# 4

## LOCAL, COMMUNITY, AND REGIONAL PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAMS

A stylized graphic of a mountain range with various shades of blue and teal, positioned at the bottom of the page behind the main title text.



# Goals & Opportunities

Parks and facilities that offer recreation and leisure activities like sports, play, fitness, community events, and relaxation can contribute to the wellbeing and quality of life of residents. In small, rural towns, public spaces are also where people gather to create social connections.

This Plan categorizes local, community, and regional parks and facilities as “Organized Recreation” for four districts and two cities in Nevada County. Key takeaways, goals and opportunities are provided in the following pages.

A detailed summary of existing inventory and resources is described later in the chapter, in order to understand the current state of Organized Recreation in Nevada County.



Western Gateway Regional Park, Penn Valley

## Key Takeaways

- The County of Nevada does not have a Recreation & Park division, but supports the efforts and operations of some recreation providers through administrative tasks and identify funding opportunities.
- Volunteers, nonprofit organizations, “Friends of” groups, businesses and others are important to sustaining recreation countywide through fundraising and in-kind labor that fills capacity gaps.
- The Nevada County Library System and community libraries are located within or near parks and provide recreation programming, equipment rentals and other complementary services that could be expanded upon.
- Disparities in funding and offerings exist between the eastern and western portions of Nevada County.

### In Western Nevada County:

- Financial and staffing constraints are challenges for the recreation and park districts, with all three having significantly lower operating budgets and staffing than the national average or lowest quartile of agencies.
- Grants have been secured to renovate and enhance parks and facilities, but a lack of sustainable or sufficient funding impedes operations, administration, and maintenance.

- Recreation & Park Districts, and potentially the cities, could benefit from sharing resources and developing additional funding sources to address deferred maintenance and labor needs.
- Additional playgrounds and community parks or recreation amenities could be provided in rural locations like Greater Higgins or Alta Sierra to improve the level of service goal for Bear River Recreation & Park District.
- Indoor recreation facilities are needed in some areas to meet programming demands for all ages and abilities.
- It is difficult for residents to find or discover what recreation programming, services or amenities are available as there is not a central directory or registration platform that exists in western Nevada County.

### In Eastern Nevada County:

- Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District offers abundant park and recreation opportunities. A comparison of their staffing levels and an operating budget to national benchmarks indicates that the district is adequately funded.
- Additional playgrounds and community parks or recreation amenities could be provided in rural locations like Soda Springs, Floriston, and Hirschdale.



Truckee River Regional Park McIver Arena, Truckee



Shared-use path adjacent Western Gateway Regional Park



# Goals & Opportunities

- Goals for Organized Recreation**
1. Provide diverse, accessible, multi-generational opportunities to support healthy communities.
  2. Increase role of community parklands and facilities in countywide resiliency strategies.
  3. Increase awareness and use of organized recreation and program offerings.
  4. Increase funding and operational resources for fiscal and operational sustainability.
  5. Maximize existing resources and address maintenance needs of existing parks.

**Table 6:** Goals & Opportunities for Local, Community, and Regional Parks, Facilities & Programs (Part 1)

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES   LOCAL, COMMUNITY, AND REGIONAL PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAMS		
Goal	1. Provide diverse, accessible, multi-generational opportunities to support healthy communities.	2. Increase role of community parklands and facilities in countywide resiliency strategies.
Opportunities	1.1 Reinvest in existing parks to offer quality amenities and continue to adapt park offerings to appeal to a range of users.	2.1 Invest in equipment and maintenance practices to continually improve irrigation efficiencies.
	1.2 Ensure ADA access requirements and special needs for all ages are accommodated including consideration of comfort, safety, and surfaces.	2.2 Consider opportunities for solar powered lighting and solar parking shade structures with major park renovations.
	1.3 Provide opportunities for fully accessible, special needs play.	2.3 Install wildland fire suppression systems as part of irrigation approaches, where appropriate.
	1.4 Support parks as vibrant community spaces that empower residents to contribute to their neighborhood identity.	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.
	1.5 Strategically build new local park facilities such as playgrounds, multi-use lawn areas, and picnic spaces in underserved areas.	2.5 Consider transitioning maintenance fleets to electric vehicles.
	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).	2.6 Improve energy efficiency of buildings through recommendations provided in Nevada County Energy Action Plan.
	1.7 Expand the “Art in Public Spaces” program to outdoor and indoor park and recreation spaces.	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.

Continued on next page

Nevada County General Plan (1995), updated (2014), Area Plans and Partner Organization Planning Documents

# Goals & Opportunities

**Table 6:** Goals & Opportunities for Local, Community, and Regional Parks, Facilities & Programs (Part 2)

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES   LOCAL, COMMUNITY, AND REGIONAL PARKS, FACILITIES & PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)			
Goal	3. Increase awareness and use of organized recreation and program offerings.	4. Increase funding and operational resources for fiscal and operational sustainability.	5. Maximize existing resources and address maintenance needs of existing parks.
Opportunities	3.1 Provide information on park offerings and events that is relevant, easy to find, and user friendly.	4.1 Diversify financial strategies to include new and increased methods of funding for projects and maintenance.	5.1 Actively address deferred maintenance.
	3.2 Promote existing services and expand participation.	4.2 Confirm Nevada County’s role in leadership to advance the fiscal and operational stability of recreation districts.	5.2 Prior to constructing new buildings or facilities, optimize assets of local and regional partners (e.g., schools, college, library, nonprofits, fire stations).
	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.	4.3 Provide consistent, centralized administrative and operational support for interested western Nevada County recreation districts.	5.3 Ensure new development has provided funding for on-going maintenance and capital replacement.
	3.4 Develop programming and park amenities that promote wellness, placemaking, and connect to Nevada County’s culture, heritage, and art.	4.4 Foster board and volunteer succession planning.	5.4 Consider long-term operations and maintenance prior to building new facilities.
	3.5 Support programs and facility development for youth and young adults, particularly during before- and after-school enrichment and activities.	4.5 Evaluate opportunities to form a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) as an organizational structure for shared resources of interested western Nevada County recreation districts.	
		4.6 Develop and identify the roles and responsibilities, policies, and agreements needed to increase operational sustainability of the western Nevada County recreation 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.	

Nevada County General Plan (1995), updated (2014), Area Plans and Partner Organization Planning Documents

## Park Access and Level of Service

Counties, cities, and agencies across the nation use level of service (LOS) standards as a metric to understand the amount and type of park facilities their residents have and to identify gaps. Although the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) uses LOS as one benchmark, there is recognition that every community is different and the need for parks and recreation amenities varies based on resident desires, demographics, land use planning, geography, and proximity to open space owned by federal and state agencies.

In Nevada County, the goal for how many parks or acres of park are available for residents is established by the RPDs, local cities, and town. The RPDs in western Nevada County have identified three acres of park per 1,000 residents as their goal. Truckee-Donner RPD has a LOS standard of five acres of park

per 1,000 residents. The LOS benchmark of three acres per 1,000 residents is on par with the recommended access requirement by the State of California. In neighboring Placer and El Dorado counties, their cities and districts have a goal of five acres of park space for every 1,000 residents.

### Key Takeaways

A review of how much park space the districts are providing is summarized in the following tables. Oak Tree PRD and Western Gateway RPD have an adequate amount of park access for residents within their district boundaries. The Truckee-Donner RPD is slightly under its desired goal.

Bear River RPD is significantly under its LOS goal. Even with including fields and play equipment provided by schools, the area has less than one acre of park per every 1,000 residents, indicating a need for a park.



Truckee River Bike Park, Truckee

## Level of Service Comparisons

The 2023 National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review summarizes benchmark measurements for park and recreation agencies across the nation. On average, the level of service for independent districts is 9.5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The lowest quartile was 3.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents and the upper quartile was 15.0 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. Although Nevada County does not meet the level of service in many areas, it must be noted that there is a significant amount of land in public ownership that is available for utilization including open space, lakes, rivers, and trails.

The established level of service for the western Nevada County recreation and park districts and benefit zones is 3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, comparable to the lowest quartile on the national level.

In eastern Nevada County, the established level of service for Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District is 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 people. This goal includes a functional service population estimate of full-time and seasonal residents plus visitors that use recreation facilities throughout the year.

Table 6: Existing Park Level of Service

Existing Parks, Facilities, and Recreation & Park District Level of Service (LOS)					
Recreation District/ Benefit Zone	Parks and Facilities	Population	City/Rec District Acres (Amount per 1,000 residents)	School District Acres <sup>2</sup> (Amount per 1,000 residents)	Level of Service (Amount per 1,000 residents)
Oak Tree Park & Recreation District <sup>1</sup>	<i>Public Parks and Facilities</i> Oak Tree Community Park North San Juan Community Center North Columbia Cultural Center	2,388	14.72 acres (6.30 LOS)	1.89 acres (0.81 LOS)	7.10  (LOS standard is 3 park acres/1,000 people)
Western Gateway Recreation & Park District <sup>1</sup>	<i>Public Parks</i> Western Gateway Regional Park	15,612	87.00 acres (5.57 LOS)	1.99 acres (0.13 LOS)	5.70  LOS standard is 3 park acres/1,000 people
Bear River Recreation & Park District <sup>1</sup>	<i>Public Parks and Facilities</i> Higgins Lions Community Center Magnolia Sports Complex (Includes Gary D. Clarke Turf Field) Dr. Ralph Shaffarzick Park Higgins Pond Mathis Pond (BYLT) Adam Ryan Preserve (BYLT)	23,777	8.67 acres (0.36 LOS)	11.84 acres (0.50 LOS)	0.86  (LOS standard from Nevada County General Plan is 3 acres park/1,000 people; Bear River RPD Master Plan identifies a LOS of 5 acres park/1,000 people)  Indicates additional park acreage is needed

Nevada County General Plan (1995), updated (2014) and Area Plans

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>2018 Parks and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study

<sup>2</sup> Acreage adjusted to reflect equivalent park acres available for the public as calculated in the 1997 Nexus Study

Bear River Recreation & Park District is below the LOS standard, which indicates additional park acreage is needed.



# State of the System | Organized Recreation

**Table 7:** Existing Park Level of Service (continued)

Existing Parks, Facilities and Recreation & Park District Level of Service (LOS) (Continued)						
Recreation District/ Benefit Zone	Parks and Facilities	School District	Population	City/Rec District Acres (Amount per 1,000 residents)	School District Acres (Amount per 1,000 residents)	Level of Service (Amount per 1,000 residents)
Grass Valley/Nevada City Recreation Benefit Zone <sup>1</sup>	<b>Public Parks and Facilities</b> Condon Park Minnie Park Dow Alexander Park Memorial Park and Pool DeVere "Dee" Mautino Park Elisabeth Daniels Park Glenn Jones Park Northstar Mining Museum Tobiassen Field Calanan Park Pioneer Park with Pool, Seaman's Lodge, and Amphitheater Railroad Museum Firehouse #1 Museum	<b>School District</b> Grass Valley School District Nevada City School District Nevada Joint Union High School District Union Hill Elementary School District Chicago Park Elementary School District Sierra College	40,006	119.48 (2.99)	22.56 (0.56)	3.55  (LOS standard is 3 park acres/1,000 people)
Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District	<b>Public Parks and Facilities</b> Downtown Park Meadow Park Floriston Park Shoreline Park Glenshire Ballfields Truckee River Regional Park West End Beach Riverview Sports Park Donner Lake Boat Launch Facility Donner Lake Public Piers	<b>School District</b> Tahoe/Truckee Unified TA 1 Elementary School District Tahoe/Truckee Unified TA 2 Elementary School District Tahoe/Truckee Unified TA 4 Elementary School District	17,100 + seasonal residents = 25,757 (functional service population) <sup>4</sup>	118.85	Per 2023 Nexus Study update, school acreage not included in level of service	4.5  (TDRPD LOS standard is for 5 park acres/1,000 people)

Sources:  
<sup>1</sup>2018 Nevada County Parks and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study  
<sup>2</sup>Acreage adjusted to reflect equivalent park acres available for the public as calculated in the 1997 Nexus Study  
<sup>3</sup>Privately-accessible park acreage is not attributed toward level of service because the facilities are not available to the general public  
 Facilities shown for reference only  
<sup>4</sup>2023 Truckee-Donner RPD Park Impact Fee Nexus Study Update

**Truckee-Donner is below their LOS standard, which indicates additional park acreage is needed.**

# State of the System | Organized Recreation

## District Operations

The type and quantity of park space and activities offered within park and recreation facilities varies widely across the nation, which makes it difficult to establish staff and operating budget standards. In order to provide some level of comparisons for decision-making, NRPA has worked to summarize levels of operating budgets and staffing based on different factors, such as population served, acres of park provided, and number of staff.

A review of the association's 2023 metrics revealed the three recreation and park districts located in western Nevada County have significantly lower operating budgets and staffing than both the national average or the lowest quartile of agencies. This difference in budget and staffing levels is shown in Table 8.

In eastern Nevada County, there is a significant difference in the amount of park and recreation facilities and programming that is provided. Truckee-Donner RPD is able to maintain a higher operating budget and staffing levels due to major revenue sources derived from a dedicated property tax and parcel assessment. The district also generates almost 40 percent of its revenue from programming fees and charges.

Similar to many rural communities, financial and staffing constraints are challenging



Riverview Sports Park, Truckee

for recreation and park districts in western Nevada County who rely on volunteers and community-based organizations to help fill immediate funding and capacity gaps. Long-

term sustainable solutions are needed, and as such, are prioritized as part of this Master Plan's suite of recommendations.



# State of the System | Organized Recreation

**Table 6:** Average Annual Budget and Staffing

Average Annual Budget and Staffing Summary for Recreation & Park Districts				
Recreation & Park District	Average Annual Budget	Revenue Sources	Budget/Operating Expense Per Capita	Full Time Equivalent Staff, including Contractors (FTE)
<b>National Recreation &amp; Park Association 2023 Metric Agency Benchmark</b>	<b>Agencies w/ populations below 20,000</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median: \$1,200,000</li> <li>• Lower quartile: \$573,150</li> <li>• Upper quartile: \$2,482,403</li> </ul> <b>Agencies w/ less than 10 FTE's</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median: \$686,535</li> <li>• Lower quartile: \$400,000</li> <li>• Upper quartile: \$1,093,304</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Fund tax support (62%)</li> <li>• Earned/generated revenue (25%)</li> <li>• Parcel tax assessment (7%)</li> <li>• Other dedicated taxes (1%)</li> <li>• Grants and scholarships</li> </ul>	<b>Agencies w/ populations below 20,000</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median: \$120.79</li> <li>• Lower quartile: \$69.65</li> <li>• Upper quartile: \$229.61</li> </ul> <b>Agencies w/ less than 10 FTE's</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median: \$54.17</li> <li>• Lower quartile: \$20.83</li> <li>• Upper quartile: \$103.97</li> </ul>	<b>Agencies w/ populations below 20,000</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median: 11.3 FTE</li> <li>• Lower quartile: 6 FTE</li> <li>• Upper quartile: 22 FTE</li> <li>• Upper quartile for agencies serving 20,000 to 49,999 residents is 67.8 FTE</li> </ul>
<b>Oak Tree Park &amp; Recreation District</b>	\$33,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parcel tax assessment</li> <li>• Facility rental fees</li> <li>• Grants</li> <li>• Quimby funds</li> <li>• AB 1600 mitigation fees</li> </ul>	\$13	0.2
<b>Western Gateway Recreation &amp; Park District</b>	\$155,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parcel tax assessment (from 1998 with no cost of living adjustment)</li> <li>• Facility rental fees</li> <li>• Grants</li> <li>• Quimby funds</li> <li>• AB 1600 mitigation fees</li> </ul>	\$1	0.3
<b>Bear River Recreation &amp; Park District</b>	\$215,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of property tax in district boundaries</li> <li>• Cascade Crossing assessment</li> <li>• Program revenues</li> <li>• Facility rental fees</li> <li>• Quimby funds</li> <li>• AB 1600 mitigation fees</li> <li>• Grants</li> </ul>	\$9	2.4
<b>Truckee-Donner Recreation &amp; Park District</b>	\$13,500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of property tax in district boundaries</li> <li>• Parcel tax assessment</li> <li>• AB 1600 mitigation fees</li> <li>• Quimby funds</li> <li>• Program revenues</li> <li>• Facility rental fees</li> <li>• Grants</li> </ul>	\$524	60.5
			(District includes a recreation and aquatic center and provides high levels of recreation programming which skews the staffing levels in comparison to national and regional districts of similar size)	

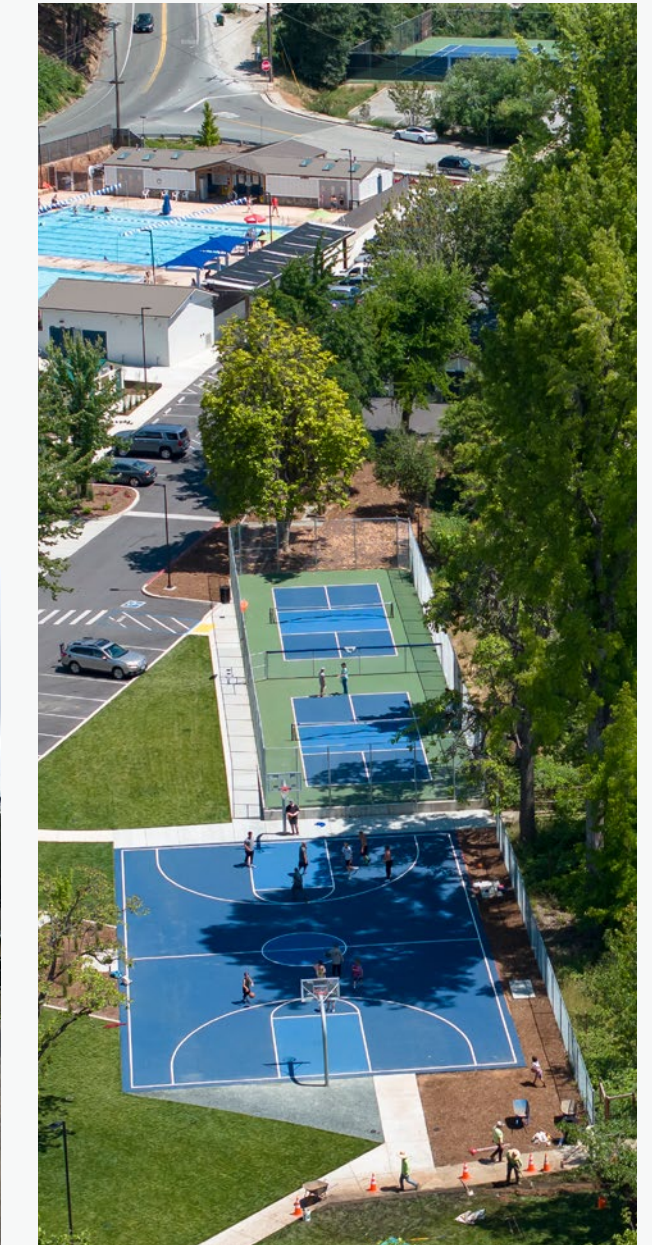
# State of the System | Organized Recreation

## Funding Needs for Western Nevada County Recreation and Park Districts

The average annual budget of the three recreation and park districts in western Nevada County range from 62 to 95 percent lower than national averages for districts with population levels below 20,000 people. Budget per capita is between 82 to 87 percent less than average. The districts could benefit from working together, alongside adjacent jurisdictions, to leverage resources and funding to supplement volunteer labor for maintenance and administrative needs.



Basketball Court, a school district facility utilized by Bear River RPD



Memorial Park, Grass Valley



# State of the System | Oak Tree Park & Recreation District



New ADA-accessible playground at Oak Tree Community Park

The Oak Tree Park and Recreation District (PRD) includes the unincorporated communities of North San Juan, North Columbia, and French Corral. Residents from Downieville and Camptonville in Sierra County, use the facilities for organized activities. The district owns and maintains one park, Oak Tree Community Park, which provides a full-sized field for multiple sports (e.g., softball, soccer, baseball, lacrosse).

The 11-acre site also includes a pond and several buildings with spaces that are leased to North San Juan Early Head Start program and the San Juan Ridge Community Library. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the library provided internet access to many families with school children for distance learning. Today, it is still used regularly as one of the area's only reliable sources of broadband internet.

## Facilities Overview

### Organized Recreation Facilities

Oak Tree Community Park: 11 acres

- ADA-accessible playground
- Multi-use field
- Pavilion
- Dirt track
- Community garden
- Walking path
- Track
- Pond

Park Facilities at the San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center: 8 acres

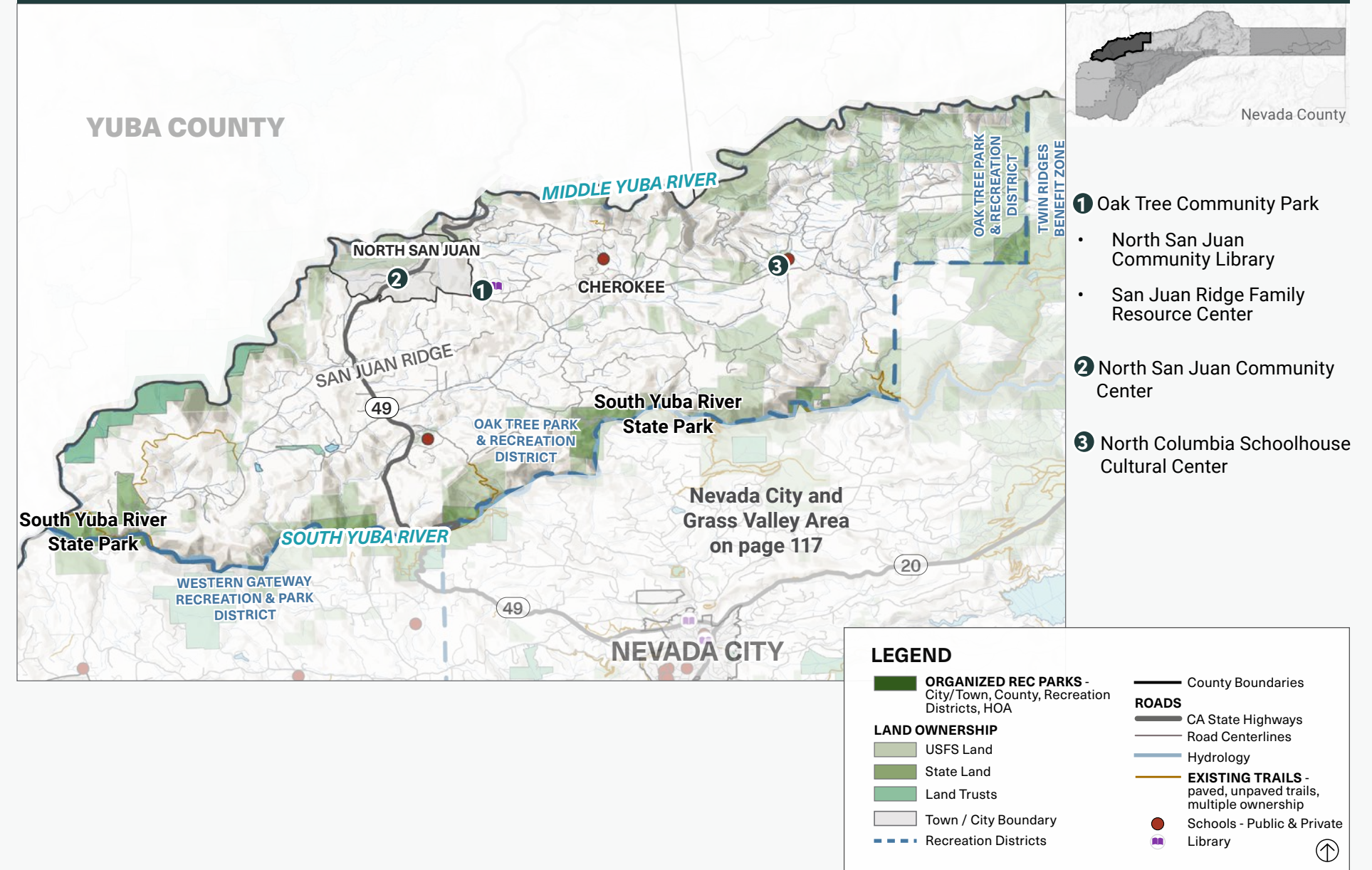
- Playground
- Basketball court
- Open lawn area
- Community garden

Other Community Facilities:

- North San Juan Community Library (located at Oak Tree Community Park)
- San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center
- North San Juan Community Center
- North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center
- Mountain Valley Child & Family Services
- Grizzly Flat School (includes fields, courts and playground)

# State of the System | Oak Tree Park & Recreation District

## FACILITIES WITHIN OAK TREE PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY





# State of the System | Oak Tree Park & Recreation District



Grinding rocks from the Nisenan are located along the walking path at Oak Tree Community Park, presenting preservation and educational opportunities.



The pond is home to endangered species and is an attractive feature that can be restored.

Although sustainable funding for the district is limited, the volunteer board has successfully completed a number of projects through community fundraising and grants. Improvements include a new playground, shaded pavilion, picnic areas, parking lot lighting, ballfield dugouts and bleachers, and brush clearing.

The site has an inoperable bathroom which is closed to use. Restroom facilities are provided through the use of portable facilities located close to the entry.

In addition to providing park access, the library offers recreation and community programming. The adjacent parcel, owned by the Twin Ridges School District, is home to the San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center



The track encircling the ballfield is well used and in need of repair to provide a consistently usable surface.

## Funding Overview (2016-2023)

- Annual budgets from FY 2016 through 2023 ranged between \$33,000 to \$51,000
- Special assessment is primary revenue source
- In FY 2018, a large influx of recreation development mitigation funding doubled the annual revenue for the year
- Strong volunteer board
- Grounds keeper lives on property with a stipend for all maintenance and security (allows for 8 hours per week estimated)
- Contract staff for board secretary, bookkeeping, etc.
- Contracts with the North San Juan Ridge Community Library which leases building space and pays for all utility fees
- Utilizes resource sharing where possible
- Grants: Prop 68 grant in 2021 to install a playground with ADA path (\$111,952); purchase of the play equipment was through local fundraising

# State of the System | Oak Tree Park & Recreation District

(FRC) which provides indoor and outdoor play and recreation amenities. A shared community orchard is planned for the hill connecting the two sites.

Oak Tree PRD has limited funding and has passed up opportunities to acquire the adjacent FRC parcel due to deferred site maintenance associated with the parcel and buildings (estimated at over \$500,000). The FRC does host summer sports programming on the field at the community park.



Stairs and pathway connections between Oak Tree Community Park and the Family Resource Center pose a safety hazard and are in need of renovation and repair.

Priorities for the Oak Tree PRD include sustainable funding for maintenance and administrative costs. Grant funding that supports the vision for the community and wellness functions of the two sites may provide an avenue to address maintenance issues while enhancing its art and cultural aspects. Future revenue generating potential may be explored by increasing the use of the park by regional groups who may rent the field or facilities to offset operational costs.



The Family Resource Center, owned by Twin Ridges School District, includes a number of smaller buildings that offer community services.

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Continue to leverage community volunteers, donations, and sponsorships
- Enhance connectivity with adjacent San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center site: stairs and improved pavement/surfacing of roads and walkways
- Address maintenance of track around the multi-use field and provide a stable, well-drained surface for the pathway
- Tell the story of the site's cultural and natural history through an enhanced trail network with interpretive signage and visual connectivity to pond
- Continue efforts to address maintenance across the site
- Provide seating (tables and benches) for community members to comfortably access Wi-Fi for work force development, education, etc.
- Explore opportunities for revenue generation from regional markets while keeping park access and programming inexpensive or free for local residents

**See Chapter 7 for additional park enhancement and connectivity recommendations**



# State of the System | Western Gateway Recreation & Park District



Floating in Squirrel Creek at Western Gateway Regional Park, Penn Valley

The Western Gateway Recreation and Park District (RPD) is located in Penn Valley and serves the unincorporated communities of Penn Valley, Lake Wildwood, and Rough & Ready. The 87-acre Western Gateway Regional Park draws people from beyond the service area, including Yuba County residents from Beale Airforce Base, Smartsville, Marysville, and Yuba City.

The Regional Park provides several courts and fields, a disc golf course, bike park, and several community gathering and performance spaces. The district is mostly run and supported by volunteers, with many

of the amenities designed and maintained by community-based organizations through partnership agreements.

The dog park, for example, is the only off-leash dog park in the district, which is managed by the nonprofit "Friends of Western Gateway Dog Park". The dog park encompasses two acres and has four exercise yards with a variety of agility equipment and is situated in the shade of the surrounding oak trees.

Squirrel Creek runs through the regional park and offers a place to cool off during the summer. Access is primarily located near the

## Facilities Overview

### Organized Recreation Facilities

Western Gateway Regional Park: 87 acres

- Dog park
- Disc golf course
- Bike park
- 3 Playgrounds
- Ballfields (softball, baseball & soccer)
- Paved walking/biking paths
- Tennis/pickleball courts
- Basketball courts
- Bocce ball courts
- Remote control car tracks
- Stage pavilion
- Amphitheater
- Picnic areas
- Squirrel Creek
- Buttermaker's Cottage
- New RV park addition (to be completed by 2028)

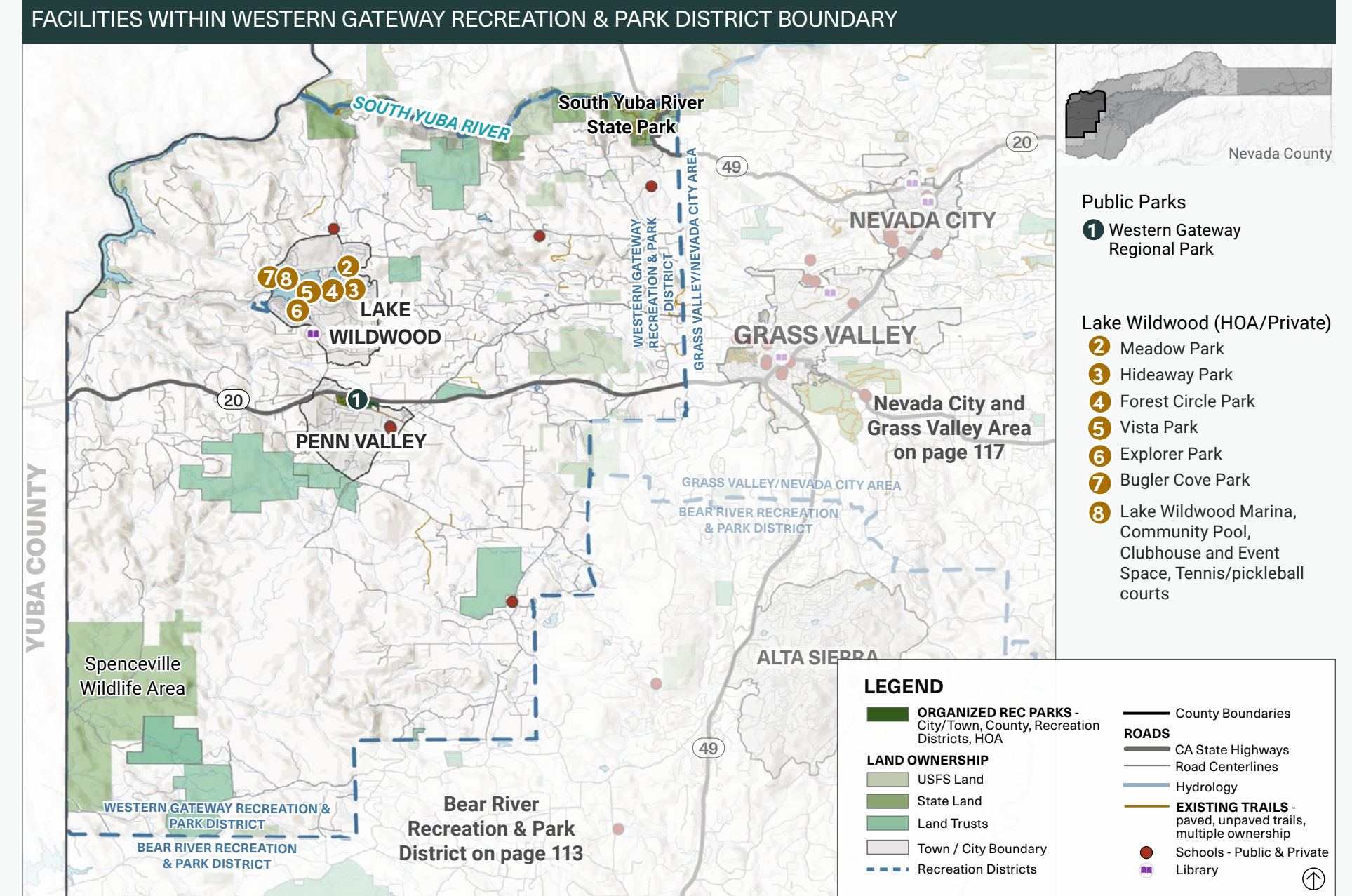
### Other Community Facilities:

- Planned: Community Center (under development at nearby parcel)
- Penn Valley Union Elementary
- School District schools
- Penn Valley Library
- Ready Springs Partners Family Resource Center

### Lake Wildwood Facilities (Private): 24 acres

- Meadow Park
- Hideaway Park
- Forest Circle Park
- Vista Park
- Explorer Park
- Bugler Cove Park
- Golf course
- Lake Wildwood Marina
- 30 acre lake (water sports, fishing)
- Open space
- Paved walking/biking paths
- Community pool
- Clubhouse and Event Space
- Tennis/pickleball courts

# State of the System | Western Gateway Recreation & Park District





# State of the System | Western Gateway Recreation & Park District

roadway and bridge crossing with an informal trail that follows the creek and beach-like areas that connect to an adjacent lawn with playground.

At 87 acres, the regional park provides a wide variety of amenities and opportunities to recreate. The stage pavilion and lawn seating host concerts and community activities year-round. A paved pathway along Penn Valley Drive creates a welcoming pedestrian/bicycle connection that extends from a Caltrans Park-n-Ride facility to the Penn Valley business district. Users, of all ages and abilities, can be seen accessing the path for fitness, socializing or one of the many public transit stops along the route.

Overall, the park is organized into five general areas. Vehicular access from Penn Valley



A variety of play facilities and community event spaces are available for use.

Drive occurs in three locations, but the vehicular and paved pedestrian paths do not connect all of the different park facilities or general areas within the park boundary. For example, there is not a way to go to the tennis/pickleball courts from the ballfields without exiting the park on Penn Valley Drive in order to re-enter at the parking area for the tennis/pickleball courts. Enhanced signage, wayfinding, and circulation would improve overall safety and connectivity.

As a whole, the park offers popular attractions and facilities that are valued by residents and visitors. Deferred maintenance and repairs need to be addressed to support use and demand. For example, the tennis/pickleball courts have cracking and weeds that impede play. Long-time irrigation repairs are costly to the operating budget due to



Tennis/pickleball courts are weeded by volunteers but are in need of significant repair.

## Funding Overview (2017-2023)

- Annual budgets from FY 2017 through 2021 ranged between \$135,000 to \$155,000
- Parcel tax assessment of \$12.94 is a flat rate that provides \$108,000 in revenue annually
- Revenues from fees total \$50,000 per year, derived from selling firewood and facility rentals of picnic areas, baseball fields, Stage Pavilion, and Buttermaker's Cottage
- Strong volunteer board
- Minimal fundraising provided by the Western Gateway Park Foundation
- Three part-time employees, two maintenance positions, and one office position
- Recreation Development Fee (AB 1600 & Quimby), collected by Nevada County
- Grants received:
  - CA State Parks Rural Recreation & Tourism funds (\$1,144,634) for a new RV park and improvements to three ballfields and amenities
  - CA State Parks Prop 68 funds for playground improvements

# State of the System | Western Gateway Recreation & Park District

excessive utility fees from leaks. And, the bike park requires continual maintenance due to surface erosion that is making it unusable. In addition to considering grants, the Western Gateway RPD should explore passing a new parcel fee that annually adjusts for cost-of-living (COL) increases. The current fee of \$12.94 was passed in 1998 with no annual adjustment, which makes the current purchasing power today less than \$6.75. Lake Wildwood residents pay parcel fees but they also have access to private amenities which they pay for through HOA dues.

The Western Gateway RPD has grant funding for a RV park which is intended to be a revenue generator. Completion of a business plan and marketing strategy as part of the



The dog park is well-used and offers a wide variety of equipment.  
Image Credit: Friends of Western Gateway Dog Park

improvements can help make that goal a reality.

In addition to continuing to leverage community sponsors, donations, and volunteers, other strategies may be considered to reduce annual maintenance and operating expenses. One approach is to reconsider investing in existing facilities in ways that provide long-term sustainable improvements. For example, across the nation many park districts are finding the need to switch bike park pump tracks from dirt to asphalt. This has shown to reduce the labor hours needed to reform the lines but it also increases the days a bike park may be open, especially after a rainy or stormy winter season.



The bike park and skills course were developed by a volunteer group.

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Continue to leverage community volunteers, donations, and sponsorships
- Improve park connectivity with a paved pathway system and signage within the park that links different use areas and creates a pedestrian and bicycle loop system
- Support pathway connectivity of the regional park to Lake Wildwood to reinforce importance of the regional park to all district residents
- Evaluate park maintenance needs and develop a capital improvement plan that identifies funding strategies
- Explore the feasibility of voter-approval to replace the existing parcel tax with a parcel tax with annual cost-of-living adjustment
- Develop business and marketing plan for RV park and facility rentals

**See Chapter 7 for Master Plan prioritized projects and recommendations**



A national trend for bike parks is to convert dirt pump tracks into asphalt to extend use and reduce maintenance.



# State of the System | Bear River Recreation & Park District



Multi-use field in Bear River Recreation & Park District

The Bear River Recreation & Park District (RPD) includes the unincorporated communities of Alta Sierra and Lake of the Pines. Funding is provided by rental revenues, program fees, grants, and a small portion of the property taxes collected within RPD boundaries.

Similar to the other districts in western Nevada County, it is mostly volunteer led. A full time general manager was recently hired in the fall of 2023, and is supported by part-

time staff for programming and operations. The district does not have facilities, except for a small community park at Cascade Crossing, but is able to utilize fields and facilities through a joint use agreement with the Pleasant Ridge Union School District for Magnolia Sports Complex located at Magnolia Intermediate School.

In 2023, Bear River Recreation & Park District completed resurfacing of a 2.5 acre synthetic multi-use field at the sports complex, known

## Facilities Overview

### Organized Recreation Facilities

#### Magnolia Sports Complex: 16 acres

Located adjacent to Bear River High School, Magnolia Intermediate School, and Cottage Hill School

- Gary D. Clarke Turf Field
- Baseball/softball fields
- Multi-purpose fields
- Soccer field
- Outdoor basketball field
- Disc golf course
- Horseshoe pit
- Outdoor volleyball
- Playground
- Track

#### Other Public Parks & Community Facilities:

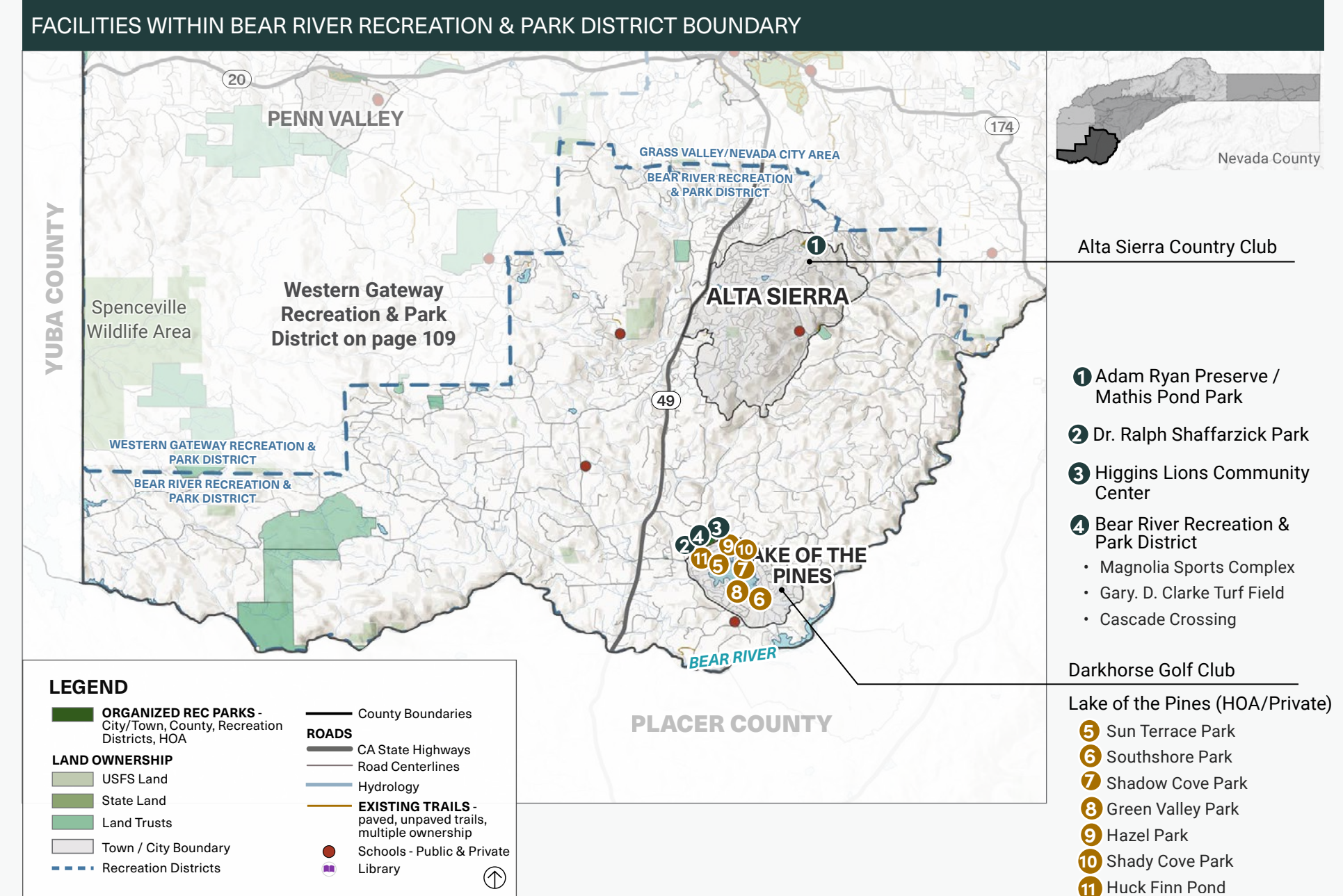
- Dr. Ralph Shaffarzick Park
- Higgins Lions Community Center
- Mathis Pond Park
- Adam Ryan Preserve
- Bear River Library
- Higgins Pond
- Alta Sierra School
- Clear Creek K-8 School
- Alta Sierra Golf Course
- Dark Horse Golf Course
- Pleasant Ridge Elem. School
- Forest Lake Christian School

#### Lake of the Pines Facilities

##### (Private): 24 acres

- Sun Terrace Park
- Southshore Park
- Shadow Cove Park
- Green Valley Park
- Hazel Park
- Shady Point Park
- Golf course
- Huck Finn Pond
- Marina & 230-acre lake
- Pool

# State of the System | Bear River Recreation & Park District





# State of the System | Bear River Recreation & Park District

as Gary D. Clarke Field, funded by state and county grants.

The district provides recreational and sports programs for youth and adults, including after-school and camp activities, with registration offered through its website. Availability is limited due to limited facilities, with many offerings in high demand. Additional park and gym space would provide opportunities for additional programming.

The private community of Lake of the Pines is located within district boundaries. Residents of the homeowner association pay dues to access a community pool and fitness

center and have access to six parks, a pond, recreational lake and golf course.

A comparison of estimated growth rates for the county shows that this area, defined by Bear River RPD boundaries, is anticipated to be one of the faster growing regions of Nevada County, which may be due to its proximity to the Sacramento metro and regional growth pressures. In particular, Lake of the Pines had an estimated annual growth rate of 0.31 percent compared to annual growth rate estimates of 0.18 percent, 0.01 percent, and 0.01 percent for Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee, respectively.



Basketball courts by the Magnolia Sports Complex



Pathway adjacent the Gary D. Clarke Turf Field

## Funding Overview (2014-2024)

- FY 22-23 budget: approx. \$215,000
- Program and facility rental fee average annual revenues: \$125,000
- Property tax FY 22-23 revenue: \$6,000
- Recreation Development Fee (AB 1600 & Quimby), collected by Nevada County
- Cascade Crossing Landscape & Lighting Fund revenue: \$60,000
- Grants: recently renovated the Gary D. Clarke Field through Nevada County ARPA allocations, Prop 68, and CA State Parks Rural Recreation and Tourism funding \$377,952

# State of the System | Bear River Recreation & Park District

Overall, the district is in need of additional park space, to meet level of service standards and as identified in the 2003 Bear River Recreation & Park District Master Plan and 2023 Greater Higgins Area Plan.

The Bear River RPD does not have a district-wide special tax or assessment to support its operations. However, residents of the



The Greater Higgins Area Plan highlights the need for additional community park space and opportunity sites for consideration.

Cascade Crossing development pay an annual assessment to maintain Dr. Ralph Shaffarzick Park, with its walking trail, pond, and improvements that may be incorporated at the site.

In the summer of 2004, the district sought approval of a per-parcel assessment to raise revenues for operations. The measure failed to pass by less than one percent. Since that time, the Bear River RPD has been able to maintain the status quo for programming and field access but has not been able to meet new park and programming demands. A recommendation of this Plan is to revisit the feasibility of a special assessment for parks and recreation facilities and operations for the district.



The District has developed a disc golf course at the Magnolia Intermediate School.

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Build off successful sports and community program offerings
- Investigate opportunities to utilize and transform low-cost nearby indoor space to provide programming requiring gym space (e.g., utilize empty warehouse space)
- Provide a new regional park to serve district residents
- Provide access to playground and multi-use field space for residents who may not have access when schools are in session
- Continue partnership with schools to provide access to fields, courts, and playgrounds
- Explore the feasibility of passing a voter-approved special assessment to support sustainable funding for park maintenance, staffing, and increased park and recreation program offerings and facilities

**See Chapter 7 for Master Plan prioritized projects and recommendations**



# State of the System | Grass Valley & Nevada City Area

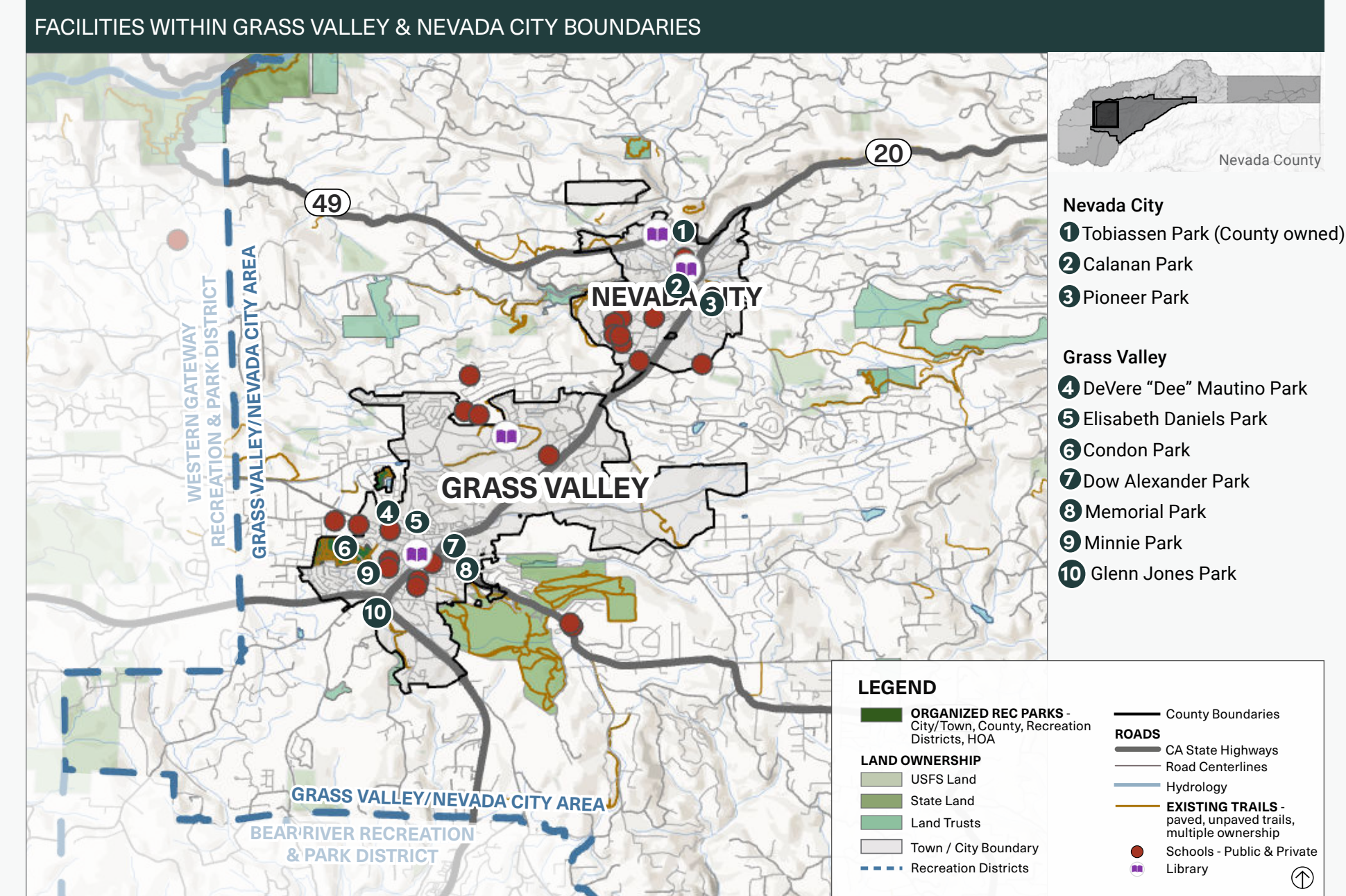


Park improvements at Memorial Park in Grass Valley

Grass Valley and Nevada City are the two incorporated cities in western Nevada County. Together, along with a portion of surrounding unincorporated areas, the cities comprise the Grass Valley/Nevada City Recreation Benefit Zone which serves approximately 23,000 people.

Facilities Overview		
<b>Organized Recreation Facilities</b>		
Public Parks: 120 acres		
<b>Grass Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elizabeth Daniels Park</li> <li>Glenn Jones Park</li> </ul>	<b>Public Schools and Community Facilities with Recreation</b> <i>See Chapter 7 for more facilities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northstar Mining Museum</li> <li>LOVE Building</li> <li>Scout Lodge</li> <li>Seaman's Lodge and Amphitheater</li> <li>Railroad Museum</li> <li>Firehouse #1 Museum</li> <li>Nevada County Fairgrounds</li> <li>Gold Country Senior Services</li> <li>Madelyn Helling Library</li> <li>Grass Valley Library</li> <li>Litton Field</li> <li>NEO Bright Futures for Youth Center</li> <li>FREED Independent Living Resource Center</li> <li>Lyman Gilmore Middle School</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condon Park</li> <li>Memorial Park and Pool</li> <li>Minnie Park</li> <li>Dow Alexander Park</li> <li>DeVere "Dee" Mautino Park</li> </ul>	<b>Nevada City</b>	
<b>Public Park Amenities:</b>		
<b>Grass Valley</b>	<b>Nevada City</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor basketball courts</li> <li>Tennis &amp; pickleball courts</li> <li>Disc golf</li> <li>Dog park</li> <li>Baseball/softball fields</li> <li>Soccer fields</li> <li>Picnic pavilions</li> <li>Playgrounds</li> <li>Skate park (plans for expansion)</li> <li>Swimming pool</li> <li>Ped/bike paths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bocce ball</li> <li>Outdoor basketball courts</li> <li>Tennis &amp; pickleball courts</li> <li>Dog park</li> <li>Baseball/softball fields</li> <li>Multi-purpose fields</li> <li>Picnic pavilions</li> <li>Playgrounds</li> <li>Swimming pool</li> <li>Ped/bike paths</li> <li>Amphitheater</li> <li>Skate park (plans in development)</li> </ul>	

# State of the System | Grass Valley & Nevada City Area





# State of the System | Grass Valley & Nevada City Area

Grass Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2001), City of Grass Valley Strategic Plan (2022)

## Grass Valley

Grass Valley maintains 108+ acres of parks that include seven developed parks and a public swimming pool, but does not have a Parks & Recreation Department. Local nonprofit and community-based organizations partner with the City to organize and manage sports and recreation programming throughout these facilities. Participation is open to people throughout the area.



Skate park at Condon Park in Grass Valley

Condon Park is an 80-acre regional park that includes a skate park, dog park, disc golf course, ballfields, pond, sports courts and playground. It is a hub of activity year-round. Memorial Park has recently undergone extensive renovations including expansion of the swimming pool (which is operated by the YMCA), addition of two pickleball courts and a basketball court, plus softball field improvements.

Expenses for recreation purposes are embedded in Public Works. Grass Valley does have a Parks and Recreation Master Plan from 2001, and the 2022 Strategic Plan identified 19 short and long-term projects to improve park amenities.

The Measure E fund is generated from 1 percent of sales tax, which has been applied towards recreation improvements since 2018. Funds have also been leveraged to maximize co-benefits and grant funds, with many awarded to the City in recent years. For example, Prop 64 funding will support improvements to the skate park.

In order to enhance recreation programming, the City purchased recreation management software to allow for online registration, reservations, and payments. In 2021, staff implemented a new Trumba calendar on the City's website where sports clubs, organizations and others can view and

## Funding Overview (2014-2024)

### Grass Valley

- Average annual recreation budget: \$435,000
- Estimated fee revenue: \$40,000
- AB 1600 FY 22-23 revenue: \$50,000
- Quimby Act FY 22-23 revenue: not listed
- E. Daniels Park Fund balance: \$103,325
- Over \$10.5M in Measure E funds have been allocated to park improvements (22% of program expenditures)
- Grant awards from the Community Development Block Grant, Prop 64, and Prop 68 have accelerated recreation investments

### Nevada City

- Average annual budget: \$500,000
- Estimated rentals and programming revenue: \$125,000
- AB 1600 FY 21-22 revenue: \$2,357
- Quimby Act FY 21-22 revenue: \$2,640
- Grant awards from the State of California include Prop 64, Prop 68 and Recreational Trails program funds
- One full-time, year-round employee and approximately 35 seasonal staff
- ARPA funds have been set aside for recreation planning and infrastructure that will need to be obligated by December 2024

# State of the System | Grass Valley & Nevada City Area

City of Grass Valley Strategic Plan (2022)

schedule or reserve use for any of the City-managed facilities.

## Nevada City

Nevada City has a Parks & Recreation Department that oversees up to 4 percent of the City's General Fund expenses for operating and maintaining its facilities. These include two developed parks, an outdoor swimming pool, one field, and associated amenities.

Revenues are received from fees and charges from facility rentals and the many summer programs and recreational classes the department manages. The department employs one full-time employee year-round and approximately 35 seasonal staff during the summer months.



Ballfield at Pioneer Park in Nevada City  
Image Credit: Nevada City

The City has made Parks and Recreation as one of seven priorities from 2022-2027.

Pioneer Park is the city's most developed park. It includes 16 acres of sports fields and courts, picnic areas, playground, open lawn area with an amphitheater, a swimming pool, and other amenities.

Anticipated projects on the horizon include tennis court and playground improvements at Pioneer Park, as well as the development of a new skate park which will be funded through a Prop 64 grant, similar to Grass Valley. The City also anticipates to develop a citywide parks master plan to more fully identify and plan for park and recreation improvements over the next 10 years.



Horseshoe pits at Pioneer Park in Nevada City  
Image Credit: Nevada City

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Continued coordinating with local organizations for program and recreation offerings
- Coordination between cities and recreation and park districts to market and promote recreational programming and create a centralized website with a western Nevada County resource directory
- Continue updating and reinvesting in park facilities
- Evaluate the feasibility of a jointly operated indoor gym/fieldhouse facility that complements the indoor community programming facilities offered by local community organizations and nonprofits
- Continue partnerships with libraries and schools to provide access to fields, courts, and playgrounds
- Evaluate improvements at Tobiassen Field as a strategy to meet the needs for ballfields in Nevada City

**See Chapter 7 for Master Plan prioritized projects and recommendations**



# State of the System | Twin Ridges Area



Viewpoint overlooking Tahoe National Forest and Twin Ridges Area

The Twin Ridges area stretches across the central portion of Nevada County. The Tahoe National Forest comprises the majority of the area. No publicly available local, community, or regional park facilities exist in the area. The populated area has less than 300 people – with 99 people estimated to reside in the Town of Washington as of 2022 and 14 estimated to reside in Graniteville. The rural nature of the community and limited number of permanent residents suggest that

development of significant local park facilities are not needed at this time. Consideration for access to a facility that provides community meeting space could be an opportunity. A local fire station or other existing community buildings may be considered.

The majority of needs associated with the Twin Ridges area relate to the South Yuba River, trails, recreation use management, and reducing wildfire risk through fuels management. **See Chapters 5, 6, and 7.**

## Facilities Overview

### Organized Recreation Facilities

This area of Nevada County does not have local, community, or regional parks with fields, courts, or playgrounds.

### Other Community Facilities:

- Twin Ridges Elementary School District / Washington School
- Washington Fire Department

### Funding Overview (2014-2024)

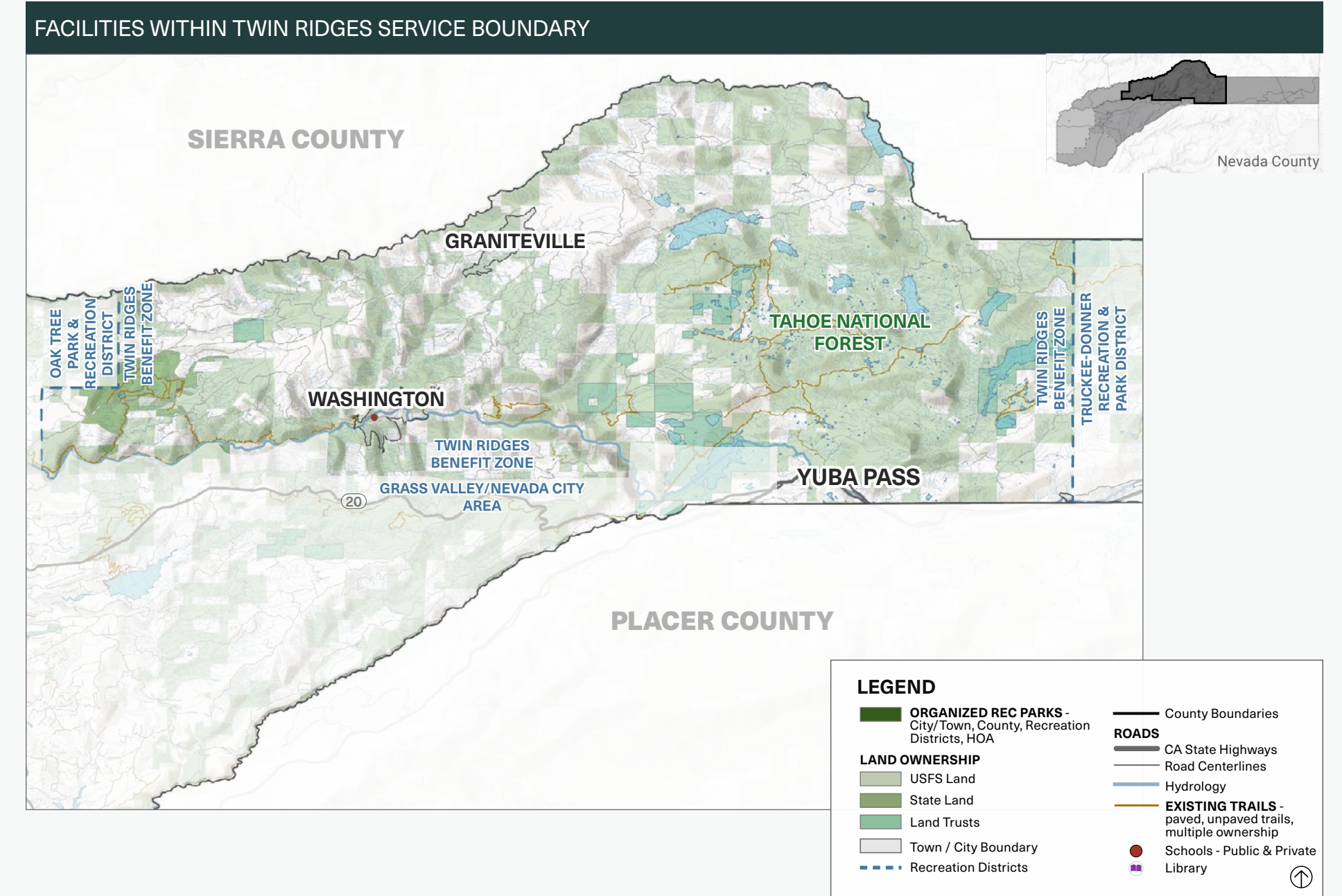
- Recreation Development Fee for the area associated with the Twin Ridges Recreation Benefit Zone are collected and administered by Nevada County
- The Recreation Development Fee is an impact fee on new residential development in order to fund the cost of new or expanded parks and recreational facilities attributable to the new development. The 2024 projected balance is \$4,916
- Due to terrain, access, and the high percentage of Federal land ownership, little to no new development is anticipated in the area
- Measure A was passed in 2024, which may be used by the Twin Ridges School District to improve facilities and serve as matching funds for grants

### Potential Actions to Consider

- Although a small community, with access to federally-owned open space, residents may benefit from access to a community facility that is multi-functional during both normal operations and times of emergency or disaster response

**See Chapter 7 for Master Plan prioritized projects and recommendations**

# State of the System | Twin Ridges Area



PLACER COUNTY

**LEGEND**

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkgreen;"></span> ORGANIZED REC PARKS - City/Town, County, Recreation Districts, HOA	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:1px solid black;"></span> County Boundaries
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen;"></span> USFS Land	<b>ROADS</b>
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:mediumseagreen;"></span> State Land	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px solid black;"></span> CA State Highways
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightseagreen;"></span> Land Trusts	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:1px solid black;"></span> Road Centerlines
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border:1px solid black;"></span> Town / City Boundary	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:1px dashed blue;"></span> Hydrology
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px dashed blue;"></span> Recreation Districts	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px dashed orange;"></span> EXISTING TRAILS - paved, unpaved trails, multiple ownership
	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightcoral; border-radius:50%;"></span> Schools - Public & Private
	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border-radius:50%;"></span> Library



# State of the System | Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District



Ballfields at Truckee River Regional Park

Truckee-Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD) was established in 1963 (prior to the incorporation of the Town of Truckee) and serves an estimated functional population of over 25,000 in an area from the Nevada state line to Donner Summit. It is the primary recreation and park service provider for the Town of Truckee and the surrounding unincorporated areas of both Nevada County and Placer County. District amenities include two recreation centers, an aquatics center, multi-purpose regional park, sports field

## Facilities Overview

### Organized Recreation Facilities

District Parks: 119 acres

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downtown Park</li> <li>Meadow Park</li> <li>Floriston Park</li> <li>Shoreline Park</li> <li>Glenshire Park</li> <li>Truckee River Regional Park</li> <li>West End Beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Riverview Sports Park</li> <li>Donner Lake Boat Launch Facility</li> <li>Donner Lake Public Piers</li> <li>Ponderosa Golf Course</li> </ul>
---	--

### Community Facilities (Owned by District or Others):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Recreation Center and Aquatic Center</li> <li>Community Arts Center</li> <li>Mclver Rodeo Arena</li> <li>Truckee Library (new facility planned)</li> <li>Veterans Hall</li> <li>Donner Memorial State Museum</li> <li>KidZone Museum</li> <li>Northwoods Clubhouse &amp; Pool</li> <li>Old Truckee Jail Museum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donner Trail Elementary</li> <li>Glenshire Elementary</li> <li>Truckee Elementary</li> <li>Alder Creek Middle School</li> <li>Truckee High School</li> <li>Cold Stream Alternative</li> <li>Sierra Expeditionary Learning School</li> <li>Sierra Continuation High School</li> <li>Truckee Railroad Museum</li> </ul>
--	--

### Public Park Amenities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor basketball courts</li> <li>Tennis &amp; pickleball courts</li> <li>Bocce ball</li> <li>Disc golf</li> <li>Dog park</li> <li>Baseball/softball fields</li> <li>Soccer fields</li> <li>Multi-use fields</li> <li>Outdoor volleyball courts</li> <li>Picnic pavilions</li> <li>Playgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Par course</li> <li>Skate park (plans for expansion)</li> <li>Bike park (a destination bike park)</li> <li>Ped/bike paths</li> <li>Track</li> <li>Slow Food Lake Tahoe Community Garden</li> <li>Golf courses</li> <li>Fishing pier</li> <li>Ice rink (seasonal)</li> </ul>
---	--

### Homeowners Association/Private Amenities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tahoe Donner</b> - Northwoods Clubhouse &amp; Pool with Recreation Hut, Alder Creek Adventure Center, Trout Creek Recreation Center, Golf course, snowplay</li> <li><b>Glenshire</b> - Clubhouse, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sierra Meadows</b> - Clubhouse, outdoor swimming pool, picnic area, tennis courts</li> <li><b>Martis Camp</b> - Recreation Center, outdoor swimming pool, tennis and pickleball courts, golf course, fishing pond</li> <li><b>Lahontan</b> - Recreation Center, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, golf course</li> </ul>
---	--

# State of the System | Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District

## FACILITIES IN TRUCKEE-DONNER RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT BOUNDARY IN NEVADA COUNTY

Note: TDRPD includes facilities in Placer County which are not shown on the map.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coyote Moon Golf Course</li> <li>Tahoe Donner Trout Creek Recreation Center &amp; Golf Course</li> <li>Donner Memorial State Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Recreation Center &amp; Swimming Pool</li> <li>Riverview Sports Park &amp; Truckee Bike Park</li> <li>Old Greenwood Golf Course</li> <li>1 Glenshire Park</li> <li>2 Community Arts Center Downtown Park</li> <li>3 Truckee River Regional Park                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mclver Rodeo Arena</li> <li>Truckee Ice Rink (seasonal)</li> <li>Truckee Skate park</li> <li>Slow Food Lake Tahoe Community Garden</li> </ul> </li> <li>4 Meadow Park</li> <li>5 Shoreline Park</li> <li>6 Donner Lake Public Piers &amp; Donner Lake Boat Launch</li> <li>7 West End Beach</li> <li>Ponderosa Golf Course</li> </ul>
---	---

### LEGEND

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ORGANIZED REC PARKS</b> - City/Town, County, Recreation Districts, HOA</li> <li><b>LAND OWNERSHIP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USFS Land</li> <li>State Land</li> <li>Land Trusts</li> </ul> </li> <li>Town / City Boundary</li> <li>Recreation Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Boundaries</li> <li><b>ROADS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CA State Highways</li> <li>Road Centerlines</li> </ul> </li> <li>Hydrology</li> <li><b>EXISTING TRAILS</b> - paved, unpaved trails, multiple ownership</li> <li>Schools - Public &amp; Private</li> <li>Library</li> </ul>
--	--



# State of the System | Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District

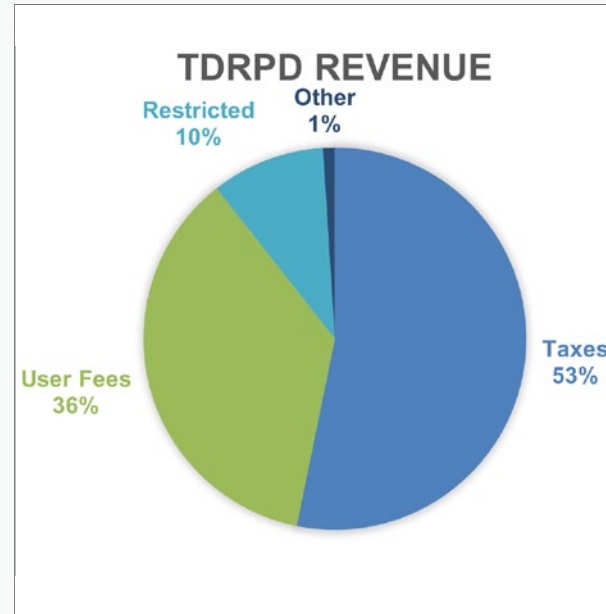
complex, bike park and pump track, five community parks, a golf course, skate park, veteran's hall, a boat launch and two public beaches at Donner Lake.

Facilities are typically well-maintained and see significant use by both area residents, seasonal homeowners, and area visitors. In particular, the 11-acre bike park is an internationally renowned and popular destination with its world class features that include pump tracks, dirt jumps, flow lines, dual slalom track, XC trail, drop zone, slopestyle features, and more.

The developed park areas are primarily located near or within the Town of Truckee. Tahoe Donner, one of the nation's largest homeowners associations, and other master planned communities offer park and recreation amenities for residents. Residents of more rural communities, such as Soda Springs and Hobart Mills, generally need to drive to Truckee to access a playground or open lawn area associated with park space.

The TDRPD operates the largest day care and pre-school in the area and has a full schedule of sports, arts and culture programming designed for all ages. Future and current planning includes a newly expanded skate park and new pickleball court complex plus the addition of a community library and KidZone museum at the regional park.

Figure 27: TDRPD Revenue Pie Chart



Revenue source breakdown in 2022

The district is governed by an elected board of five, is financially healthy and maintains a six-month cash reserve. It has a reputation for innovative funding to advance programming and build facilities. This includes using a combination of leveraging community/volunteer sources, grants, and fundraising.

With respect to ongoing operations, the district is sustainably funded through a combination of program revenues, county property taxes, Quimby fees and AB1600 developer mitigation fees.

## Funding Overview (2014-2024)

- In FY 2020, 56% of the TDRPD General Fund revenue came from property taxes and an \$8/parcel assessment for parcels within district boundaries
- No property tax revenues, mitigation fees, or Quimby revenues are received from the Placer County portion of the District
- Restricted revenues include Quimby and AB1600 fees collected from new residential building permits used for land acquisition and park and trail development projects. Park impact fees can be used to fund the cost of new or expanded park and recreational facilities. Grants and donations designated for specific projects are also restricted to specific uses
- Program revenue accounts for 36% of revenues. These are fees collected for facility use and programming. Fees are determined on a five-tiered system based on an algorithm of user fee sensitivity, market rate comparison, cost recovery and community benefit and overall demand
- The remaining 1% of the budget is comprised of interest income and sale of fixed assets

# State of the System | Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District

## Success Story: Community Recreation & Aquatic Center

In 2009, the TDRPD constructed a 40,000 sq. ft. community recreation center financed by Certificates of Participation (COP). The facility was completed at \$7 million under budget. Rather than repay the money, the district determined that they could further leverage the remaining funds to build additional facilities. In 2011, the TDRPD conducted an economic impact study and extensive outreach to determine the highest priority facilities and the likelihood of a

bond measure passing. Ultimately, TDRPD went out to an advisory vote on whether or not to utilize legislation for a Lighting and Landscape district which did not require a vote for development of public facilities.

The district renovated the former recreation center into a performing arts venue with a budget of \$195,000 with 40 percent of the cost being provided by donations and in-kind services to build the aquatic center that was completed in 2015.



Regional bike park by Riverview Park



Skate park at Truckee River Regional Park

## Potential Actions to Consider

- In addition to maintenance and renovation improvements, projects that are planned or underway include:
  - » Pickleball complex with 17 courts (location to be determine)
  - » Expansion of the Rocker Memorial Skate Park
  - » Signage, branding, and wayfinding improvements
  - » Expand inclusive offerings and impact (e.g., translating materials to Spanish and have Spanish speaking staff, expand inclusive programming)
  - » Nurture partnerships with other organizations (e.g., Truckee Tahoe Unified School District, area partners)
- Consider providing developed neighborhood park space in rural portions of the community to provide access to playgrounds and open lawn areas for play – evaluate co-locating space with other community facilities like schools and centrally locate to encourage use

**See Chapter 7 for Master Plan prioritized projects and recommendations**





# 5

## ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE, LAKES, & RIVERS



# Goals & Opportunities

The diversity of landscapes, lakes, and rivers combined provide abundant recreational opportunities year-round for residents and visitors of Nevada County. Hiking, gravel and road cycling, mountain biking, water sports, equestrian, OHV access, camping, and snow sports are just a few examples of how people access the great outdoors. Nevada County contains an extensive network of year-round and seasonal creeks, streams, and rivers, as well as reservoirs and high mountain lakes – a distinguishing feature of the recreation system. Additionally, the celebration of the county's culture and the variety of natural and working lands contribute to the rich sense of place and quality of life.



Bridgeport bridge over the South Yuba River

Numerous agencies and organizations work together to manage public lands and waterways. The second section of this chapter summarizes the different recreation offerings and the importance of natural and working lands in the county.

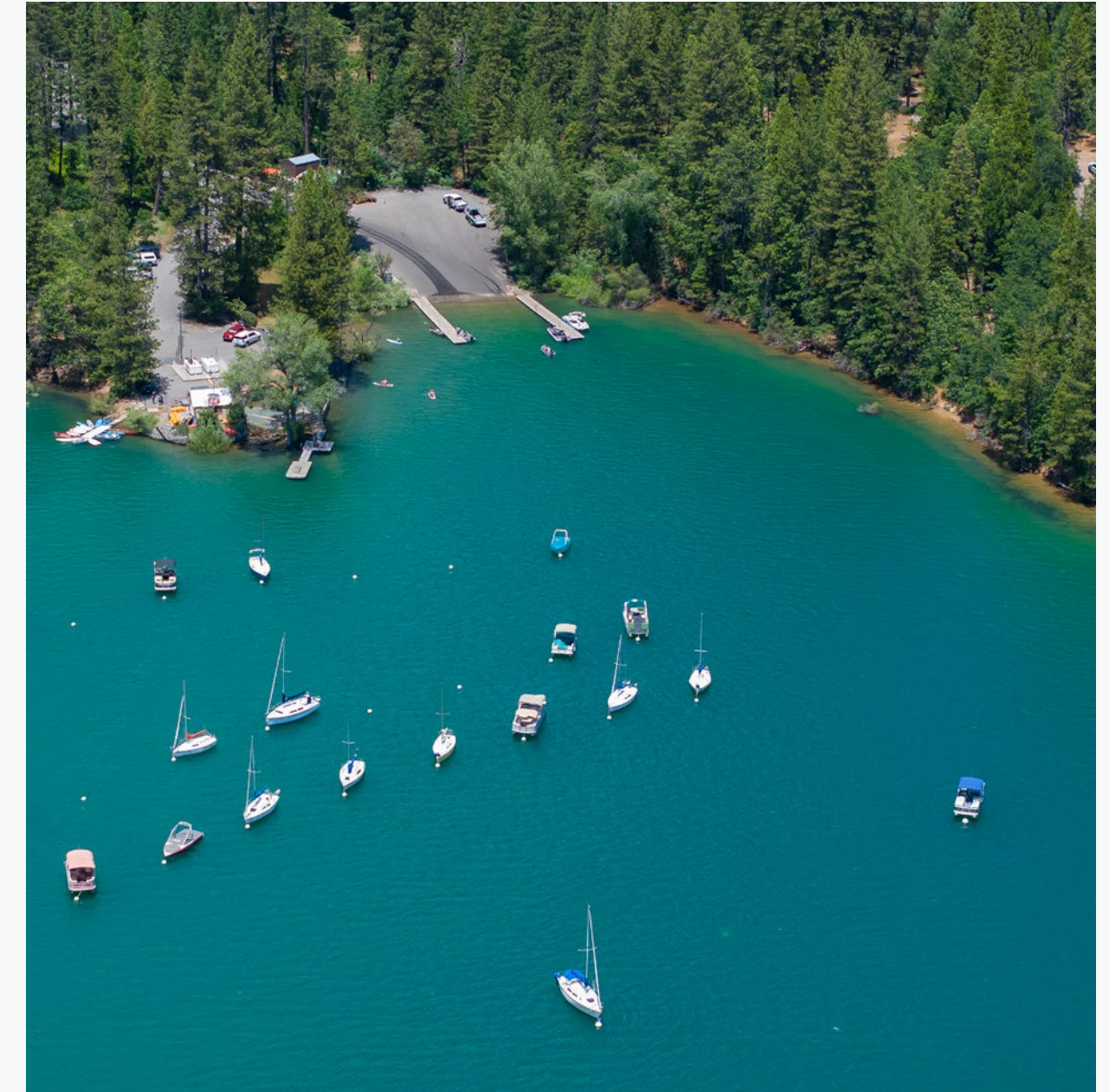
An overview of benefits, detailed summary of facilities and resources is described later in the chapter, in order to understand the current state of the system for open space, lakes and rivers in Nevada County.

## Key Takeaways

- Public lands and waters are managed by federal, state, and utility providers where recreation is often a part of their mission and project requirements.
- Local and national nonprofits and land trusts play a significant role acquiring, conserving, protecting natural lands, and providing places for people to access the outdoors.
- Agriculture is an integral part of Nevada County that bolsters the economy and provides jobs; it contributes to the sense of place, scenic beauty, and shapes the local identity.
- The offerings and quality of campground and public recreation access varies. Continued enhancement of campgrounds at high use lakes and reservoirs will be important to address increasing demand.
- Recreation often occurs in hard-to-reach places. With limited cellular broadband connectivity, recreationalists may not have access to maps and important information, therefore making it imperative to plan ahead before accessing the outdoors.
- Recreation areas that face the most acute risk are those with high traffic and visitation that also have high wildfire danger, limited communication service, and single lane or narrow roads serving them.

## Goals | 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.
2. Promote and support responsible and sustainable recreation.
3. Respect and build a resilient future for our agricultural lands.
4. Build a stewardship ethic.
5. Increase resiliency to natural disasters and a changing climate.
6. Recognize and support the value of recreation as an economic opportunity.
7. Maximize public and private dollars for financial sustainability.



Scotts Flat Reservoir



# Goals & Opportunities

**Table 6: Goals & Opportunities for Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers (Part 1)**

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES   ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE, LAKES, & RIVERS			
<b>Goal</b>	<b>1. Put nature first. Connect to tribal values and use the best available science to protect healthy ecosystems and restore degraded habitats.</b>	<b>2. Promote and support responsible and sustainable recreation.</b>	<b>3. Respect and build a resilient future for our agricultural lands.</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	1.1 Protect and enhance the headwaters of the Bear, Yuba, and Truckee Rivers for improving water infrastructure and carbon sequestration.	2.1 Provide the right facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms, trash receptacles) in the right places	3.1 Support the conservation of high-quality agricultural lands as open space.
	1.2 Cultivate biological diversity and conservation in parks and natural areas.	2.2 Disperse use to appropriate areas.	3.2 Communicate and support mutual respect for private property owners and those appropriately accessing and using recreation resources.
	1.3 Restore and enhance resiliency of degraded habitat and natural systems.	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.	3.3 Increase agritourism.
	1.4 Sustain, enhance, connect, and restore habitat blocks and areas of high ecological value and potential.	2.4 Provide uniform messaging, mapping, and signage around appropriate recreation access locations and uses.	3.4 Increase demand, supply, and access to local, community-based foods.
	1.5 Increase habitat and ecological system connectivity.	2.5 Continue to leverage ambassador programs to increase appropriate recreation use.	3.5 Value and support working landscapes and their contribution to the stewardship of Nevada County's agricultural heritage.
	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.	2.6 Respect needs of local communities.	3.6 Promote sustainable, productive agricultural lands.
	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.	2.7 Invest in digital connectivity and technology infrastructure improvements in backcountry and river access locations.	3.7 Integrate agricultural and ecosystem objectives to provide for high-value habitat on working lands.
		2.8 Employ customer service training programs to teach area employees how to effectively use and share visitor information.	3.8 Increase appreciation and better understanding of working landscapes' role in food production and healthy lives in Nevada County.
		2.9 Provide appropriate locations for winter access needs for snow play.	3.9 Protect high-quality soils from erosion, maintain soil health, increase resiliency, and improve carbon capture methods.
		2.10 Offer multilingual visitor information to connect with non-English speaking populations.	Continued on next page

# Goals & Opportunities

**Table 9: Goals & Opportunities for Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers (Part 2)**

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES   ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE, LAKES, & RIVERS (CONTINUED)				
<b>Goal</b>	<b>4. Build a stewardship ethic.</b>	<b>5. Increase resiliency to natural disasters and a changing climate.</b>	<b>6. Recognize and support the value of recreation as an economic opportunity.</b>	<b>7. Maximize public and private dollars for financial sustainability.</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	4.1 Engage youth to foster inspiration, respect for nature, and career pathways in natural and working lands.	5.1 Incorporate fuels reduction projects into planning and implementation of recreation and restoration projects.	6.1 Promote western Nevada County as a recreation and cultural destination; maintain eastern Nevada County's national and international position.	7.1 Package multi-benefit projects that can utilize funding from a variety of sources.
	4.2 Unite people by increasing relationship with nature; provide opportunities to connect with, enjoy and protect natural resources.	5.2 Control invasive species.	6.2 Provide a high-quality recreation experience to maintain competitiveness in key markets.	7.2 Continue to foster collaborative partnerships that broaden funding opportunities, enhance communication, and increase operational capacity.
	4.3 Expand the "Art in Public Spaces" program to open spaces.	5.3 Increase diversity of tree species to reduce susceptibility to insect attack and enhance forest health.	6.3 Communicate and connect people to Nevada County's many exceptional places, businesses, and adventures.	7.3 Leverage governance structures to unlock access to capital, increase capacity, share resources, work across jurisdictional boundaries, and enable procurement of services.
	4.4 Offer educational programs, workshops, and outreach initiatives to inform residents and users about sustainable practices.	5.4 Reduce residential development on steep slopes in high fire risk areas.	6.4 Prioritize respect for community needs.	7.4 Strengthen partnerships by collaborating in tourism development, economic development, and legislative advocacy.
	4.5 Empower local stewardship initiatives such as community gardens, clean-up projects, and celebrations of positive efforts.	5.5 Utilize low-water use native and adapted native plants and permeable materials to mitigate flooding.	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.	7.5 Secure sustainable funding to build, operate, and maintain recreation resources.
			6.6 Diversify recreation offerings to combat seasonal local unemployment during off-seasons.	7.6 Design facilities with maintenance and operations in mind.
			6.7 Support affordable and achievable housing strategies and policies to support local workforce.	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.
			6.8 Increase length of stay for recreation visitors.	



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

Nevada County General Plan (1995)

Nevada County has a significant amount of land in public ownership which translates to the potential for significant opportunities to access the varied landscapes, rivers, and reservoirs. Of the county's 974 square miles, 958 square miles is land and 16 square miles 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, and public lands owned, managed, or operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM),

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), 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.

## Foothills

The western foothills of Nevada County extend from the western county board

to slightly southwest of Grass Valley and Nevada City. The area is characterized by gently rolling oak woodlands (Nevada County General Plan Soils Chapter, 1995). Typical outdoor activities include hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and gold panning. Hallmarks of recreation access in the western foothills of Nevada County are the South Yuba River, the centerpiece of a 39-mile state-designated Wild & Scenic River corridor that stretches from the Spaulding Reservoir to Englebright Reservoir, the Middle and North Yuba Rivers, South Yuba River State Park,

and the Independence Trail, the nation's first wheelchair accessible wilderness trail.

## Mountains

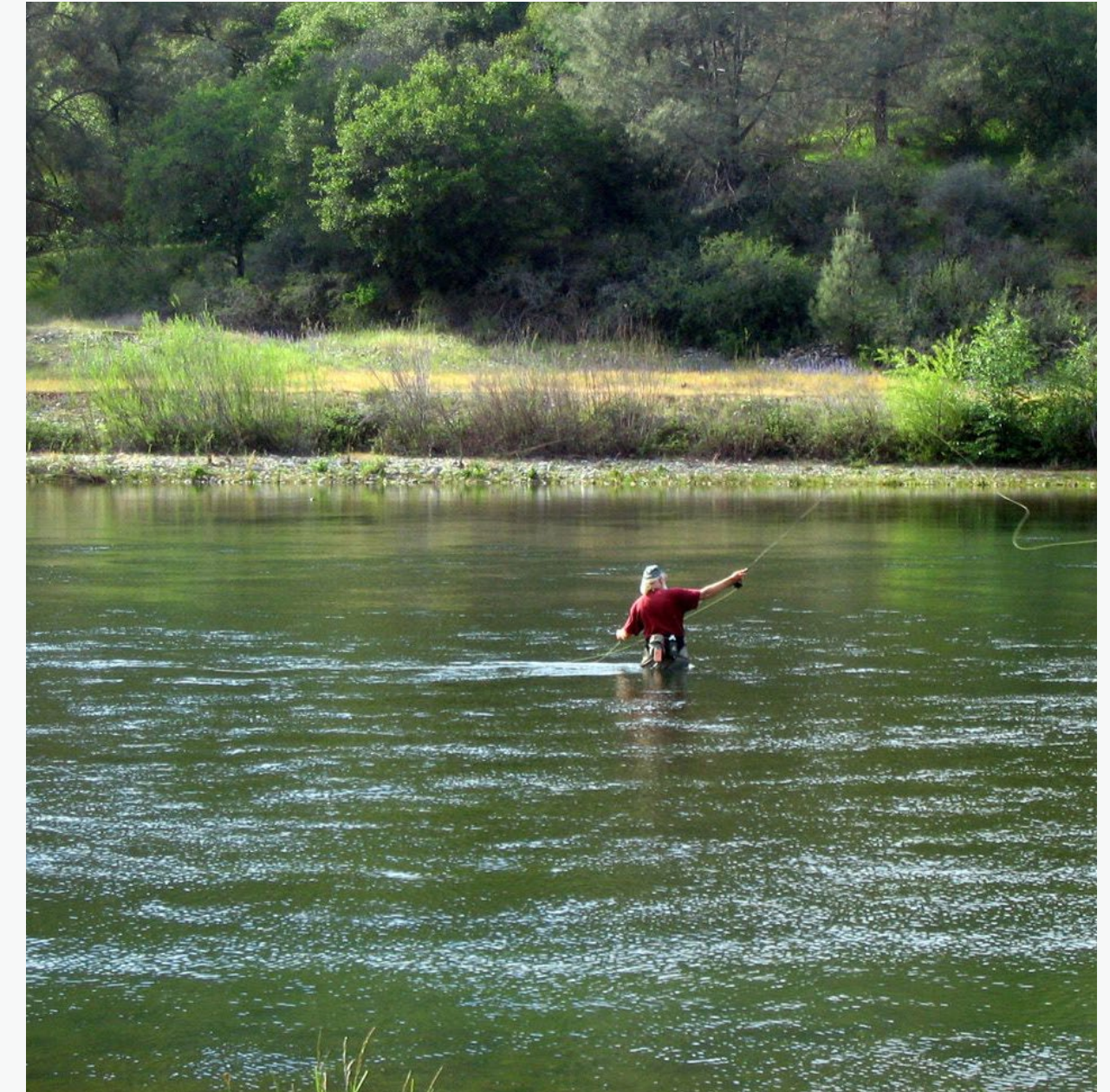
The mountainous region of Nevada County is defined by the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Elevation gains begin just east of Nevada City and Grass Valley, stretching from the north with the San Juan Ridge to the east at Donner Summit Canyon. The Tahoe National Forest covers most of the mountainous landscape. The Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,650-mile trail that spans from southern California to Washington, runs through Nevada County with a trailhead and access point in Donner Summit. Residents and visitors enjoy year-round recreation access from backcountry skiing to climbing in places like Donner Peak, Mount Judah, Snowshed Wall, and Old Donner Summit Road.

## Water

Access to water bodies is a distinguishing feature of recreation in Nevada County. The county contains an extensive network of year-round and seasonal creeks, streams, and rivers, as well as reservoirs and high mountain lakes. The Bear River, the Scotts Flat Reservoir area, Bowman Reservoir/Jackson Meadows Reservoir, and the 39-mile South Yuba River corridor rank among the most popular recreational assets for casual users taking a dip in hot summer months to the most professional anglers seeking trout



Tahoe National Forest



Fly fishing



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

lakes. In the eastern portion of the county, the Truckee River crosses through the Town of Truckee and Donner Lake, Prosser Creek Reservoir, and Boca Reservoir - all are popular for water recreation activities.

## Natural & Working Lands

Agriculture is an integral part of Nevada County. Per the 2022 Nevada County Crop Report, there are 365 farms in the county. Grazing occurs on 21 percent of the county's total land acreage. Farmlands cover 7,760

acres and there are 3,313 acres of total harvested cropland.

The gross value of all agriculture production in the county in 2022 was approximately \$18,773,400. Livestock and products contributed 52 percent of the revenue. Since 2013, agricultural sectors that have seen the most significant growth are "other fruits and vegetables" and "nursery and flower". The former sector saw an increase of \$2.76 million (a 285 percent increase).

In addition, commercial cannabis production's estimated value was \$6.9 million in 2022. This represented a 44 percent reduction from 2021's \$12.4 million estimated value. Elements affecting the decrease include industry oversupply and heavy storms in October of 2022 that rendered most of the unharvested plants unusable.

It is important to note that the estimated values do not measure farm profitability or quantify economic contributions to the county's economy. They serve as standalone estimates which help the county develop informed decisions about land use, infrastructure, and resource allocation that aligns with the needs of the agricultural community.

Agriculture in Nevada County not only bolsters the economy and provides jobs, it also contributes to the sense of place, scenic beauty, and local identity.

Local farmers' markets allow producers to sell their certified commodities directly to the public. In 2022, there were 28 certified producers and six farmers markets that were certified by the Agricultural Commissioner. Three of the certified markets were in Grass Valley, with other markets in Penn Valley, Nevada City, and Truckee.

Agritourism and farm-to-table economic strategies are also opportunities to support agriculture in the county. For example, winery



Nevada County Resource Conservation District's 49er Farm Trail Map

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

and farm tours connect people with outdoor activities and agricultural open space with opportunities to promote stewardship of natural resources.

## Forever Farms

Sierra Harvest is a local nonprofit with a mission to transform lives and strengthen community through fresh, local, and seasonal food. Since 2006 they have worked with farms, schools, and residents. Successes include increasing access to farm land, creating and expanding a Farm to School program, hosting a Sustainable Food & Farm Conference, and sharing resources for residents to have successful backyard gardens.

In 2020 Sierra Harvest, Bear Yuba Land Trust, BriarPatch Food Co-op, Tahoe Food Hub, and Mountain Bounty Farm formed a partnership named Forever Farms to conserve local farmland. The land trust identifies and purchases farmland at risk of development and works with local farmers on long-term evergreen leases to ensure that land remains productive farmland and is sustainably managed. All partners leverage respective knowledge, networks and resources to identify and protect farmland into the future.

## Building Resiliency

The Crop Report summarizes weather patterns that impact that year's crop

production and subsequent revenue generation. Changing precipitation patterns and increasing temperatures can impact agricultural lands. Warmer temperatures can lead to more invasive plants that can overtake riparian trees which reduces shade and can increase erosion.

In particular, changing precipitation patterns that increase invasive plants can increase the spread or intensity of wildfire. The Crop Report describes the benefits of weed eradication and management. These benefits, listed below, connect agriculture, recreation, ecological health, and resiliency.

- Safeguard natural infrastructure
- Strengthen climate resiliency
- Protect water resources
- Decrease wildfire risk
- Preserve biodiversity
- Maintain agriculture production
- Provide recreation opportunities



Mountain Bounty Farm, Nevada City  
Image Credit: Mountain Bounty Farm

## Potential Actions to Consider

- 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
- Communicate and support mutual respect for private property owners and those appropriately accessing and using recreation resources
- Increase agritourism
- Increase demand, supply, and access to local, community-based foods
- Value and support working landscapes and their contribution to the stewardship of Nevada County's agricultural heritage
- Promote sustainable, productive agricultural lands
- Integrate agricultural and ecosystem objectives to provide for high-value habitat on working lands
- Increase appreciation and better understanding of working landscapes' role in food production and healthy lives in Nevada County
- Protect high-quality soils from erosion, maintain soil health, increase resiliency, and improve carbon capture methods
- Control invasive species
- Consider code revisions to allow for low-intensity camping to support landowners and increase transient occupancy taxes for investment in recreational infrastructure



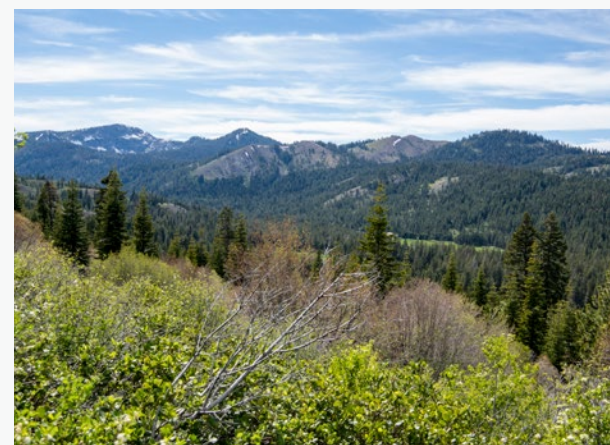
# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

## Federal Public Access Providers

Out of Nevada County's 958 square miles, 314 of those are federally-owned lands. Three federal agencies own and manage these lands.

### USDA Forest Service (USFS)

USFS operates the Tahoe National Forest which covers approximately 265 square miles of land in Nevada County. Two Ranger Districts operate in Nevada County: the Yuba River Ranger District and the Truckee Ranger District. The Tahoe National Forest offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities. Capacity is limited for staffing and managing, planning, and implementing projects. The USFS works with area nonprofit organizations to lessen shortfalls and help advance recreational access and projects.



View out toward the Tahoe National Forest

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Bureau of Land Management owns and manages lands in western Nevada County as part of the greater Mother Lode Field Office. The South Yuba Wild & Scenic River Recreation Area stretches along portions of the South Yuba River and abuts State Parks, USFS, and BLM lands. Parking is advertised as being located at Round Mountain Trail and Purdon Crossing. Restroom facilities as well as informal parking areas are located at Edwards Crossing and the South Yuba Campground.

### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

USACE 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 of the county, Martis Creek Lake, located in Placer County, 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.

## Facilities & Activities

### USFS Tahoe National Forest Lands

- Camping
- Fishing
- Climbing
- Hunting
- Boating and water recreation
- Picnicking
- Hiking, biking, and horseback riding
- OHV riding
- Nature viewing
- Outdoor learning
- Winter sports
- And more

### BLM Lands

- Camping
- River access
- Picnicking
- Fishing
- Cultural learning
- Hiking, biking, and horseback riding

### USACE Lands

- Boat-in camping
- Camping
- Kayak/canoeing
- Picnicking
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Hiking
- Nature viewing
- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

## State

The major managers of state lands include the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks or CSP) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). California State Lands Commission also owns land which is not regularly used for recreation.

### California Department of Parks and Recreation (CSP)

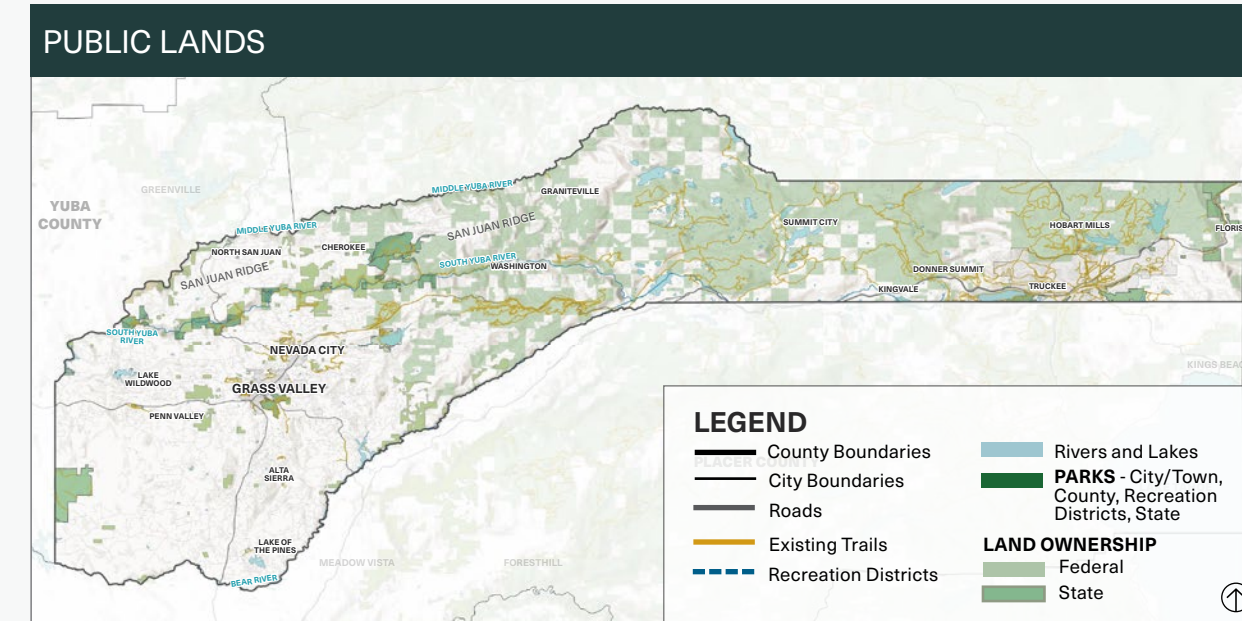
State Parks owns and manages four state parks and recreation areas in the county:

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

### South Yuba River State Park

Once the South Yuba River watershed was the focal point of the California Gold Rush. Today, it is recognized by the California State legislature as a Wild and Scenic River with scenery of "Outstanding Remarkable Value." This park, which follows the river for twenty miles, provides a scenic geologic cross-section of the Sierras.

The longest single-span covered bridge in the world spans the steep rugged canyon of the South Yuba River at Bridgeport, and the Independence Trail aligns the river near



South Yuba River at the Highway 49 crossing



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

Highway 49 crossing, as the first identified wheelchair-accessible wilderness trail in the country. Today, portions of the Independence Trail are closed due to the 2020 Jones Fire, but plans are underway to rebuild the path.

South Yuba River State Park offers many scenic vistas. Visitors can view swift moving water carving the granitic canyon that is peppered with seasonal native blooms in springtime, and experience refreshing swimming holes that dot the 39-mile Yuba River corridor in late summer and can be accessed by the park. Along the length of the park, visitors can see several architecturally different bridges spanning from the Gold

Rush era to the mid-20th century at various river crossings.

## Empire Mine State Historic Park

Empire Mine State Historic Park is the site of one of the oldest, deepest, and richest gold mines in California. In operation for more than 100 years, the mine extracted 5.8 million ounces of gold before it closed in 1956. The park contains many of the mine's buildings and the former owner's home and restored gardens, as well as the entrance to 367 miles of abandoned and flooded mine shafts. The park encompasses 856 acres of forested backcountry and fourteen miles of



Empire Mine State Historic Park  
Image Credit: CA State Parks

## Facilities & Activities

### South Yuba River State Park

- 11 miles of hiking trails
- Horseback riding
- Swimming
- Bird watching
- Panning for gold
- Wildflowers in the spring
- Hiking in the historic gold country
- Docent-led history, wildflower, birding, geology, and gold-panning tours are also offered at selected times throughout the year

### Empire Mine State Historic Park

- Hiking trails
- Horseback riding
- Picnic areas
- Environmental learning/visitor center
- Exhibits and programs
- Guided tours
- Interpretive exhibits
- Museums
- Family programs

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

trails for leisurely hikes, mountain biking and equestrian use - in the park.

## Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park is nestled amongst the pine-studded chaparral forest of the Sierra Nevada Foothills and is home to California's largest hydraulic gold mine. The 3,000-acre park encompasses the town of North Bloomfield and the historic Diggins site, which allows visitors to step back in time and experience the boom and bust of the California Gold Rush. Visitors can see huge cliffs carved by mighty jets of water, results of the gold-mining technique of washing away entire mountains to find gold.



Donner Memorial State Park

The park Visitor Center features displays on mining and pioneer life in the old mining town of North Bloomfield, as well as a short video on hydraulic mining.

The park also offers unparalleled hiking, camping, and fishing opportunities, and, in winter, snowshoeing.

## Donner Memorial State Park

Donner Memorial State Park is located in the scenic Sierra Nevada mountain range at an elevation of about 6,000 feet.

This legendary alpine park offers summer camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, water-skiing, and hiking. During winter, visitors can cross-country ski, snowshoe on trails, and play in the snow. Visitors are welcome year-

round to visit the famous Pioneer Monument, built to commemorate the California emigrants traveling west during the mid-1800's.

The Visitor Center features compelling exhibits that illuminate the Emigrant

## Facilities & Activities

### Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

- 20 miles of multi-use trails
- Horseback riding
- Boating
- 30 Camping sites and rental cabins (family, group, alternative, RV and en route)
- Historical/cultural site
- Picnic areas
- Swimming
- Vista point
- Environmental learning/visitor center
- Exhibits and programs
- Fishing
- Guided tours
- Interpretive exhibits
- Museums
- Family programs
- Geocaching

### Donner Memorial State Park

- 8 miles of hiking and over-the-snow trails
- Fishing
- Public boat ramp operated by TDRPD
- 154 campsites



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

Experience, the Donner Party, the Land of the Washoe, Chinese construction of the railroad, and early motoring adventures over Donner Pass.

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 and the Truckee River Wildlife Area is located on the opposite side of the county at the Nevada state line.

*Spenceville Wildlife Area*

Spenceville Wildlife Area is comprised of approximately 11,900 acres of blue oak - gray pine woodland, a characteristic of the Sierra



Gold panning along a creek in Nevada County

Foothills. It is bordered on the west by Beale Air Force Base and on the north, south, and east by privately owned ranches. There are numerous ponds, creeks, trails and riparian zones in the area.

*Black Swan Preserve*

Bear Yuba Land Trust's Black Swan Preserve transferred to CDFW in 2020. Located on the border of Nevada County and Yuba County, the property abounds with riparian habitat, blue oak-foothill pine woodlands, and groundwater-fed ponds. It includes Gold Rush-era town sites, hardrock tunnels, and a two-mile natural earth trail for hiking, biking, and dog-walking (on leash). Long before miners altered the landscape with water cannons and ditches, Native Americans fished for salmon in Deer Creek.

*Truckee River Wildlife Area*

The Truckee River Wildlife Area includes five units (Canyon, Union Ice, Boca, Polaris, and West River) that total approximately 5,300 acres. These units consist of gently sloping river banks, and uplands scattered with lodgepole and Jeffrey pines. The open areas are covered with sage and bitterbrush. Alder and willow are clustered along the gravel bars in the river. This area was acquired primarily for fishing access. Natural reproduction supports a good trout fishery in the Truckee River.

## Facilities & Activities

### Spenceville Wildlife Area

- Fishing
- Wildlife viewing
- Hiking
- Dog training
- Equestrian trail riding
- Bicycling
- Seasonal camping
- Hunting

### Truckee River Wildlife Area

- Fishing
- Wildlife viewing
- Hunting
- Campsites (family, group, alternative, RV and en route) (30 camping sites and rental cabins)
- Historical/Cultural Site
- Picnic Areas
- Environmental learning/visitor center
- Exhibits and Programs
- Fishing
- Guided tours
- Interpretive exhibits
- Swimming
- Vista point
- Museums
- Family programs
- Geocaching
- Black Swan Preserve and Trail

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

## Water and Utility Providers

Water and utility providers such as the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) are important partners that contribute to recreation and resiliency in Nevada County.

NID delivers water in the region for power, recreation, the environment, and the economy. They manage reservoirs in the foothills and Sierra Nevada Mountains

that offer recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, boating, fishing and swimming.

At Rollins and Scotts Flat reservoirs, NID provides public parks, trails, campgrounds and beaches for the community's enjoyment. Higher up in the mountains, NID maintains and operates campgrounds in the Bowman Reservoir areas.



Scotts Flat Reservoir

NID works regularly with organizations like the Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) to help provide public recreation opportunities. Examples include trail projects along the Cascade Canal and the growing trail system surrounding Scotts Flat Reservoir. Although NID has easements across private lands to convey water and to operate and maintain the water system, the private property owner maintains discretion as to whom they will allow access to their property. Any agreements with property owners held by organizations like BYLT have been crafted so that those providing access to their properties specifically permit public access.

PG&E lakes and reservoirs range from remote to developed. Smaller lakes, such as Blue Lake, Rucker Lake, Carr Lake, and Lindsey Lake offer dispersed, primitive, and hike-in camping. Spaulding Reservoir has more developed facilities, such as a boat launch and group camping facilities.

Many of PG&E's reservoirs also feature campgrounds and picnic areas and offer fishing, swimming, and boating. These amenities are typically provided through a concessionaire. PG&E has also worked with BYLT to provide recreation facilities and has transferred land to the land trust to facilitate projects, where appropriate.

As discussed in previous sections, Donner Lake recreation amenities are provided by both Truckee-Donner RPD and California



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

State Parks. Donner Memorial State Park wraps around the eastern and southeast edges of the lake. Truckee-Donner RPD owns and operates West End Beach, a boat launch, and public piers which offer access to the lake. The area is highly used during summer months. During public engagement events, participants identified improved parking and waste management as opportunities to enhance the popular facilities.

## Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC/Commission) is responsible for regulating the construction, operation, and maintenance of non-federal hydropower projects. Every project and site is unique. In many instances, the license issued by the Commission includes requirements related to public recreation and public access.

Within its authority, which varies for each licensee, the Commission's policy promotes the development of recreation resources consistent with area needs. As part of relicensing efforts, licensees are to acquire sufficient land within the project boundary to assure optimum development of recreation resources, consistent with the primary purpose of the project and area recreation needs. Licensees are also to develop suitable recreational facilities and to make provisions for adequate public access, including consideration of the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Facilities & Activities

### Nevada Irrigation District

- Scotts Flat Reservoir
  - Boat launch, campgrounds (RV, tent, group), trails, fishing, water activities
- Rollins Reservoir
  - Boat launch, marina, campgrounds (RV, tent, group), Emigrant Trail, fishing, water activities
- Jackson Meadows Reservoir
  - Boat launch, campgrounds (tent, trailer, horse camp, Aspen & Silvertip group campgrounds), fishing, water activities
- Bowman Reservoir
  - Dispersed camping, fishing, hiking, non-motorized water activities
- Faucherie Reservoir
  - Non-motorized boating, group campground
- Combie Reservoir (private lake with encroachment permits for docks and project for mercury removal underway)
- Canal Easements
  - NID does not own the land traversed by many of its canals. To convey water, NID relies on easements across private lands and the property owner maintains sole discretion regarding access. There are some instances where NID has partnered with organizations to craft recreational trail easements to allow public use.

*Many of the above reservoirs and lakes are located within the Tahoe National Forest.*

### Pacific Gas & Electric Company

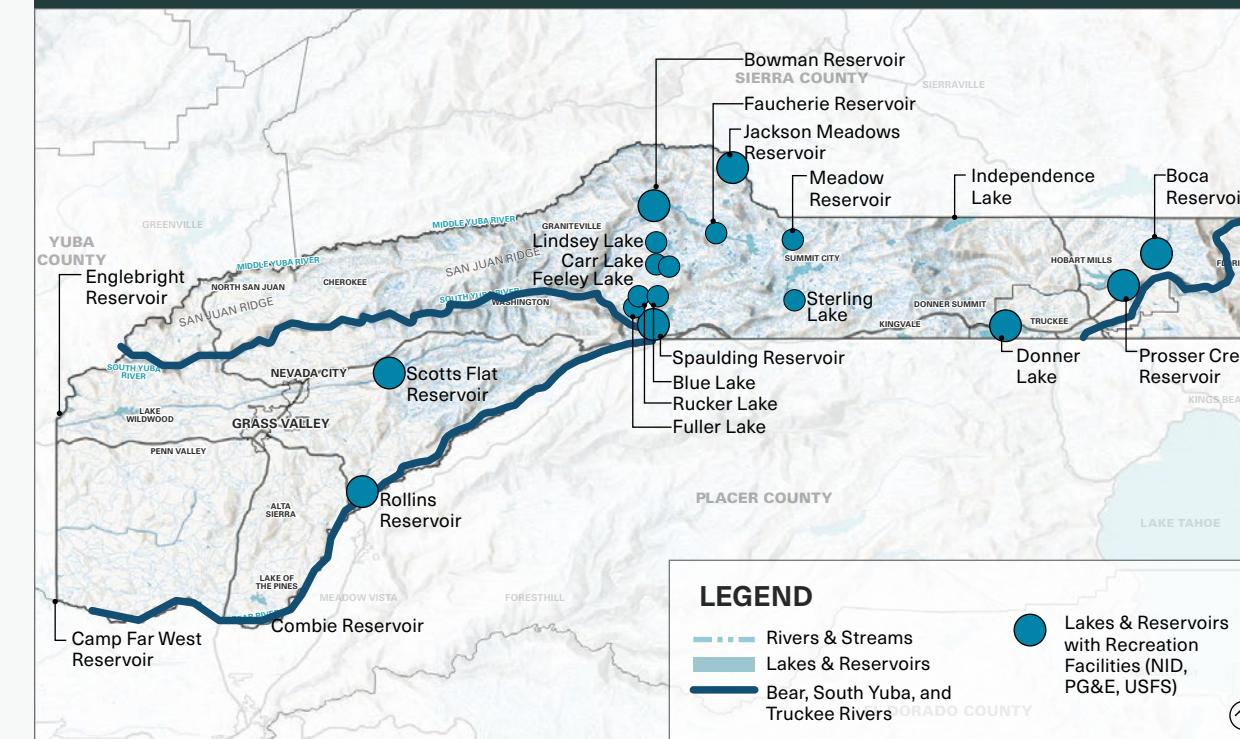
- Sterling Lake
  - Dispersed camping, fishing, hiking, non-motorized water activities
- Spaulding Reservoir
  - Boat launch, group campground, water activities, hiking
- Blue Lake
  - Dispersed camping, hiking
- Rucker Lake
  - Dispersed camping, fishing, hiking, non-motorized water activities
- Carr Lake & Feeley Lake
  - Hike-in camping, fishing, trails, non-motorized water activities
- Lindsey Lake
  - Primitive camping, fishing, trails, non-motorized water activities
- Meadow Reservoir
  - Tent/small trailer camping, fishing, OHV trail, informal boat launch

### Truckee-Donner RPD & State Park

- Donner Lake
  - Boat launch, public piers, West End Beach with park amenities, camping, fishing, water sports, rentals, trails, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

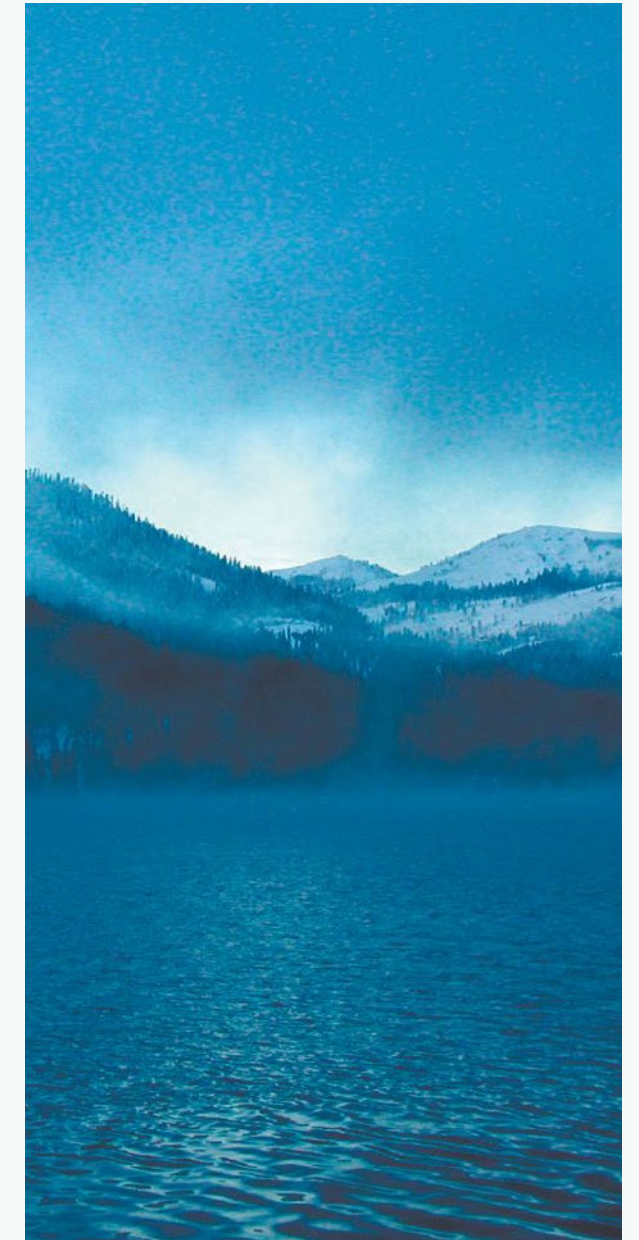
## LAKES, RIVERS, & RESERVOIRS



In Nevada County, many of the reservoirs associated with NID and PG&E fall under the Commission's purview. For example, the Commission has interest in Combie Reservoir's mercury abatement project.

The offerings and quality of campground and public recreation access varies for the different reservoirs. Continued enhancement of campgrounds at high use lakes and reservoirs, such as Donner, Prosser Creek, Scotts Flat, Rollins, and Spaulding Reservoir

will be important to address increasing demand. Access to the lakes is a strategic piece of shifting recreation access away from rivers during peak season and unsafe water flows. Increasing summer temperatures will also place higher demand for access to water-based recreation.



Donner Lake  
Image Credit: Brian Babbit



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

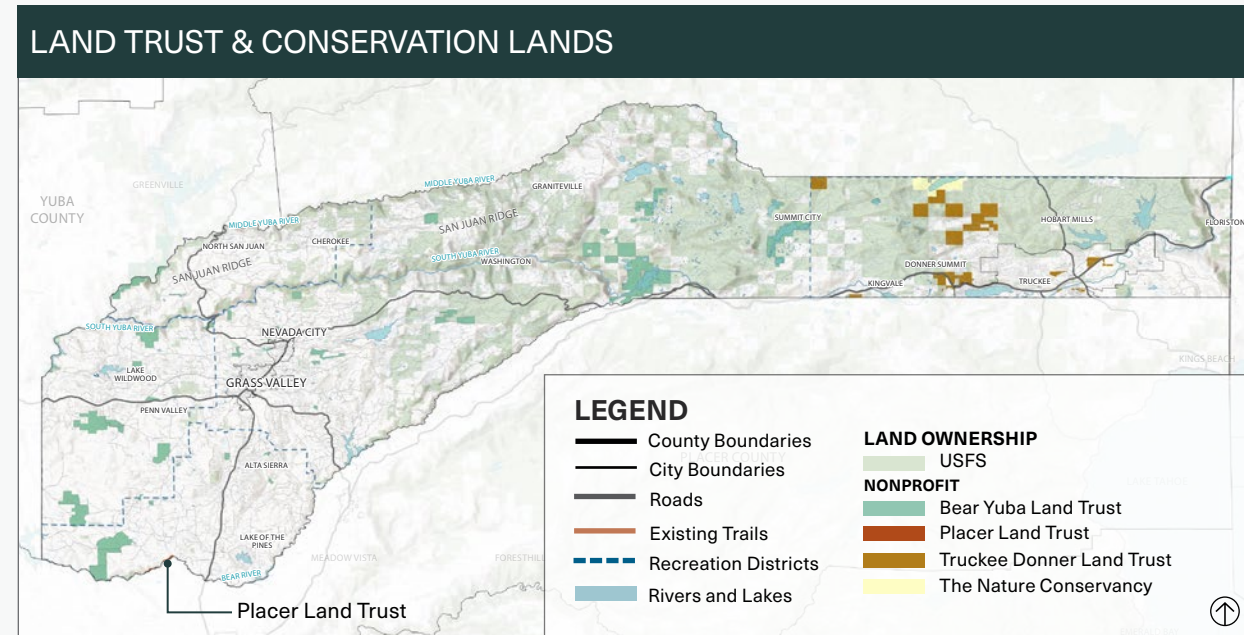
## Land Trusts, Conservancies, and Nonprofits

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

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

Independently, each organization works to protect and conserve open space, and natural and working lands within the county. Some properties are made available for public access and some may primarily be part of a preserve and do not include public access.

The organizations may also work together toward their common goals. For example, as part of the Pines to Mines Trail, the Trust for Public Land, USFS, Bear Yuba Land Trust and Truckee Donner Land Trust have a goal of adding nearly 3,500 acres to the Tahoe National Forest. The partners are working together to secure federal funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to enable the Trust for Public Land to acquire



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers



Round Mountain  
Photo by J Carville

the land from Sierra Pacific Industries and convey it to the USFS. The purchase would help mitigate the effects of checkerboard public-private land ownership and to provide a feasible route to address a gap in the planned 72-mile Pines to Mines Trail.

The trail project itself is a partnership between the Tahoe National Forest, Bear

Yuba Land Trust, Truckee Trails Foundation, Gold Country Trails Council, and Bicyclists of Nevada County. These organizations play a significant role in developing and maintaining the trail system and recreational opportunities throughout the county, as discussed more in Chapter 6.

## Facilities & Activities

### Bear Yuba Land Trust

- Protected over 26,000 acres with a goal of protecting 10,000 more by 2024. Protects and enhances meadows, watersheds, forests, farms and ranches, trails, and parks.
- Examples of focus areas and trails:
  - Over 45 miles of trail/ 25 miles in progress
  - 10 preserves
  - 23 open space easements
  - 4 forestry easements
  - 7 agricultural easements
  - Forever Farms program

### Truckee Donner Land Trust

- Preserved more than 40,000 acres of open space, builds trails, manages a campground, and creates other opportunities for public access
- Examples of properties with public access:
  - Webber Lake/Lacey Meadows
  - Independence Lake Preserve
  - Lower Carpenter Valley
  - Lake of the Woods
  - Perazzo Meadows
  - Frog Lake, Red Mountain, and Carpenter Ridge
  - Donner Lake Rim Trail
  - Black Wall
  - Johnson Canyon

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Continue to foster collaborative partnerships that broaden funding opportunities, enhance communication, and increase operational capacity
- Strengthen partnerships by collaborating in tourism development, economic development, and legislative advocacy
- 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
- Provide the right facilities (parking, restrooms, trash) in the right places
- Disperse use to appropriate areas
- Continue to leverage ambassador programs to increase responsible recreation
- Provide appropriate locations for winter access needs for snow play
- Advocate for funding and support for federal and state land managers to provide and maintain recreation amenities and infrastructure to meet regional needs



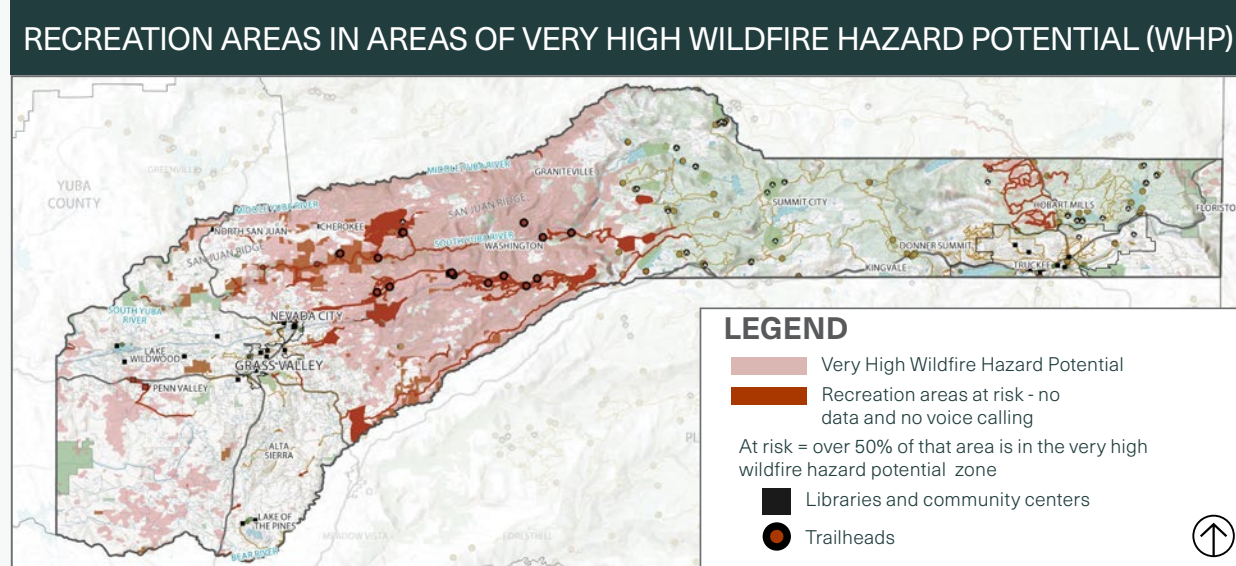
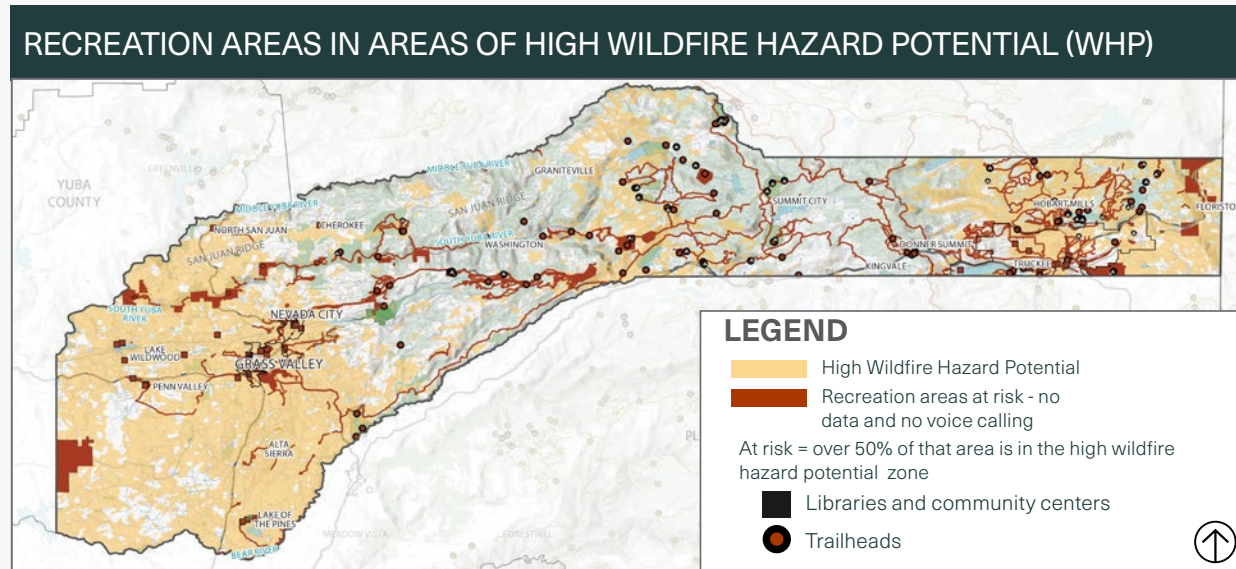
# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

## Intersection of Recreation and Potential Hazards and Threats

Effects such as warming temperatures, increased drought, reduced snowpack and widespread wildfires are projected to change the outdoor 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.

An update of the Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is underway through the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services (OES). The CWPP will identify actions that can be implemented to mitigate wildfire risk to communities in the County. It will identify priority areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatments, address community preparedness, and recommend actions homeowners and communities can take to reduce structure ignitability.

The mapping analysis presented in this section of the Plan illustrates how recreation lands and trails overlap with areas of high and very high wildfire hazard potential. Opportunities to reduce risks associated with the hazards are presented. The recommendations were developed by the



- Potential impacts that come from wildfire:**
- Threats to human life and safety
  - Closed access to recreational areas
  - Smoke exposure
  - Economic loss
  - Environmental degradation
  - Loss of structures

# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

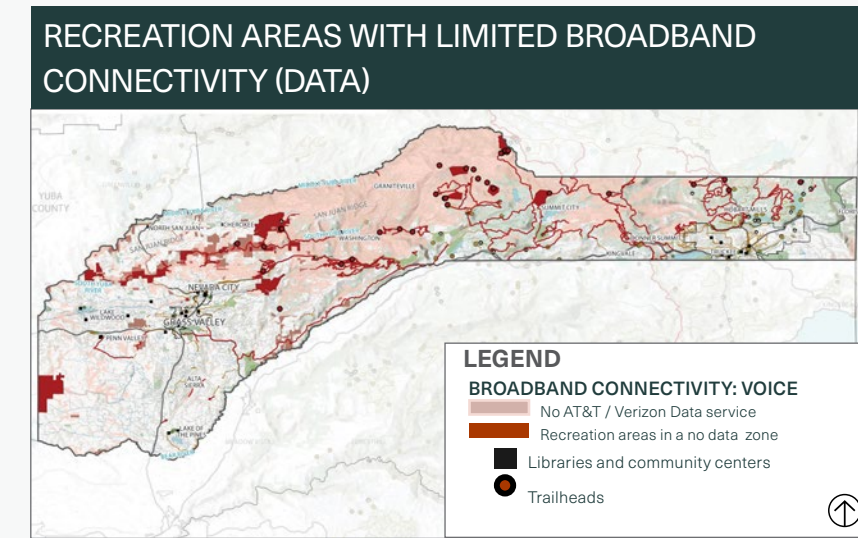
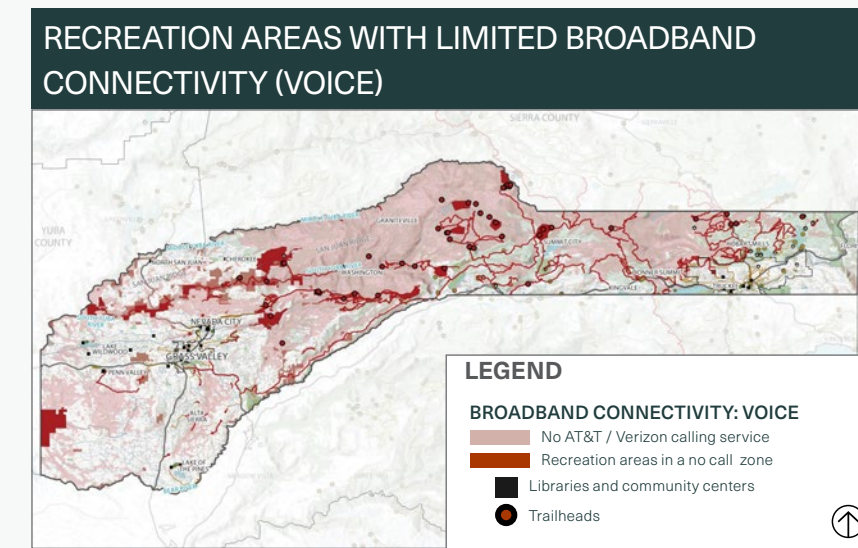
team of experts working on the CWPP update and are intended to work in coordination with the priorities and recommendations that will come forward as part of the CWPP. The analysis reveals recreation areas located at the intersection of high/very high wildfire hazard potential and limited communication and vehicular infrastructure.

Areas highlighted in red on the adjacent maps are parks and trail facilities that are within areas of high or very high wildfire hazard potential and also lack voice or data connectivity.

## Why This Is Important

Nevada County is highly prone to wildfires due to vegetation conditions, complex topography, the potential for critical fire weather, and ample ignition sources of both human and natural causes. Wildfire leads to direct and indirect impacts such as smoke exposure and poor air quality, access restrictions and closures, recreational infrastructure damage, and post-fire impacts including hazard trees, landslides, and debris flows.

A paramount safety concern for recreation in Nevada County is communicating with community members during times of unpredicted evacuations. Due to the remote location of many high use areas, access to parks, trails and open space can be challenging and potentially dangerous for inexperienced travelers. Recreation often



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

**⚠️**  
For people recreating outdoors, it can be challenging to issue a warning if they are off the grid or cell phones are turned off.

**⚠️**  
GPS is not always accurate and can lead to drivers unfamiliar with the geography to become lost or end up in a more dangerous situation.



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

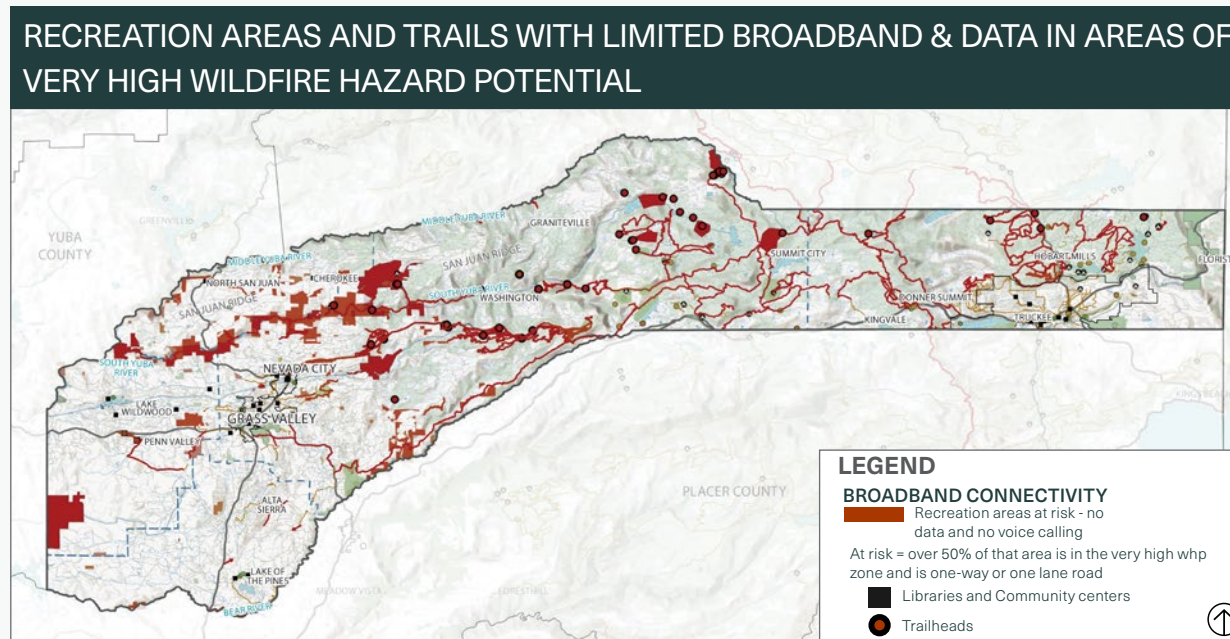
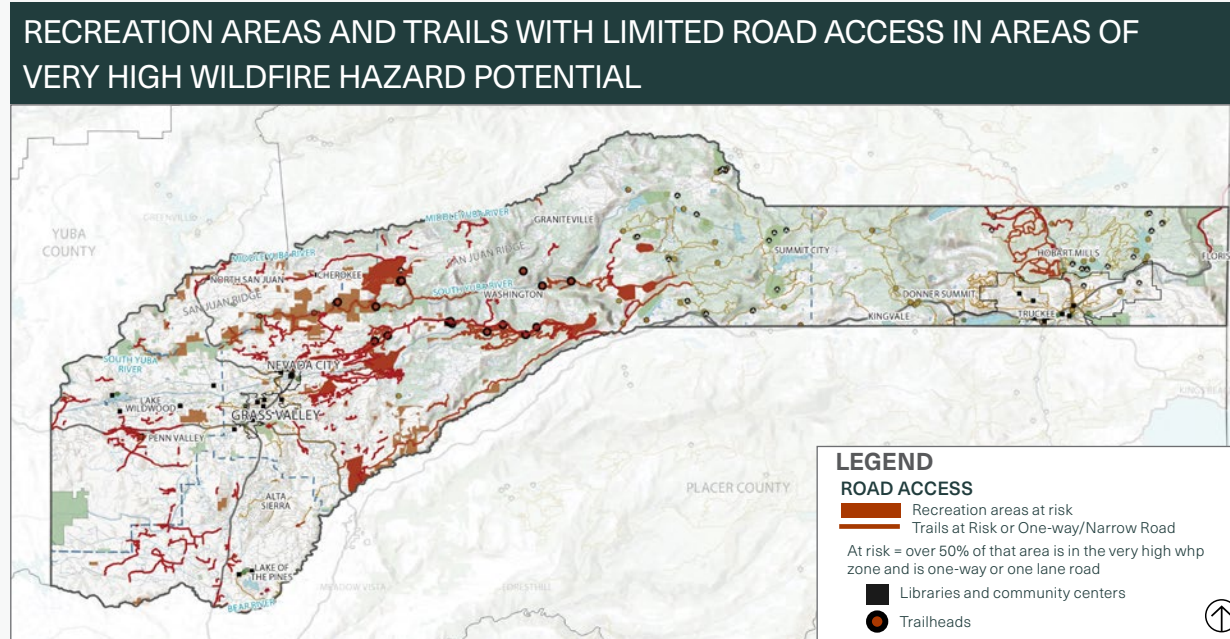
occurs in hard-to-reach places. With limited broadband and cell connectivity, people recreating do not have access to on-demand maps and websites and need to plan ahead in order to safely navigate the area.

This is especially impactful during peak tourist season and/or when climate events like wildfire or winter storms close or impair normally navigable roads.

Areas that face the most acute risk are those with high traffic and visitation that also have high wildfire danger, limited communication service, and single lane or narrow roads serving them. Identifying these areas (depicted in the maps to the right) helps inform strategies that build safety and resiliency into planning and operational efforts.

## Western and Central Nevada County Recreation and Wildfire Hazard Potential

Most of the western area of the county is identified by CAL FIRE as a high or very-high fire hazard severity zone within the wildland-urban interface (WUI). This is a zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. A WUI poses tremendous risks to life, property and infrastructure in associated communities. It is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations in firefighting.



# State of the System | Access to Open Space, Lakes, & Rivers

Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2022)

A fire sparked in the central area of the county may go unreported for a period of time and, with the right conditions and high winds, has the ability to explode into a conflagration, threatening surrounding populated areas, sensitive ecosystems and watersheds and recreation amenities.

## South Yuba River State Park

The South Yuba River draws over 800,000 visitors annually. The high visitation coincides with peak fire season during July and August. The high-use area has little to no cellphone connectivity, which severely impacts the ability to communicate with those in the area during emergency situations.

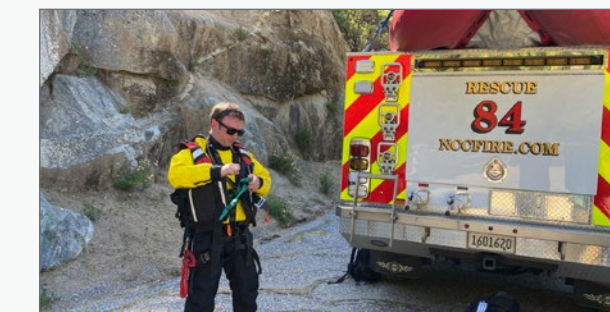
The South Yuba River canyon is located in an area of very high wildfire hazard potential due to dense fuels and steep slopes which can exacerbate wildfire behavior and increase the difficulty of wildfire suppression. The park's proximity to major access points including Highway 49 and Pleasant Valley Road make it a popular destination for recreationalists, especially during hot summer days when wildfire risk is heightened.

Other access points include bridges at Purdon Crossing and Edwards Crossing, which may be inadequate in the event of an evacuation. Plans are in progress for replacing the bridge at Edwards Crossing and improving access to the river.

## Climate Change Impacts to Eastern Nevada County Recreation Areas

The eastern Nevada County zone is the only zone with organized snow sports and includes five downhill ski resorts and two cross country resorts. Climate science models are projecting that snowpack will decrease over 50 percent during the mid-century in Nevada County, and that snowfall in areas below 6,000 feet elevation will no longer occur (Sierra Nevada Climate Vulnerability Assessment, 2022). Not only does this influence the winter recreation activities and the winter tourism economy, but risk for drought and wildfire will continue to increase.

Nevada County relies on its tourism economy almost year-round. As the winter recreation season is predicted to shorten – spring, summer, and fall sports and activities may occur earlier in the season (e.g., mountain biking, hiking, etc.). However, this also means increased wildfire risk, and the need for responsible recreation will be magnified.



Emergency rescue demonstration

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Increase wildfire educational signage at major access points
- Provide signage describing what to do in times of emergency at popular trailheads and coordinate information with river and trail ambassadors
- Increase summer patrols by officials that can communicate accurate information
- Increase broadband connectivity efforts countywide, focusing on areas of high risk
- Prioritize roadside fuel reduction treatments around major parking areas
- Utilize existing trail systems to conduct trail side fuels reduction (minimum of 4 feet on either side, preferred of 15 feet on either side)
- Look for opportunities to expand emergency access, like improving existing unpaved roads or widening trails. Coordinate with OES and CWPP planning efforts
- 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





6

TRAILS



# Goals & Opportunities

Trails provide recreation, transportation, health, and quality of life benefits associated with activities such as walking, wheeling, hiking, biking, and horseback riding throughout the county's varied landscapes. Walking is most often listed by survey respondents as the most frequent recreation activity. Aligned with national trends, this is true for Nevada County residents. Whether it is a walk or wheel around neighborhood streets or parks or traversing rugged terrain in the backcountry, people want the ability to get outdoors and access nature. Trails are one of the primary ways to do so.

The second section of this chapter provides an overview of the countywide trail system, providers, and planned enhancements based on related planning documents. It also presents current design standards and opportunities for design strategies for trails to be part of wildfire mitigation strategies. Key takeaways regarding the existing and planned trail system and the goals and opportunities related to trails are summarized below.

## Key Takeaways

- Partnerships have been critical to the development and maintenance of trail facilities.
- In the eastern portion of the county, the Truckee Trails Foundation, Truckee Dirt Union, and Truckee Donner Land Trust have

helped fund, develop, and maintain area trails.

- In the western portion of the county, Bear Yuba Land Trust has been a critical partner in acquiring trail easements, planning, implementing, and maintaining trails in unincorporated areas.
- The highest quantity of Class I paved bike path miles and recreational/unpaved multi-use trail miles exist in eastern Nevada County. The trail systems in Truckee and Tahoe Donner are guided by trail master plan documents and implemented through both public funding and community and nonprofit partnerships.
- Key topics that appear in related trails plans are goals for connectivity and to develop trails for different user groups. This includes both natural surface trails for different users such as mountain bicyclers, hikers, and equestrians, as well as paved Class I shared-use paths.
- Precedent plans, along with the strategic plans and guiding documents for local nonprofits and state and federal land managers, inform the Master Plan's trail recommendations.
- Nevada County and trail and land managers respect private property and are committed to working closely with private land owners to address issues and concerns while also encouraging continuity of the trail system.
- Although it wasn't adopted, the County of Nevada 2018 Parks and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study included

research and recommendations to incorporate a Western County Trails fee component as part of an update to its Recreation Development Fee.

- Trails may be incorporated into shaded fuel breaks or certain trails may have design components of shaded fuel breaks to assist with wildfire mitigation.
- Town of Truckee voters have approved a 1/2 cent sales tax as a dedicated source of funding to expand, repair, and maintain Truckee's trail system. Western Nevada County does not have similar, dedicated funding.
- Numerous studies and research show the positive economic and health benefits of trails.

## Goals for Trails

1. Improve mobility for residents and visitors by connecting destinations with a trail system.
2. Accommodate diverse ranges of ages, abilities, and uses.
3. Provide a high quality trail network.
4. Work with partner organizations to obtain funding to develop and maintain trail systems.

**Table 6: Goals & Opportunities for Trails**

GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES   TRAILS				
Goal	1. Improve mobility for residents and visitors by connecting destinations with a trail system.	2. Accommodate diverse ranges of ages, abilities, and uses.	3. Provide a high quality trail network.	4. Work with partner organizations to obtain funding to develop and maintain trail systems.
Opportunities	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.	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.	3.1 Keep trail networks well-maintained.	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.
	1.2 Prioritize improvements that serve disadvantaged communities and that link community destinations such as parks, schools, and community facilities with a trail system.	2.2 Develop a series of multi-use stacked loop trail systems to accommodate needs of different skill levels and uses.	3.2 Restore trails in sensitive landscapes and eroding slopes.	4.2 Capture economic impacts and environmental gains of improved trail network to support grant and community funding requests.
	1.3 Prioritize and address accessibility deficiencies.	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.	3.3 Utilize consistent design standards that promote longevity and reduced maintenance.	4.3 Support trail maintenance endowment programs.
	1.4 Reduce the number of gaps in both paved and unpaved trail systems.	2.4 Create a consistent, uniform system of signage that communicates trail etiquette.	3.4 Design trail systems for both recreation (overall experience) and transportation needs in mind.	
	1.5 Create regional trails that connect communities throughout the county.	2.5 Where appropriate in areas of high equestrian use, incorporate a native surface side-path along regional Class I paved trail systems.	3.5 Expand the "Art in Public Spaces" program to trails and trailheads.	
	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.*



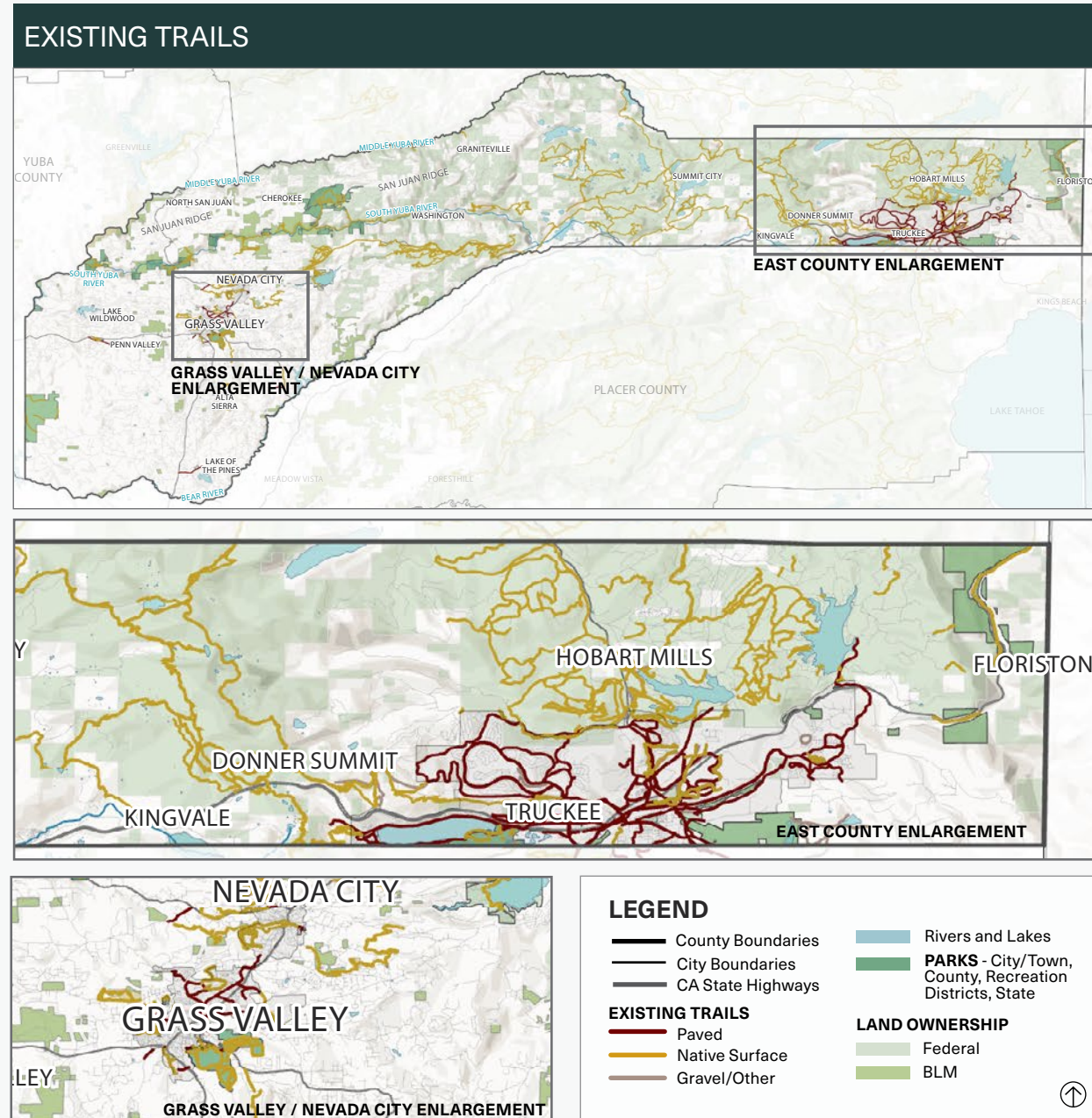
# State of the System | Trails

## Existing Trail System

The trail system throughout Nevada County is a mix of paved, native surface (dirt), and gravel pathways. The eastern portion of the county has the highest quantity of Class I paved bike path miles and more miles of recreational/unpaved multi-use trails. The trail system in Truckee and Tahoe Donner are guided by trail master plan documents and implemented through both public funding dollars and community and nonprofit partnerships.

Partnerships have been critical to the development and maintenance of trail facilities. In particular for the eastern portion of the county, the Truckee Trails Foundation, Truckee Dirt Union, and Truckee Donner Land Trust have helped fund, develop, and maintain area trails. Trail systems in both incorporated and unincorporated eastern Nevada County strive to link residents to community facilities and provide access to the Tahoe National Forest's system of recreational trails.

Throughout central and western portions of the county, the trail system primarily consists of multi-use native surface trails which provide multiple uses including hiking, wheeling, mountain biking, horse back riding, OHV, and more. Recreation paths are often located on public lands, owned and managed by State Parks, BLM, and the USFS. Many of the trail easements, planning, implementation, and maintenance of trails



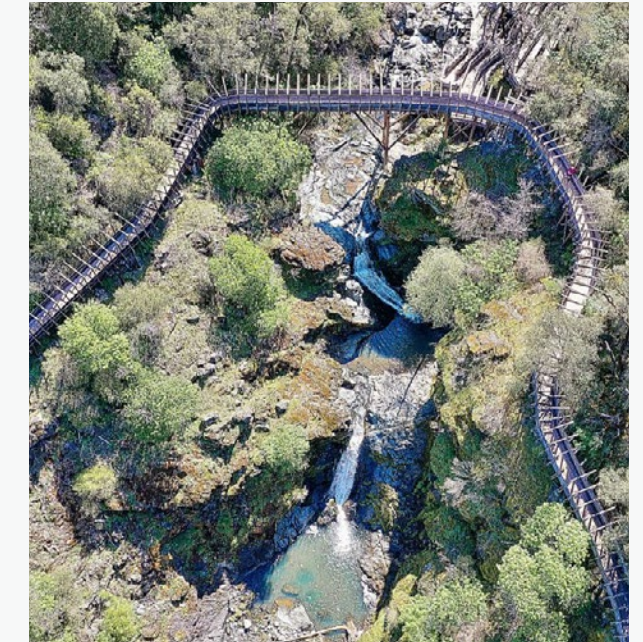
has been led by the Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT).

BYLT is a critical partner for both trails and open space preservation. As of 2020, the organization has built and maintained over 45 miles of trails in the county and has 25 additional miles of trail in progress. In coordination with TNF, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Truckee Trails Foundation, Bicyclists of Nevada County, and Gold Country Trails Council, BYLT helped advance work toward completing the Pines to Mines Trail that will connect western and eastern Nevada County.

One trail of significance, the Independence Trail, is maintained by BYLT in partnership with California State Parks. Independence

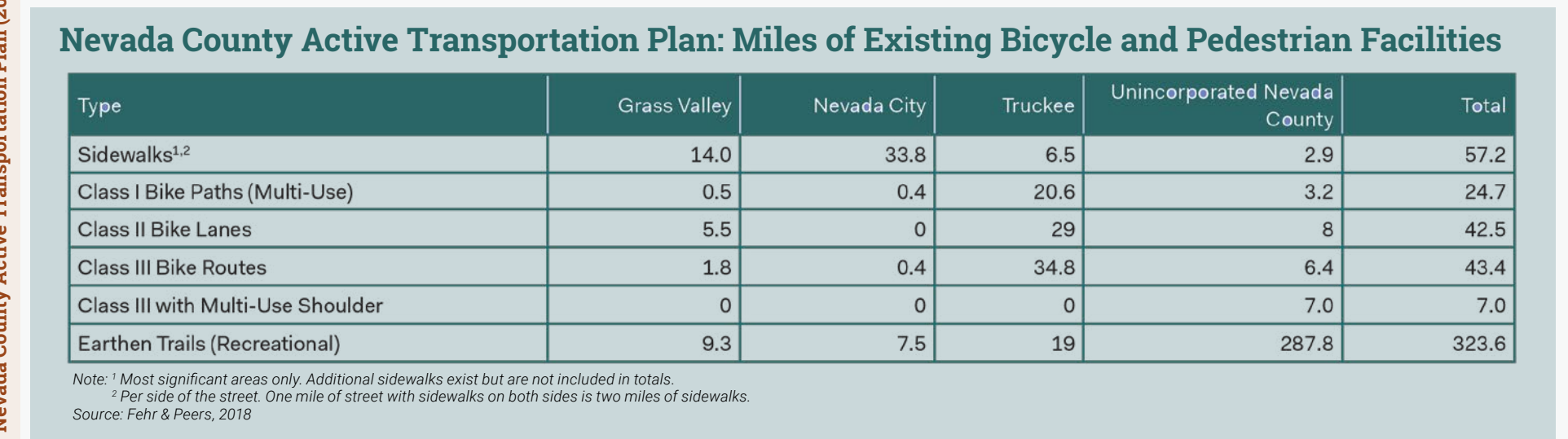
Trail is an example of the significant trail system BYLT stewards. As the first identified wheelchair accessible wilderness trail in the country, the pathway includes views of the scenic South Yuba River canyon and represents the visionary passion of John Olmsted who worked tirelessly during the 1970's to create the trail with volunteer support.

Using the framework of the area's old flumes and mining legacy, the Independence Trail provides access to accessible picnic areas and seating. During the 2020 Jones Fire, unfortunately the wooden structures burned, rendering sections of the trail unusable for accessible access. BYLT has worked with California State Parks to navigate regulatory barriers and fundraise to rebuild the trail.



Independence Trail  
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust

Figure 28: Nevada County Active Transportation Plan: Miles of Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities





# State of the System | Trails

## Trail Plans in Nevada County

Several different planning documents address the existing and desired trail system in Nevada County. Some of the references for goals, policies, and design standards for trails include the following:

- Nevada County General Plan (1995 & 2010 Circulation Element update)
- Truckee 2040 General Plan (2023)
- Truckee Trails & Bikeways Master Plan (2015)
- Grass Valley General Plan (1999)
- Nevada County Active Transportation Plan (2019)
- Western Nevada County Non-motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan (2010)
- Nevada City General Plan (1980)
- Municipal code, guidelines, and standards
- Local Area Plans and Specific Plans

Key topics that appeared in the different plans and as part of the countywide community input were goals to create a continuous regional trail network and to develop trails for different user groups, whether that be children, adults, people with disabilities, or the elderly. This includes both natural surface trails for different users such as mountain bicyclers, hikers, and equestrians, as well as paved Class I shared-use paths to connect residents to parks, schools, and community centers.



Accessible section of the Independence Trail  
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust

These precedent plans, along with the strategic plans and guiding documents for local nonprofits and state and federal land managers, inform the Master Plan's trail recommendations. In particular, the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is referenced because of its recent completion and its integration of other plans' recommendations. The Western Nevada County Non-motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan is also drawn up because it provides detail on community connectivity through a system of unpaved multi-use trails. Priority trail connections

identified by key partners, such as BYLT, are also reflected in the mapping.

All proposed trail alignments are diagrammatic in nature and only reflect the intent to evaluate feasibility for future trail connections. Trail corridors and alignments that are known to have sensitive considerations around property rights and easements are not included on the Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan maps, but may be part of future considerations.

# State of the System | Trails

The County of Nevada and other trail and land managers respect private property and are committed to working closely with private land owners to address issues and concerns while also encouraging continuity of the trail system. These different agencies and partners work together toward the goal of improving the trail system throughout the county.

This collaboration is especially important when considering the variety of user groups that should be accommodated as part of trail planning and design. The County of Nevada works to partner and support these efforts rather than duplicate or supersede them.

## E-bike Use

Since the development of many of the earlier reference documents, the use and demand for electric bikes (e-bikes) and electric scooters has emerged as a growing trend. As described in the 2019 ATP, state law governs where the devices may be used, but local jurisdictions may adopt more restrictive rules.

The planned natural surface Pines to Mines Trail has been designed to allow for e-bike use. The inclusion of Class 1 e-bikes as an approved use on the trail expands access to individuals that may not be able to walk or ride a traditional bicycle for as long. As

described in information provided by the Tahoe National Forest, e-bike technology has the potential to include user groups of all ages and attract more diverse users to explore their public lands in a socially and ecologically responsible way. Class 1 e-bikes are equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches the speed of 20 mph. Studies completed during project analysis indicated that Class 1 e-bikes are similar to traditional mountain bikes in terms of components, relative speeds and impacts to trails.

Figure 29: Allowed Electric Mobility Device Use on Paved Bike Paths in California

## Allowed Electric Mobility Device Use on Paved Bike Paths in California

	Class I Bike Path	Class II Bike Lane	Class III Bike Route	Class IV Separated Bikeway	Additional comments
Class 1 E-Bike	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	
Class 2 E-Bike	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	
Class 3 E-Bike	Prohibited	Allowed	Allowed	Prohibited	
Electric Scooter	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed (if speed limit ≤ 35 mph)	Allowed	Prohibited from roads with speed limit > 35 mph
Electrically Motorized Board	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	
Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Device	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	

Note: Local jurisdictions may enact further restrictions. Source: California Vehicle Code 2018, Fehr & Peers, 2018

Nevada County Active Transportation Plan (2019)



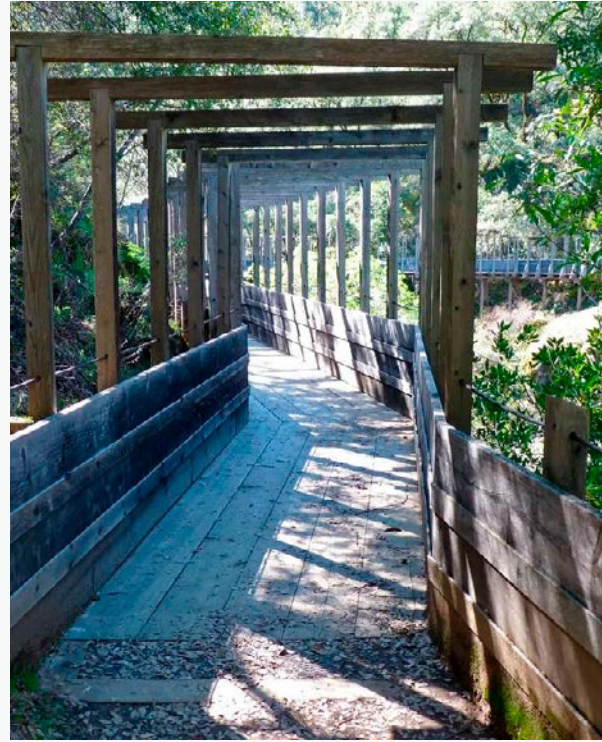
# State of the System | Trails

Park and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study (2018)

## 2018 Trails Fee Nexus Study

The 2018 Nevada County Parks and Recreation Facilities Fee Nexus Study included research and recommendations to incorporate a Western County Trails fee component as part of an update to its Recreation Development Fee. The adoption of the trails fee component would have helped partners fund trail improvements and easements necessary to support development-related trail needs in the unincorporated portions of western Nevada County.

Although it was not adopted at the time, Nevada County should include the study of a trails fee component as part of the next nexus study for the recreation fee update. This will allow Nevada County, its residents, and Board of Supervisors to evaluate and consider adoption in the future.



Independence Trail  
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust



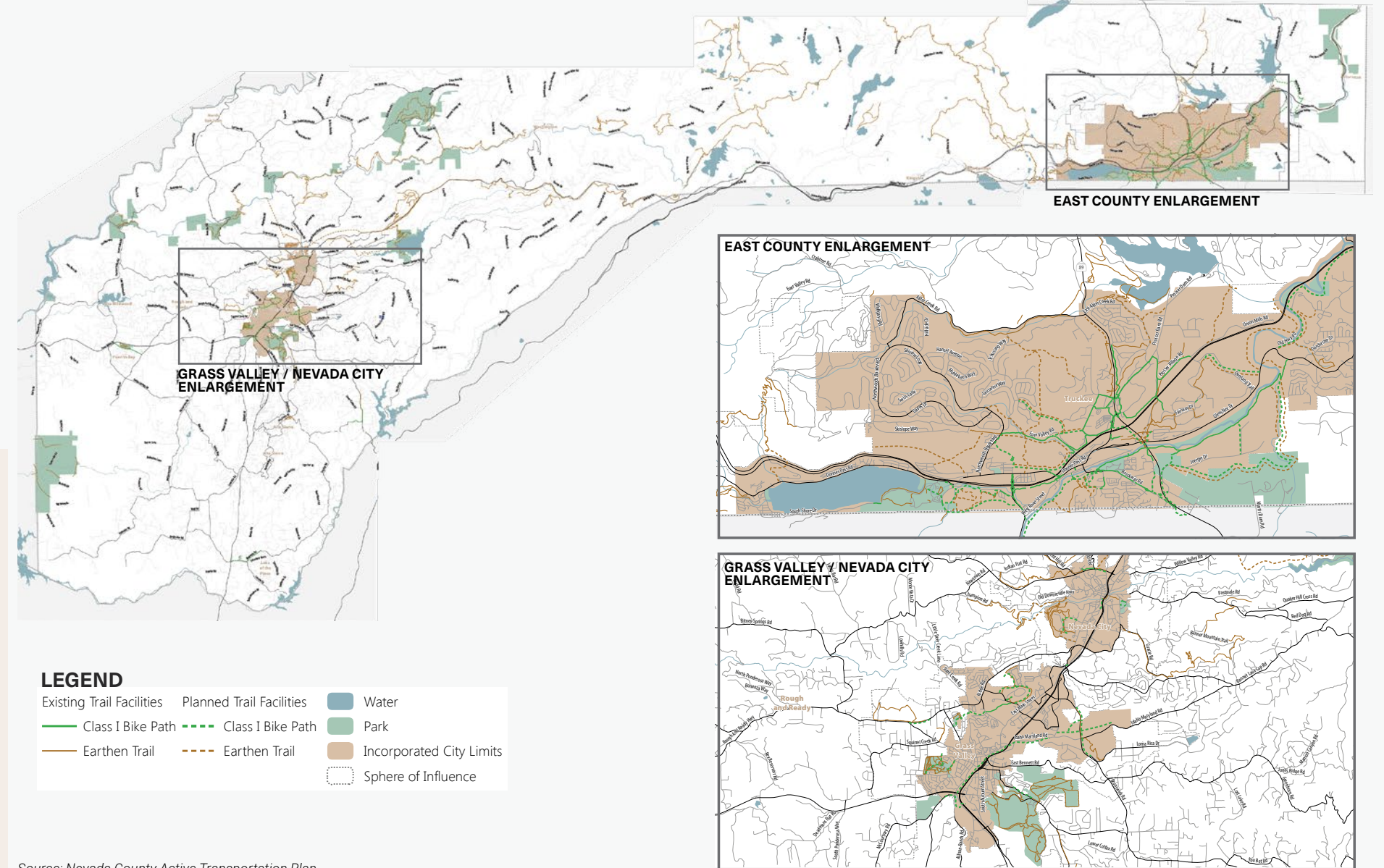
Trail Adopters Daspah Seyo Trail  
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust



A meadow in Truckee

# State of the System | Trails

## EXISTING & PLANNED TRAIL FACILITIES | PER THE COUNTY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



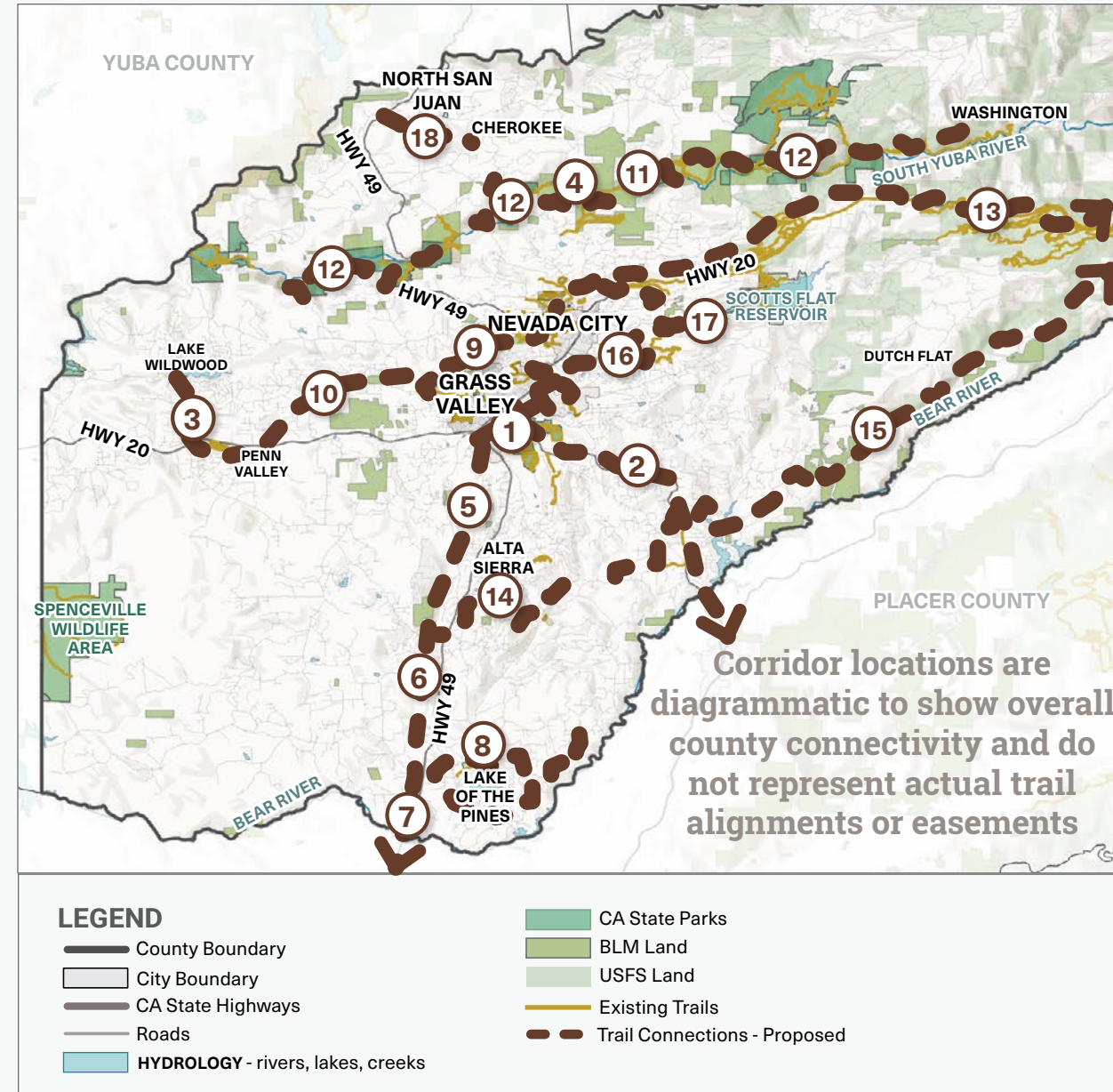
Source: Nevada County Active Transportation Plan

Nevada County Active Transportation Plan (2019)



# State of the System | Trails

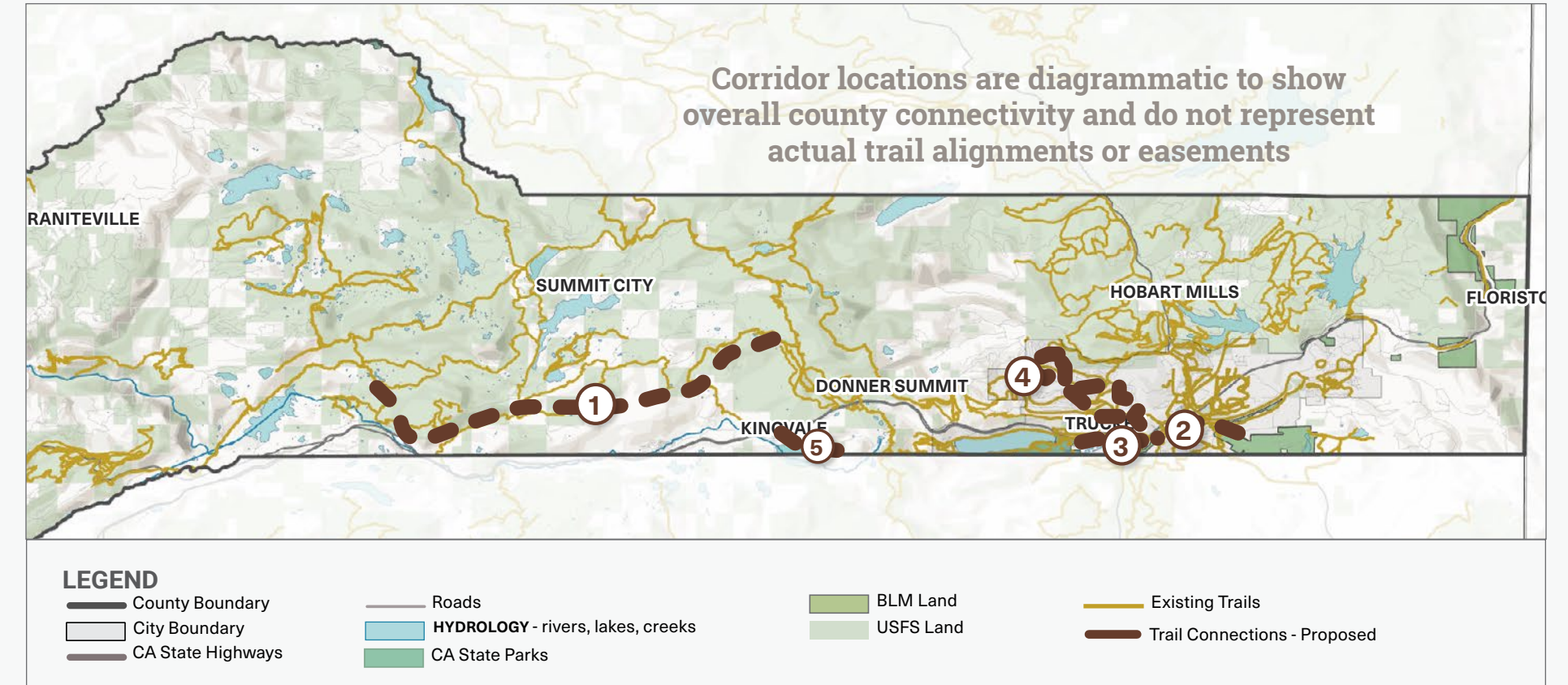
## Western Nevada County Conceptual Trail Corridor Connections from Previous Plans



- ① WOLF CREEK TRAIL
- ② COLFAX HWY COMMUTER TRAIL
- ③ LAKE WILDWOOD TO WESTERN GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK / PENN VALLEY
- ④ MONTEZUMA RIDGE / GOVERNOR'S HILL TRAIL
- ⑤ GRASS VALLEY TO ALTA SIERRA
- ⑥ ALTA SIERRA TO LAKE OF THE PINES
- ⑦ LAKE OF THE PINES TO NORTH AUBURN
- ⑧ COMBIE ROAD SHARED USE PATH & MAGNOLIA TRAILS (EXTENSION)
- ⑨ NEVADA CITY TO ROUGH & READY
- ⑩ ROUGH AND READY TO PENN VALLEY
- ⑪ SOUTH YUBA RIVER CAMPGROUND CONNECTOR TRAIL
- ⑫ SOUTH YUBA RIVER TRAIL (EXTENSION)
- ⑬ PIONEER TRAIL (EXTENSION)
- ⑭ ALTA SIERRA TRAILS
- ⑮ OVERLAND EMIGRANT TRAIL
- ⑯ CASCADE CANAL & DS CANAL TRAIL (EXTENSION)
- ⑰ SNOW MOUNTAIN DITCH TO SCOTTS FLAT TRAIL
- ⑱ NORTH SAN JUAN TO CHEROKEE

# State of the System | Trails

## Eastern Nevada County Conceptual Trail Corridor Connections from Previous Plans



- ① PINES TO MINES TRAIL
- ② LEGACY TRAIL PH 4
- ③ LEGACY TRAIL PH 5
- ④ TAHOE DONNER TRAILS MASTER PLAN PLANNED LOOP TRAILS
- ⑤ SODA SPRINGS AND SERENE LAKES CONNECTION



# State of the System | Trails

## Trail Design Considerations

This Plan primarily addresses trails that are separated from roadways, including Class I bikeways (also known as bike paths or shared-use paths) and unpaved multi-use trails. The ATP, Area Plans, Specific Plans, and the Truckee Bikeways Master Plan include recommendations for on-street bike facilities and sidewalk connectivity.

### Class I Shared-Use Paths

Class I bikeways are also often referred to as shared-use paths, paved bike paths, and bikeways. Caltrans has established design guidance for Class I bikeways (see Chapter 1000 of the Highway Design Manual) and the ATP and other local plans and codes provide additional guidance. These facilities provide both recreation and transportation opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians which are separated from roadways and are often aligned with riparian corridors, utility easements, rights-of-ways, or within and between parks.

Shared-use paths provide the greatest level of comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians because they are separated from roads, often with a landscaped buffer. This makes them ideal for year-round use in warmer parts of the county. High-use trails in Truckee may also have snow removed to improve winter connectivity. Where appropriate, a dirt

sidepath may be considered in areas of high equestrian use.

The number of at-grade road crossings should be minimized and, where possible, crossings should be grade separated to reduce conflicts between vehicles and trail users. Where heavy use is anticipated, separation of bicyclists and pedestrians should be accommodated.

### Multi-Use, Unpaved/ Natural Surface Trails

Unpaved multi-use trails are also often referred to as natural surface or dirt trails. Multi-use trails are generally used for hiking, mountain biking, or horseback riding. These trails are recreation-oriented but also serve a connectivity or transportation need. They include designated natural surface trails through public lands – providing both access to recreation areas and enjoyment of using the trail itself.

Multiple-uses of natural surface trails are preferred for the majority of trail systems in order to reduce the number of parallel trails and minimize environmental impacts. However, some single- or limited-use trails exist and are appropriate for trails through wilderness areas or for technically-oriented use. For example, off-highway vehicles (OHV) and other similar motorized uses are only accommodated on trails designated for

those uses. TNF has plans for enhancing the Parliament Trail system to be optimized for mountain bike use. Consideration should also be given to regional needs for equestrian trails and that the level of service for multiple types of trail uses are adequate.

### Multi-Use Trail Width and Design Elements

The design of natural surface trails should consider the type of use and how developed or undeveloped the trail should be. Design guidelines or standards may vary for different land managers. A best practice is to utilize USFS's trail design standards. A few considerations are listed below:

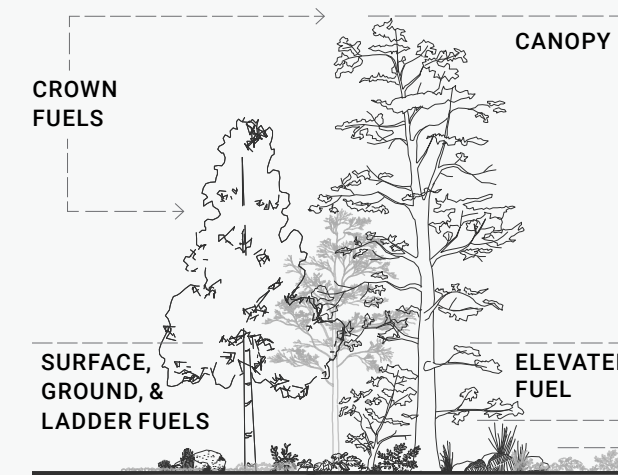
- Trail loops are preferred over “out-and-back” trails to reduce user conflict.
- Trail sight lines and grades should be designed to reduce user conflicts.
- Trails require clear signage to designate appropriate use, direction, and etiquette.
- Trail widths, design surface, and grade should reflect the designated use and level of trail development.
- Separated-use trails are appropriate for high use areas, to accommodate higher skill levels (technical trails), or to address environmental impacts. Management and enforcement of separated-use trails should be considered prior to designation of separated uses.
- Multi-use trails should be able to accommodate the anticipated volume of use with minimal user conflicts.

# State of the System | Trails

## Trails and Wildfire Mitigation

Trails may be incorporated into shaded fuel breaks or certain trails may have design components of shaded fuel breaks to assist with wildfire mitigation. Shaded fuel breaks act as a strategic “defensible landscape” to reduce fire speed and severity. The purposes of strategic fuel modification are to separate communities or groups of structures from the native vegetation and break up large expanses of flammable fuel into smaller blocks, all with the purpose of reducing fire intensity. The shade provided by the canopy improves the microclimate conditions of underlying fuels.

The primary goal of this practice is to significantly alter the fire's behavior within the treated area. For example, crown fires, those that rapidly spread from tree to tree,



Vegetation Profile

pose the greatest danger to human and ecological values. Decreasing the overall risk of rapidly spreading crown fires is the goal of the fuel break. Installation of fuel breaks should be done when fire service agencies, local community wildfire protection, or other local fire safe planning efforts have identified the area as a strategic need for a fuel break system. Considerations may include factors including the below items:

- Locate ignition sources that could cause fires: e.g., public roads, railroads, urban development, recreation sites, utilities.
- Locate fuel breaks between the potential ignition source and the resources to be protected. Favor locations for fuel breaks that are on strategic ridgelines for fire suppression control and bottoms of canyons leading up to saddles to reduce the risk of fires moving upslope.

Shaded fuel breaks can also serve as staging locations for wildfire crew. The diagrams on the following pages illustrate guidelines for fuel breaks. Although best practices indicate a desire for removing fuels within 100 feet of both sides of a trail, it is recognized that a 200 foot treatment area may not be feasible. A minimum of 4 feet and a goal of 15 feet of treated area on either side of the trail was indicated as a guideline by CAL FIRE stakeholders. These distances should be included in environmental approval

## Shaded Fuel Break Goals

- Controlling fire behavior by reducing ladder fuels
- Opening the tree canopy
- Treating ground fuels
- Facilitate fire suppression (ground and air attack)

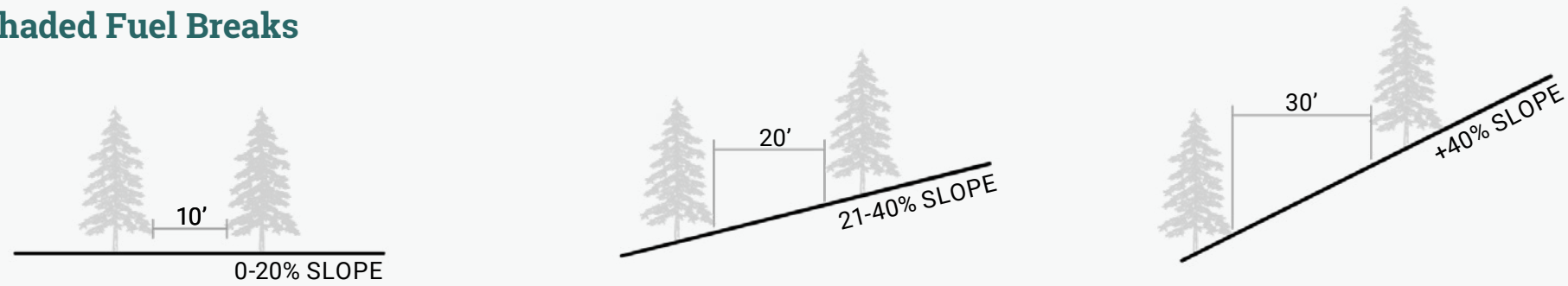


Shaded Fuel Break  
Image Credit: Placer Resource Conservation District



# State of the System | Trails

## Shaded Fuel Breaks



### Shaded Fuel Break: Ideal Condition

AXON

10' MIN BETWEEN TREE CROWNS

**REDUCE LADDER FUELS**  
REMOVE TREE BRANCHES AND VEGETATION 3 TIMES THE HEIGHT OF ADJACENT SHRUBS

# State of the System | Trails

## Shaded Fuel Breaks

### Placement Considerations for Shaded Fuel Breaks

**CONNECT FUEL BREAKS TO NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL FIRE BARRIERS:**  
RIVERS / CREEKS / WET MEADOWS

100'

**LARGE ROCK OUTCROPS**

100'

**ROADS**

100'

### Shaded Fuel Breaks Design Guidelines

- A minimum separation of 10' is recommended between tree crowns.
- Retain 30 percent maximum canopy coverage.
- Trees selected to be retained should be representative of the dominant and codominant species for the vegetation community and must be evaluated in regard to health and senescence.
- Trees that are suppressed, diseased, or damaged should be prioritized for removal unless retained for habitat reasons such as nest hollows or seeding.
- Lop tree branches  $\leq 6$  feet above the ground (unless a sapling to be retained)
- Connect fuel breaks to natural or artificial fire barriers – rivers, creeks, large rock outcrops, wet meadows, roads, or areas with low fuel loads/cover such as existing adjacent fuel break.
- Feather the edges of the fuel breaks as feasible into the adjacent protected areas for aesthetic purposes and to limit habitat disruption.
- Consider maintenance (every 2-3 years) when locating and planning for shaded fuel breaks.
- Fuel breaks should NOT be located on mid-slope areas because these areas are less accessible and less functional for fire containment.



# State of the System | Trails

documentation and as part of training for volunteer trails crews and adopters.

## Multi-Benefits from Trails in Shaded Fuel Breaks

BYLT has been approached by a landowner on Montezuma Ridge with the desire to donate a trail easement along an existing, essential trail that runs through two parcels they own. The trail is referred to as Governor's Hill Trail and connects these rural neighborhoods between Purdon Road and Jackass Flats to the business area in North Columbia.

This trail easement is also part of the Montezuma Ridge Fuel Break that has been maintained by CAL FIRE and the community for many years since it lies on the ridgeline above the South Yuba River. The trail easement will be 150 to 300 feet in width to allow for the trail to be maintained as well as the surrounding land that is part of the fuel break. Nevada County was recently awarded funding to plan and implement multi-benefit wildfire mitigation actions in partnership with Yuba Watershed Institute.



BYLT's Governor's Hill Trail aligned through a shaded fuel break and hazardous fuels reduction project  
*Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust*

## Potential Actions to Consider

- Create regional trails that connect communities to communities and local trails that link people to key destinations and public lands
- Expand support for community-based organizations that lead efforts for planning and prioritizing trail linkages, acquiring easements, designing, implementing, and maintaining trail systems
- Connect trails to critical locations such as senior centers and schools to support both the aging population and families and to promote active transportation
- Focus on completing missing links in paved and unpaved trail systems
- Co-locate trails in shaded fuel breaks where appropriate and encourage design and approval of fuels management between 4' to 15' in width on both sides of trail corridors
- 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
- Capture economic impacts and environmental gains of improved trail networks
- Develop sustainable funding sources to support partner organizations in the development and maintenance of trail systems