

Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use
Planning Phase of Project

Summary of Public Comments and
Master Responses

During Project Planning Phase

6-14-22

State Parks received more than 700 comments regarding the proposed Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use Project. These comments came primarily in the form of emails. State Parks staff have read all of the individual comments and have provided a summary of all of the public comments. Many comments make the same point or provide the same information and this summary attempted to capture unique comment categories and not repeat identical or similar comments. Many individual emails or letters contained multiple comments about different issues. The summary statements of the comments below are both paraphrased from comment emails and letters and in some instances excerpted directly. The comments were categorized by similar topic, in some cases there is overlap in these categories and in the responses.

1. Summary of Comments Regarding Compatibility with Existing Uses, Facilities and Services

- The Browns Ravine Trail has soils that are extremely durable.
- The Browns Ravine Trail has grades that are generally gentle and sightlines that are mostly good.
- The trail is not conducive to multi-use as it is too narrow and has blind curves.
- Some sightlines are very poor with steep drop-offs making the trail incompatible for multi-use.
- I and a partner recently walked a ½ mile section of the Browns Ravine Trail from the El Dorado Irrigation Pump Station east to the low bridge near Guadalupe Drive. There were 16 blind turns where I could not see my partner from 40 feet ahead of me. It seems the adequate line of sight claim is inaccurate.
- This trail does not meet the criteria and standards to be a multi-use trail.
- Where will extra cars for new trail users park? If the Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use is approved, parking must be expanded and enforced to allow horse trailers and equestrians to have access. Potential trail users seeking to park at Falcon Crest are often forced to turn away due to lack of parking.
- Hiking/jogging and bikes do not mix well on trails.

- Brown's Ravine is heavily used by hikers which should not have to jump out of the way of bikes. There are many alternative routes that the bikes can use.
- There are more bikers than equestrians, therefore there should be more trail opportunities for bikers.
- Without conducting brake distance metric analysis to calculate stopping distance under various trail conditions, how can the Department conclude whether a site line is adequate?

Master Response

The Browns Ravine Trail was determined to be generally conducive to the proposed Change-in-Use (CIU) and the existing uses and facilities compatible with the proposed CIU.

The Browns Ravine Trail receives lighter use than some of the other trails within FLSRA, including the trails in the Granite Bay area. It is anticipated that trail user conflicts will be less along this trail than there might be in other portions of the FLSRA where there is heavier trail use. The portion of the trail from Browns Ravine to New York Creek appears to be more heavily used than the remainder of the trail from New York Creek to Old Salmon Falls which appears to be very lightly used.

State Parks does not have trail count numbers identifying how many of each type of trail user utilizes the trail. Staff have been out on the trail regularly over the years and many times in the past year. Portions of this trail are ridden regularly by mountain bikes. This is an observation and is not the rationale for considering or approving the CIU. State Parks staff have regularly seen pedestrians/runners on the trail as well. Less equestrian use has been directly observed by State Parks staff; however, it is understood that this is anecdotal information.

The Browns Ravine Trail is currently aligned along relatively gently undulating topography with adequate trail width or open areas along most sections of the trail for trail users to pass or to step off the trail and allow other users to pass. The proposed trail modifications include trail widening in specific areas, notably from Higgins Point to Old Salmon Falls. In addition to the trail modifications, routine trail maintenance is being performed on the trail which includes brushing and tread work to restore the trail tread to its original designed and constructed specifications. This type of maintenance has not been performed in many years and the slough and berm build up on the trail has narrowed the trail tread over time. The maintenance will restore the original trail width. With the proposed trail modifications, trail safety can be maintained with the implementation of the CIU.

The sight lines along the Browns Ravine Trail are good for the most part. As noted above, routine trail maintenance is being performed on the trail and this will help improve sight lines and restore the trail to its original designed specifications. The proposed trail modifications, which are a condition of the CIU, includes areas where the need for additional brushing, beyond maintenance level brushing, has been identified to provide adequate sight distance in specific locations. These trail brushing modifications will improve sight distance over the current trail condition. Trail user speed and braking distance does affect sight distance, however there are many, many variables that affect bike speed and braking distance on a highly variable natural surface single-track trail: including tread surface, soil moisture, trail gradient, bike

type, brake type and condition, force applied to brakes, tire type, tire inflation, rider strength and capability, rider reaction time, rider weight, and more. Many of these variables are different at different points along the trail. It is beyond the scope of the Change-in-Use process to conduct a braking distance analysis that takes into consideration all of these variables for every location on the trail where sight distance may be a concern. The State Park Trails Handbook provides broad guidance regarding sight distance. The 2012 Trail User Conflict Study, an appendix to the Change-in-Use PEIR, also provides discussion and recommendations regarding sight distance.

Also, the relationship between sight lines and cyclist speed is also not uni-directional or simple. While long sight lines do allow trail users more time to see one another to slow down or stop prior to passing, longer sight lines also tend to serve to increase cyclist speed as they can see further ahead along the trail. Increasing trail sinuosity (curvilinear design), tread texture, installing pinch points and other trail design elements and modifications can help slow bike speeds. Determining appropriate sight lines is a balance between providing adequate time and distance for trail users to see one another and not encouraging increased speeds through trail design.

In reviewing the trail conditions for the CIU evaluation and for specific proposed trail modifications, State Parks staff paid particular attention to downhill sections, in regard to both sight lines and trail features that would serve to slow speeds, as well as other locations where speed and sight lines may be problematic. Through the CIU evaluations and other field reviews, State Parks staff have identified locations where modifications may be needed to improve sight distance and modifications which can serve to slow bike speeds. As we move forward with the project level design and implementation of the trail modifications, additional trail modifications to improve sight distance and or slow bike speeds, such as pinch points may be identified.

In addition to the trail design considerations, it is incumbent on trail users to enjoy the trails in a safe manner, to utilize good trail etiquette, and to ensure their equipment and skills are appropriate for the trail they choose to use.

The California State Parks Trails Handbook addresses multi-use trails in Chapter Nine. The Handbook points out that because multi-use trails accommodate three different use types, each with its own design needs and user expectations, not all of the design needs and expectations can be met. Multi-use trail design and construction represent a compromise between the different groups.

The Handbook indicates that multi-use trails are appropriate when the landbase is insufficient to support trails specifically designated for hiking, equestrian, or bicycle use, or when the trail is used as a main artery of a larger trail system. In the case of the Browns Ravine Trail, both of these criteria are met. There is a relatively narrow public land base along the Folsom Lake shoreline and the Browns Ravine Trail is the primary artery along the South Fork Arm of Folsom Lake.

The Handbook notes that making multi-use trails wider and straighter, with longer sight distances and broader turning radii, allow users to see and hear each other sooner, giving them more time to stop and get off the trail and providing more passing room. Unfortunately, these characteristics also conflict with

the design needs and expectations of users and making trails wider and straighter can encourage cyclists to ride faster, which diminishes the effectiveness of design elements intended to slow users.

The Handbook identifies that multi-use trails have a minimum tread width that is consistent with the Class 1 equestrian standard of 36 inches. Where the hillslopes are steep and hikers and cyclists may have difficulty stepping off the trail, passing areas a minimum of 60 inches wide and 60 inches long should be provided. The Browns Ravine Trail was constructed with a trail tread of 36-48 inches, which is apparent by closely observing the inside and outside hinges of the trail bed. The ongoing routine maintenance of the trail is restoring that original tread width. In locations where the tread width is insufficient, the proposed trail modifications include tread widening.

The Browns Ravine Trail is currently primarily sustainable in most locations. As noted, the trail alignment is along relatively gentle topography with sustainable grades in most areas and the soils are very durable. The trail modifications will help enhance sustainability by improving drainage off the trail, eliminating areas with unsustainable grades or poor alignments where entrenchment and erosion are occurring and improving stream and drainage crossings. These modifications include reroutes, reconstruction of trail segments, installation of a couple of trail bridges, improving armored crossings as needed, installation of puncheon/boardwalk and/or causeway across wet areas and installation of drainage dips. These trail modifications will ensure trail sustainability in implementing the CIU.

The existing trailhead facilities at Browns Ravine and Old Salmon Falls have limited parking, however there is ample opportunity to provide additional trailhead parking at Browns Ravine along with other trailhead amenities such as restrooms, shade ramadas and additional signage. It is possible at Browns Ravine to create separate parking areas for equestrians and bicycles, to facilitate separating uses near the trailhead and reducing the passing of different uses in this more congested area. The Old Salmon Falls parking lot is relatively small but is currently relatively lightly used. It may be possible to expand the parking at Old Salmon Falls as well. The nearby Falconcrest/Monte Vista parking area also provides parking capacity. Implementing the CIU may include additional trailhead improvements at this trailhead/staging area including restrooms, ramadas, informational and interpretive signing and charging user fees. Depending on the demand for additional trail access parking, additional parking may be developed within the Monte Vista area.

Considering all of the above, the Browns Ravine Trail has been determined to be generally compatible with the proposed CIU.

2. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Access, Circulation and Connectivity

- Browns Ravine provides links to other multi-use and mountain bike trails which means that eventually you will be able to ride around the entire lake. Browns Ravine is also an important connector trail that would help keep cyclists safe and off the narrow and busy roads.
- Biking popularity has increased and allowing bikes to this trail will relieve congestion in other areas of the park.

- The mountain bike population has grown around the lake. Bikers are forced onto only a few trails, which then overpopulates those trails, and makes other users feel overwhelmed.
- We, as a society, and as a state population, already see the continued results of an idle society. Diabetes, obesity, depression, and many more issues result from lack of physical activity. Opening more trails to more uses provides opportunities to more of our population.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented trail and open space use as people escaped lockdowns and shelter-in-place recommendations. It is doubtful that the post-pandemic period will see fewer users. The health benefits of using our parks and trails are too obvious and too great to abandon.
- With all the new homes being built in the area over the last 10-20 years, we all need to share these trails to have more access for all user groups.
- All trails should be multi-use and open to everyone. Trails should be open for everyone to enjoy, not just a select group of people.
- Off road cycling is particularly well suited for children. There are no cars, and the bicycle riding is more "fun" and healthy.
- It is so important that the youth in our communities have a safe outlet. Not only does biking give them an activity that gets them out and into nature, but it gives them an activity that is healthy for their bodies and minds.
- Opening Browns Ravine to bikes would provide a safe alternative to riding on Salmon Falls Road.
- Why does the State do so much for horseback riding, but not for mountain biking? There are many other places for horses to ride where bikers are not allowed. State Parks should not let a vocal minority of trail users dictate their decisions.

Master Response

Much of the trail system at FLSRA was developed prior to the increased popularity of mountain biking in the late 1980's and early 1990's. As the population of the Sacramento region has grown, in particular the three Counties (Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer) in which Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (FLSRA) is located, visitor use at the park unit has increased as well. Along with the increased population growth in the region and the suburban residential development that has occurred in proximity to FLSRA, the number of visitors seeking mountain bike trail opportunities has also increased. Although some new natural surfaced bike trail opportunities have been added to FLSRA over the past 30 years, there has not been an opportunity to comprehensively reevaluate trail use opportunities. The current Folsom SRA and Folsom Powerhouse SHP Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) has provided that opportunity and the Browns Ravine Trail CIU was evaluated within the context of the RTMP with a goal of addressing trail needs based on changing demographics and recreation demand, while preserving a variety of non-bike trail experiences.

The goals for the trail system at FLSRA, identified in the 2010 Folsom Lake SRA General Plan/Resource Management Plan, include:

- A trail system that provides broad public benefit by accommodating diverse trail uses and abilities.
- A system that gives consideration to the demands of a diverse and growing user population while responding to changes in recreation demand over time.

Currently the trail mileage available to different trail uses at Folsom Lake SRA is as follows:

- 7 miles of pedestrian only trails (including accessible trails)
- 46 miles of pedestrian/equestrian trails
- 11 miles of pedestrian/bike trails
- 38 miles of unpaved multi-use trails
- 19 miles of paved multi-use trails.

Given the increase in visitor use at FLSRA, including mountain biking, over the past several decades, there is a need to provide additional trail opportunities to meet this demand, particularly in portions of the park where trail opportunities for mountain bikes is currently missing. The Change-in-Use for the Browns Ravine Trail will enhance access and circulation for mountain bikes and other single track bike trail users. There are currently segments of multi-use trail on either end of the Browns Ravine Trails, the Mormon I. Cove to Browns Ravine Trail. Implementing this CIU will give bikes uninterrupted access along the South Fork Arm of Folsom Lake and provide trail connections from Folsom Point to Salmon Falls and onto either the Darrington Trail (bike/pedestrian) to the Peninsula or the multi-use South Fork Trail to Cronan Ranch near Coloma.

The Change-in-Use is consistent with the Folsom Lake SRA General Plan in providing broad public benefit and diverse trail uses and responding the changes in recreation demand over time. The CIU will enhance trail access, circulation and connectivity for bike users.

3. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Safety

- Many cyclists wear headphones/ear buds and are not able to hear when equestrians are yelling to slow down before having to jump out of the way due to not being heard.
- Bicyclists can ride in a very dangerous manner, both individually and in large groups (e.g., riding too fast, not yielding to others, listening to music, doing jumps).

- There are hundreds of residential homes on the south side of Brown's Ravine Trail. Families with small children typically take safe hikes along this trail. It is unsafe for high-speed mountain bikes to be allowed on trails where families are calmly relaxing and enjoying nature. These bikes could crash into little kids.
- How does this change in use ensure that safety is maintained?
- The proposed CIU does not address the need for trail patrols.
- If it is not possible to control the speed of the bikes, then it is impossible to make a multi-use trail safe.
- The proposed CIU modifications don't adequately address speed control.
- If the trail is modified to be "multi-use", meaning widening and flattening the trail as well as modifying the creek approaches, it seems that it will clearly become a mountain bike racetrack.

Master Response

The Change-in-Use evaluation indicates that the trail is generally suitable for a CIU, including providing for trail safety, but would also require a combination of trail modifications and management measures to enhance trail safety. Overall, the trail grades on the Browns Ravine Trail are relatively gentle and cross slopes are generally mild to moderate. Much of the trail terrain is open and allows for users to get off the trail and allows for safe passing of trail users.

Standard maintenance will be performed on the entire trail, including brushing and tread maintenance. As part of this maintenance the trail will be brushed to an 8-foot-wide corridor, including 1.5 feet from the inboard and outboard hinge on either side of the trail. As part of the trail modifications for the CIU, additional brushing will be completed in select locations to provide adequate sight lines where required. Tread work maintenance will re-establish the original constructed trail tread width and re-establish outslope. Selected sections of the trail will be widened to facilitate passing of different trail users.

State Parks staff recognize that the speed differential between bikes and other users is one of the challenges in successfully implementing the CIU. Part of the issue with bike speed, is for both cyclists and other users to have adequate time to see one another and for cyclists to slow down and move aside for safe passing. The Browns Ravine Trail generally has good sight lines though as noted above, additional brushing will be performed in key locations as part of the trail modifications to provide adequate sight lines.

As noted above, as part of the trail modifications, some segments of trail which were constructed very narrow, will be widened in order to allow for passing. The trail will not be "flattened", and in fact some rocky/textured sections of trail, which are not a sustainability concern, will be retained which will force bikes to slow and provide technical and endurance challenges for bikes. These sections have been reviewed in the field and will not impede other trail users. If determined necessary, as part of the trail

modifications, pinch points could be installed to reduce speed at locations where there is reduced visibility.

Management measures will include providing additional trailhead education signage about safe trail use and trail etiquette, including appropriate speeds. As part of implementing the Change-in-Use, State Parks staff will patrol the trail occasionally and will provide education to trail users on safe trail use and trail etiquette. FLSRA has volunteer trail patrol groups and will utilize these volunteers, and potentially others, to help patrol the trail and provide visitor education on trail safety and trail etiquette. We will conduct outreach to trail user groups on trail safety and etiquette and will host occasional pop-up events at trail access points with our interpretive staff to promote trail safety and etiquette. Part of this messaging will include promoting the use of noise alerting devices such as bells for bikes. We will work with bike user groups and others to install “bells for bikes” stations at the Browns Ravine Trail trailheads. Gold Fields District and Folsom Sector staff intend to establish a multi-user volunteer group to assist with trail etiquette and safety education, trail patrol and presence and to encourage self-policing among user groups to adhere to trail rules and safe trail use.

All of the trail modifications and management measures above will work in conjunction with one another and will serve to improve trail safety. Ultimately, individual users are responsible to abide by the laws, rules, etiquette, and common courtesy. State Parks will utilize an adaptive management approach to monitor trail safety and implement corrections or other changes as needed.

4. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Modifications and Trail Widening

- The trail should open to bikes before the proposed trail modifications and should stay open while modifications are occurring. Modifications should proactively begin now so there is no delay if approval is granted in a year.
- Will State Parks upgrade this trail to meet the design and build standards for the multi-use?
- Most users value the ruggedness and remote feeling of this trail. Please do not overly widen the trail, remove rocky features that are not eroding, line the edges of the trail with rocks or wood, knock down "catch berms", outslope all corners to be off-camber, or lay down DG or crushed gravel on the trail. This may allow cyclists and runners to pick up more speed on the wider, smoother trail, which may reduce the safety and user experience for users.
- I'm opposed to trail widening. I want to ride trails not wide pathways. Part of riding is the challenges of trails. Just do better maintenance of the trails such as encroaching brush, trees. As well as down trees or low branches and limbs.
- California State Park's Trails Handbook contains inconsistent guidance on minimum tread width for multi-use trails. Is it 36" or 48"? We feel 48" should be the minimum width.
- No modifications are requested or needed to the existing area. Widening the trail will change the trail's natural character. This may also needlessly delay opening the trail. Please don't make this project more complicated than it needs to be.

- There is concern that proposed trail modifications, as well as getting off the trail to allow safe passage, may impact native vegetation that is important habitat for wildlife.
- If you realize that trail modifications are needed to make the trail safe to be able to accommodate bicycles, why would you consider allowing bikes on the trail prior to the modifications?

Master Response

Through the Change-in-Use Evaluation for the Browns Ravine Trail, the trail was determined to be generally conducive to multi-use, though it was not necessarily designed and constructed as a multi-use trail. State Parks has developed guidelines for the design and construction of sustainable trails and has identified specific trail modifications needed to provide for trail safety and sustainability.

For trail safety this includes improving sight distances where needed, widening the trail where needed to allow safe passage, and utilizing other trail design and features to slow the speed of bikes in areas of concern.

Folsom Lake is classified as a State Recreation Area, and while this classification allows for more active forms of recreation, State Parks is responsible, by statute, code, policy, and law, for the protection of natural and cultural resources. Allowing bikes on this trail will increase the amount of use. To maintain trail sustainability and protect natural resources, additional trail modifications are needed. These modifications include: improving drainage or creek crossings with reroutes and trail bridges; installing or repairing armored crossings; reconstructing the trail tread to provide proper outslope for drainage; installing drainage dips; installing boardwalk or causeway segments over wet areas; and removing unsustainable alternate route trail segments.

The trail currently is aligned along the property boundary in a couple of locations in close proximity to adjacent houses. The trail modifications will include reroutes to shift the trail away from the houses, to eliminate areas of unsustainable grades, to reduce potential conflict with adjacent property owners, and to provide a higher quality trail experience for all users.

There were inconsistencies in the Trails Handbook with the recommended guidance on the minimum tread width for multi-use trails. Chapter 9, Multi-use Trails, of the Handbook states a minimum 36" width. This is the correct guideline for multi-use trails. This guidance is also located in Chapter 2, Trail System Development and Management, under class 1 trails. There was an error in coordinating Appendix C, Best Practices, with this information. This has since been corrected.

Guidance on trail design can be found in the Department of Parks and Recreation Trails Handbook https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29174. Multi-use trails accommodate three different use types: hikers, equestrians, and cyclists. Each use type has its own design needs and user expectations (See *Chapter 5, Principles of Layout and Design; Chapter 6, Mountain Bike Trail Design; and Chapter 7, Equestrian Trail Design*). When these user groups share the same trail, not all of the design needs and expectations can be met. Multi-use trail design and construction represents a compromise between the

three groups. Further guidance specific to multi-use trails can be found in Chapter 9, Multi-use Trails. This design guidance builds on the information in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Trail classifications and related trail standards also determine specific design standards associated with the trail (*See Chapter 2, Trail System Development and Management*). Although the Trails Handbook does have some recommended guidelines specific to multi-use trails, such as a minimum tread width of 36", the focus is on looking at overall sustainable design and safety techniques that can be applied to the site-specific conditions and project goals and objectives.

Visitor experience and expectations must also be considered when modifying an existing trail to improve multi-use safety. Widening the trail to road width would allow for complete safe passing, however widening the tread can also lead to increased bike speeds. Removal of all vegetation that inhibits sight line visibility will improve sight distances, but again this can increase bike speeds and alters the trail user experience. State Parks considers both safety and visitor experience when evaluating modifications for multi-use.

5. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Safety/Trail Etiquette Education

- Enforcement of rules on the existing trails and education of users on trail safety and stewardship needs to occur prior to any change in use at Folsom SRA.
- State Parks needs to stop wasting resources trying to categorize the trails instead of educating users on the proper rules of trail sharing.
- There needs to be education for both cyclists and other user groups on proper trail etiquette. This would go a long way in minimizing trail conflicts.
- Having good signage will help improve trail safety.
- If multi-use is allowed on the Browns Ravine Trail, State Parks should sign areas that may be dangerous for encounters between bikes and other users.

Master Response

As part of implementing the CIU State Park will implement a number of management measures to provide occasional trail patrols, signs regarding trail safety and etiquette, social media messaging, and other public outreach to promote safe trail use. State Parks ranger and interpretive staff will patrol the trail occasionally, we will host pop-up events at trail access points with our interpretive staff and conduct other outreach to trail user groups to promote trail safety. Trail safety signing could include both signs and information boards at trailhead access points and also signs at key locations along the trail.

FLSRA has volunteer trail patrol groups and will utilize these volunteers to help patrol the trail and provide visitor education on trail safety and trail etiquette. Additionally, Gold Fields District and Folsom Sector staff intend to establish a new multi-user volunteer group to assist with trail etiquette and safety

education, trail patrol and presence and to encourage self-policing among user groups to adhere to trail rules and safe trail use. Part of this messaging will include promoting the use of noise alerting devices such as bells for bikes. We will work with bike user groups and others to install “bells for bikes” stations at the Browns Ravine Trail trailheads.

6. Summary of Comments Regarding Illegal Use of the Trail and Enforcement

- Bicycle use is currently disallowed on the Browns Ravine Trail; there are plenty of opportunities for bike use on other trails in Folsom Lake SRA and throughout the Greater Sacramento area.
- State Parks has historically been unwilling to enforce trail rules and won't likely do so in the future.
- Existing rules are already being broken by people riding on the trail. How do we know that the rules will be followed if/when the trail is opened to bicycles?
- If areas are opened to bikes this will lead to additional illegal trails and environmental damage.
- Simply legalizing a currently illegal use of a hiking/equestrian trail is not the answer.
- State Parks should not base this decision on the fact that bikes currently illegally use the trail. State Parks should stop awarding illegal bicyclists for their bad actions.

Master Response

State Parks has limited ability to patrol trails and enforce trail rules due to staffing levels and the other law enforcement needs at a large, complex and busy park unit such as FLSRA. Even with a more robust presence on the trails, it is not feasible to eliminate all illegal use of the trails. We have noted that there is regular bike use on the Browns Ravine Trail currently. The fact that bikes are currently using the trail illegally isn't the basis of our decision regarding the CIU, but it is one piece of information noted in the CIU evaluation. The key factors considered in the CIU decision include: compatibility with existing uses and facilities; trail circulation and connectivity; trail safety; trail sustainability; effects on natural and cultural resources; and effects on trail maintenance and operations.

As part of implementing this CIU, the park unit will increase staff presence along the trail by providing occasional ranger patrols, roving interpretation, and educational pop-up events at trailheads. We will also utilize volunteers and a new multi-user patrol group to assist with these efforts. Additionally, trailhead signage, social media messaging campaigns and other informational and educational outreach efforts to trail user groups will help promote compliance with trail rules, trail safety and trail etiquette. Enforcement of trail rules will always be challenging given the limited number of law enforcement staff available. This CIU will not be successfully implemented solely through enforcement, user groups will need to work and communicate with their peers on complying with trail rules and practicing good trail etiquette.

7. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Accident Data and Emergency Response

- It does not appear that State Parks has documented numerous safety incidents that have been reported over the years, which has created inaccurate historical data. It seems that to be heard, a complaint needs to be filed with State Parks every time there is an issue.
- How will emergency services access the trail in the inevitable case of a collision or accident requiring medical attention or evacuation? Via neighborhoods, the lake, or via the trail on emergency mountain bikes?
- Cell-phone reception is limited and often non-existent along Brown's Ravine Trail. That means that it is not possible, in the event of an emergency, to call 911 for emergency help resulting from a serious crash between a horse and a bike.
- The proposed CIU does not address the need for a reporting system to identify areas of concern to include trail safety.
- DPR must look at accident data in other state parks where mountain bikes and e-bikes have been introduced onto the trails.

Master Response

In order for State Parks to have an official record of an accident or incident, that incident would have to have been reported to our dispatch system (by calling 911 or State Park dispatch) which would result in a State Park law enforcement officer responding. Incident reports are completed and tracked for incidents to which a peace officer responds and there is an accident, injury, or other significant violation of law.

Many accidents or incidents may go unreported or are anecdotal reports made well after the fact. A trail user may have a bad experience with another trail user, but this may not rise to the level of calling 911. Park visitors are always encouraged to report any incidents by calling the park office, but we do not currently have a system of tracking these types of complaints. State Parks is looking into a reporting system for minor incidents and accidents. State Parks can also provide information at trailheads regarding how to report accidents or incidents.

State Parks has reviewed the trail accidents over the past ten years at Folsom Lake SRA that resulted in an official report in our public safety database. For the entire State Recreation area trails, there were 48 accidents involving horses and 260 accidents involving bicycles over the ten years. In both cases, solo accidents were far and away the most frequent occurrence representing 73% (equestrian) and 79% (bicycles) of the accident respectively. For the Browns Ravine Trail specifically, there were only five accident records, which included three solo bicycle accidents, one solo horse accident and one horse/equestrian accident. This information was presented at the January 12, 2022 public meeting and can be found in the meeting presentation which has been posted on the webpage.

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27913. The review of the past ten years of accident data included

trail use on both limited use equestrian/pedestrian trails and multi-use trails, such as the Granite Bay Multi-use Trail, the South Lake Natoma Multi-use Trail and the Beals Point to Granite Bay Multi-use Trail. All of these multi-use trails have had long standing bike use and provide a good basis for considering trail accident frequency between different uses.

Folsom Lake SRA is a primarily undeveloped natural area. While cell phone reception is better at FLSRA than many other park units, there are still places within the park where cell phone reception is limited. This is the nature of undeveloped natural environments such as state and national parks, national forests and other public lands. We encourage the public to be prepared to safely enjoy FLSRA and its network of trails. This includes wearing proper attire for the environment, bringing water and food as appropriate, having access to maps or other information where you recreate, considering recreating with others and/or letting friends or family know your plans.

In the event of an incident or accident, depending on the location, State Parks or other emergency responders may respond by any number of methods. These include by vehicle where possible, by boat via the Lake, by helicopter if warranted and feasible, by motorbike or by bicycle or foot if no other means are available or possible.

8. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Sustainability and Impacts to Natural and Cultural Resources

- There are significant environmental impacts that will occur from the construction and reconstruction of trails to provide for bicycle use, in addition to significant impacts from bicycle use of those trails once it is allowed. Bikes erode trails quickly and make them unsustainable and often dangerous to hikers and equestrians.
- How will the existing natural habitat not be damaged as a result of the proposed CIU?

Master Response

The Browns Ravine Trail is currently primarily sustainable in most locations. The trail alignment is along relatively gentle topography with sustainable grades in most areas. As previously discussed, the soils along the Browns Ravine Trail are very durable for the most part. The trail modifications will help enhance sustainability by improving drainage off the trail, eliminating areas with unsustainable grades or poor alignments where entrenchment and erosion are occurring and improving stream and drainage crossings. These modifications include reroutes, reconstruction of trail segments, installation of trail bridges, improving armored crossings as needed, installation of puncheon/boardwalk and/or causeway across wet areas and installation of drainage dips. These trail modifications will ensure trail sustainability in implementing the CIU.

Site specific environmental review of the proposed CIU modifications in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) is currently underway. Through adherence to standard project conditions and best management practices, the CIU

and related trail modifications can be implemented in a manner that avoids significant impacts to natural or cultural resources.

9. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail Maintenance

- State Parks should work with mountain bike groups to help implement necessary modifications and provide maintenance for the trail.

Master Response

In the past, maintenance along the trail has been intermittent, primarily consisting of brushing. The trail has not received regular brushing and tread maintenance for many years. Despite this lack of maintenance, the trail is primarily sustainable due to the relatively gentle grades and the very durable soils. The Gold Fields District has new resources for trail maintenance including a dedicated trail crew and trail specific equipment. This crew has been performing routine maintenance on the trail over the past several months and will be the primary work force for implementing the CIU trail modifications.

The Gold Fields District has previously worked with mountain bike groups and other volunteer organizations on various trail maintenance projects. We look forward to future collaborations with volunteers to maintain trails, including the Browns Ravine Trail.

10. Summary of Comments Regarding E-Bike and Other Bike Technology

- Mountain biking has changed tremendously since the 1970's. Advances in bike technology allows cyclists to travel at speeds that are incompatible with other user types on the trail.
- The proposed modifications to the Browns Ravine Trail will enable bikes/e-bikes to go faster, which then makes them more dangerous. Recent trends to allow e-bikes on single-track trails means increased bike speeds, which will exacerbate safety issues between bikes and horses. E-bikes are faster, heavier and more dangerous than traditional bikes.
- If State Parks allows e-bikes, they should consider signage and other measures to slow down the motored traffic for the safety of other users.
- State Parks should open Browns Ravine Trail to bikes, but not e-bikes or other motorized electric devices.
- If State Parks allows e-bikes on Browns Ravine, they should only allow Class 1 e-bikes.

Master Response

The FLSRA trail policy and currently permits Class 1 e-bikes on natural surface trails where bikes are allowed. Additionally, Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are permitted on paved trails. Class 3 e-bikes are not

permitted on any FLSRA trails. Consistent with these policies, Class-1 e-bikes will be permitted on the Browns Ravine Trail with the CIU. However, we will be monitoring trail use when the CIU is implemented, and we will make adjustments as needed or warranted. If e-bikes prove to be a particular documented problem on the trail, we could reconsider this decision for e-bikes.

Here are descriptions of the different classes of e-bikes:

- Class 1: A low speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a motor which provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when a speed of 20 mph is reached
- Class 2: A low speed throttle-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a motor used exclusively to propel the bicycle and NOT capable of providing assistance when a speed of 20 mph is reached.
- Class 3: A low speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a speedometer, and a motor which provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when a speed of 28 mph is reached.

11. Summary of Comments Regarding Special Events and Bike Races

- During the Brown's Ravine Trail CIU public meeting, park officials mentioned a moratorium on bike races on the trail for one year if the CIU was approved. As bike races on the trail will be exclusive of other uses, including hiking, equestrians, and non-competitive cycling, the trail will need to be closed to public use on race days. There needs to be full disclosure of how this will affect other trail use (e.g., number of races, number of consecutive race days, location of spectator areas, traffic management).
- I expect that with this change there will be pressure to allow mountain bike races and events to take place as have been happening on the trails near Salmon Falls. This will lead to mountain bikers practicing or training at speed on the Brown's Ravine Trail, which then leads to significant danger for all. Sometimes there are 20 – 30 or more riders at a time, which will make the trail essentially unusable for any other users. Who will have the right of way? A single hiker, runner, or horse, or 20 bikers? It seems unfair to expect a hiker, runner, or horse to step off the trail for 20 bikes to pass at 15 second intervals.
- It is my understanding that local high school mountain bike race teams will use the trail as a training ground. How does State Parks propose to handle this situation?

Master Response

Bicycle races, running events, triathlons, rowing races, kayak races and other competitive events at Folsom Lake SRA are authorized through special event permits. There are hundreds of special events permitted at Folsom Lake SRA throughout the year. Because special events can impact normal park use the park unit already does limit new special events during the peak season, which spans from Memorial

Day through Labor Day. Special event permits are discretionary, and the Department is not obligated to approve requests for special events if they conflict with resources, use of the park or operation and maintenance of the park and park facilities. Some existing bicycle races elsewhere in the park involve hundreds of riders and the effect of that amount of concentrated use on the trail to both park resources and other users' is considered in evaluating special event permit requests. For special events such as races permitted on trails, these trails are not necessarily closed to other public use, but the trails are posted with information about the upcoming special event so users can choose different days, times or locations to recreate if they prefer.

Under the proposal for the Change-in-use, existing special events on the trail would be permitted to continue. Currently the special events permitted on the trail include several running events during the winter and spring. Once the CIU is implemented and bicycle use is allowed on the trail, new special events would not be permitted for the first year of the CIU in order to see how the addition of bikes as an allowed use affects trail use of all types on the trail. This moratorium would be reevaluated after the first year of the CIU and may be continued or rescinded and consideration of new special event permits allowed.

12. Summary of Comments Regarding Consistency with Past Plans and Other Agency Plans

- This proposed action is not in compliance with the General Plan for the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area.
- To what extent is the current CIU relying on the information gathered and plans developed by the Folsom Lake Trails Advocacy Group (FTAG) 2000-2001?
- Bike use on this trail was deemed unsafe many years ago by the Department.
- Trail Plans for surrounding agencies should be considered in this decision.
- DPR's own 2012 Trail Use Conflict Study does not support the proposed Browns Ravine Trail CIU Project

Master Response

The Browns Ravine Trail CIU is consistent with the 2010 FLSRA General Plan. The goals for the trail system identified in the General Plan, include:

- Providing a trail system that provides broad public benefit by accommodating diverse trail uses and abilities.
- A system that gives consideration to the demands of a diverse and growing user population while responding to changes in recreation demand over time.

Implementing the CIU will contribute to providing broad public benefit and diverse trail uses and is responsive to the changes in recreation demand over time. The CIU will enhance trail access, circulation and connectivity for bike users.

The current CIU evaluation does not rely on work undertaken by the Folsom Lake Trails Advisory Group (FTAG) from 2000 to 2002. FTAG conducted a thorough review and evaluation of the trail in developing its recommendation to make needed modifications to the trail and to conduct a one-year pilot project to test adding bikes to the trail. FTAG consisted of trail user group representatives and State Parks staff. FTAG walked the trail, noting existing conditions and identifying modifications to the trail that would be needed for the pilot project. Public meetings were held regarding the proposed pilot project. They considered alternatives to the pilot project and developed criteria for evaluating the pilot and alternatives. FTAG provided a recommendation to the Gold Fields District Superintendent to implement the proposed one-year pilot project. The District Superintendent concurred with the FTAG recommendation but decided not to implement the proposed pilot at that time due to a freeze on hiring permanent staff, which presented challenges to being able to successfully implement the project. The Superintendent determined to defer the decision on converting the Browns Ravine Trail to multi-use to the Folsom Lake SRA General Plan, which was soon to be initiated. The Browns Ravine Trail was never determined to be unsafe for multi-use.

Since that time, the Department has developed its current Change-in-Use Process which was evaluated through a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which was finalized in 2013. The Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use Project is utilizing the process outlined in the PEIR. The request to evaluate a Change-in-Use on the trail was received in 2014, along with requests for CIU evaluations of a number of other FLSRA Trails. The State Parks CIU Evaluation Team conducted the initial field review in 2015 and the Change-in-Use Evaluation Form was finalized in 2021.

The District does work with adjacent jurisdictions in coordinating trail planning and the connection of our trails to other agency trails, such as the City of Folsom. We are familiar with the trail master plans and other trail planning documents of the surrounding counties and cities. However, the Browns Ravine Trail is entirely within the jurisdiction of Folsom Lake SRA and does not meaningfully connect with the trails of any other jurisdiction.

The 2012 Trail User Conflict Study, Appendix C of the Change-in-Use Programmatic EIR, provides a number of recommendations to reduce trail use conflicts. These recommendations are summarized on pages 1-10 through 1-12 of the Trail User Conflict Study. The recommendations are grouped into two broad categories: 1.) Recommendations for low-conflict, multi-use trail design; and 2.) Recommendations for multi-use trail conflict management. Trail design recommendations include providing adequate tread width and passing space, adequate sight distance, sinuosity, speed control features and surface texture. The multi-use trail conflict management recommendations include adopting enforceable rules, enforcement strategies, providing user information about rules and trail etiquette, utilizing volunteer programs, events and other public outreach, and considering separating trail uses with alternate use days, one way-way trails and other strategies. The recommendations are a suite of ideas to reduce trail user conflicts. Many of the recommendations focus on how to design (or modify) multi-use trails to reduce conflict. The Browns Ravine Trail CIU is consistent with the recommendations of the 2012 Trail User Conflict Study and the CIU proposal utilizes many of the recommendations made in the Study.

Part of the change-in-use evaluation process is determining the compatibility of the proposed change-in-use with the existing conditions, uses and facilities. This includes considering the gradients along the trail, trail sinuosity, width, sight distance, tread surface and soil conditions. The CIU evaluation team considered these and many other factors and found that the Browns Ravine Trail is suitable, with appropriate modifications, for the proposed change-in-use. The trail alignment is across relatively gentle terrain, without extended or steep grades. Much of the trail is across open terrain, with moderate to gentle cross slopes and provides many opportunities to get off the trail to permit passing.

13. Summary of Comments Regarding Environmental Review and Decision Process

- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, who legally owns the land, has not agreed to this proposal to add mountain bikes to Brown's Ravine Trail.
- A focused Environmental Impact will be required under the California Environmental Quality Act. No decision can legally be made by management of the California Department of Parks and Recreation until the CEQA process is completed.
- It appears that the CIU does not involve a public comment period.
- Consideration of this change in use should take place through the Folsom Area State Parks Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) and associated CEQA process.

Master Response

State Parks manages the federal lands at FLSRA through a Managing Partner Agreement (MPA) with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The MPA defines the roles and responsibilities of each agency. State Parks primary responsibility under the MPA is to develop, operate, manage and maintain public use and recreation opportunities and facilities on these federal lands.

We are taking public input on the proposed trail modifications before finalizing and then we will complete our environmental review of the trail modifications. Since the Browns Ravine Trail is on federal property, the environmental review and documentation for the physical changes to the trail needed to implement the Change-in-Use will be completed in compliance with CEQA and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). State Parks will be working with Reclamation on the NEPA compliance for the trail modifications. For CEQA, we are completing environmental review of the trail modifications and will rely on the Programmatic EIR prepared for the Change-in-Use process. Permits will need to be obtained for some of the trail modification work as well.

The public has been involved in this Change-in-Use Project. We have been in the planning phase of the project, developing and refining the project description. During this planning phase we have accepted public comments on the proposal. We held a virtual public meeting on January 12, 2022 and extended the period to provide comments during this planning phase through the end of February. We have received approximately 700 comments on the proposed project and this document summarizes those comments and provides master responses to the questions and comments.

As noted above, we are currently working on the environmental review of the proposed trail modifications necessary to implement the CIU. The level of CEQA or NEPA documentation will determine the comment period during the environmental review phase of the project.

State Parks is actively working toward completing a Road and Trail Management Plan for FLSRA. However, the District has decided to move forward with a decision on the CIU for the Browns Ravine Trail, separate from, but parallel with the development of the RTMP. The reasons for assessing this trail as a stand-alone CIU project include:

- The long history of requests and evaluation of a change-in-use for this trail going back more than 20 years, including the FTAG proposed pilot project. To show good faith to those past efforts, we want to move forward with this CIU as an individual project.
- The trail has generally favorable site conditions with relatively gentle terrain, good sight lines for the most part and durable soils.
- There are multi-use trail segments on either end of the trail and the CIU will provide connectivity for bikes.

State Parks staff believe this trail is a good candidate for a CIU and we have completed the individual CIU evaluation for the trail. As we have also been working on the RTMP, we have had the opportunity to consider this CIU in the context of the entire park unit trail system and are comfortable with moving forward with this individual CIU decision for the Browns Ravine Trail. A stand-alone decision on the Browns Ravine Trail CIU would allow the District to implement this change ahead of the RTMP.

14. Summary of Comments Regarding Alternative Proposals

- A good solution to maintain trail experience and safety would be to designate separate days for bike use and equestrian use, while allowing hikers every day.
- Conflicts between trail users are solved by separating cyclists from hikers and equestrians. Instead of user groups fighting over trails, we all should be united in demanding safe and separate trails for everyone.
- The best solution for this CIU's goal to provide trail connectivity for cyclists is not by opening the existing pedestrian/equestrian trails at Browns Ravine to cyclists. The best solution [for promoting trail connectivity for cyclists along the S. Fork Arm of FLSRA] should be to develop a separate trail in the area for cyclists.

Master Response

As part of the evaluation of the Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use proposal, State Parks has considered alternatives to converting the trail to multi-use. Designating separate or alternate days of use for bikes and other users could be one means of providing bikes access to this trail. However, this option comes with a high management burden. As noted elsewhere, State Parks has faced challenges in patrolling FLSRA's trail system and enforcing trail regulations. Successfully implementing and enforcing a system for different uses on different days of the week may require an even greater patrol presence.

The FLSRA trail system is not a remote trail system destination for which trail users plan specific trips. Rather, it is used more as a resource for local and regional residents to recreate on a daily or weekly basis. Getting the public to adhere to separate days of use on a local trail with numerous access points would be an ongoing challenge.

Separating trail uses, either spatially or temporally, is a strategy State Parks has considered for the Browns Ravine Trail change-in-use, however these strategies are not without their own costs and challenges. This includes the increased impact to park resources with constructing separate parallel trails, increased maintenance cost in providing parallel trails and potentially increased management costs in implementing and enforcing temporal separation solutions such as alternating days. Also, providing parallel trails requires sufficient public land base and much of the public land base around Folsom Lake is a relatively narrow strip of land, limiting the ability to successfully accommodate parallel trails in many locations.

The Browns Ravine Trail crosses relatively gentle topography and the trail generally follows the contours without extended steep grades. The terrain is relatively open with opportunities to get off the trail to allow for safe passing in most locations.

Given all of these factors, State Parks believes the Browns Ravine Trail is a good candidate to successfully implement a Change-in-Use versus implementing a system of alternating days or providing separate parallel trails.

15. Summary of Comments Regarding Change-in-Use Requests and Public Involvement

- The proposed CIU appears to be a response to a very vocal group of mountain bikers.
- California State Parks needs to provide quality and safe trail recreation opportunities for all users, not just those that are supported by big organizations that have corporate backers.
- California Equestrian representatives must be part of the Browns Ravine Trail CIU decision-making process.
- Women, who are the majority of equestrians, and seniors who enjoy hiking, are being consistently ignored by State Parks. Change in use policies cater to the largely male-dominated mountain bike riders, who are under the age of 40. This is a discriminatory practice. State Parks prides itself on welcoming diverse users and visitation. Do not discriminate against women, the disabled, and seniors, by taking away non-wheeled trails through access limitations, displacement, and lack of safety.

- This CIU decision is based on 20-year-old data and recommendations from an outdated advisory group that met regularly over the course of two years ending in 2002 and an outdated General Plan.

Master Response

The Department's CIU process indicates that the Change-in-Use evaluation process is initiated by a request for a CIU submitted to State Parks in writing. The Gold Fields District received several requests in writing to evaluate the Browns Ravine Trail following trail user stakeholder meetings in 2014. These trail user stakeholder meetings were held for mountain bike representatives, equestrian representatives, paved trail constituents and others. Any member of the public can submit a request for a Change in Use evaluation. In 2014 we received requests for CIU evaluations for many of the FLSRA Trails, including the Browns Ravine Trail.

The Department's Change-in-Use process identifies that the CIU Evaluation Form is to be completed by an interdisciplinary team of State Parks staff. For the Browns Ravine Trail, this interdisciplinary team included representatives from our visitor services/law enforcement staff, natural and cultural resources staff, trail specialists and planners. As land managers and stewards of the property it is important to get an objective evaluation from a multidisciplinary group of State Park staff regarding the safety, sustainability and resource issues associated with a trail to highlight opportunities or constraints prior to further review by the public and park management.

Once the initial evaluation and recommendation is made, the decision-maker then seeks input from the public regarding the recommendation and other information pertinent to the CIU. The Browns Ravine Trail CIU Project web page, which was developed and published at the end of November 2021, provides opportunities for the public to learn about and comment on the proposal. We also held a virtual public meeting on January 12, 2022, presenting a thorough overview of the project and providing opportunities for the public to ask questions and comment on the project. State Parks extended the comment period on this planning phase of the project through the end of February 2022.

A goal of FLSRA, identified in the 2010 GP/RMP, is a trail system that provides broad public benefit which accommodates diverse trail uses. In the ongoing FLSRA RTMP State Parks is considering the visitor experience on different types of trails and seeking to provide a variety of trail types and experiences. At the same time State Parks needs to consider and respond to changes in recreation demand over time including the growth in mountain biking.

While the requests for a change-in-use and consideration for adding bikes to the Browns Ravine Trail do have a long history going back to the FTAG group in 2000-2002, the current project does not rely on 20-year-old data or the recommendations of the FTAG group. The change-in-use request for this trail that the current project is responding to was made in 2014. The initial field evaluation of the change-in-use request was done by the District CIU evaluation team in 2015. This initial evaluation was reviewed and updated in 2021. Additional field work was done in 2021, specifically identifying and mapping the trail modifications the change-in-use would require. Public input regarding this change-in-use proposal was solicited, gathered, reviewed and considered in late 2021 and early 2022.

16. Summary of Comments Regarding Increase in Use

- Once this trail is advertised as multi-use—on social media, on trail maps and apps, and published on travel web sites as a mountain bike destination—the sheer volume of mountain bikers will increase exponentially.
- If there are more mountain biking trails available at Folsom Lake, this will bring more bikers to the area. That will generate additional revenue for the park, as well as providing more patronage of local business.

Master Response

Bikes currently regularly access the trail. State Parks staff have visited or worked on the trail frequently over the past year and we encounter bicycle use almost every time we visit the trail.

It is likely that the implementation of the Change-in-Use, which would allow bikes to legally access the Browns Ravine Trail, would result in increased use of the trail. The proposed trail modifications are designed to enhance trail safety and sustainability. This would be accomplished by improving lines of sight, providing opportunities for safe passing, enhancing drainage along the trail and armoring creek crossings. These trail modifications anticipate some increased use due to adding bikes to the trail. In addition to the trail modifications, the CIU proposal includes a number of measures to better manage this new and additional use, including: occasional patrols and increased staff presence along the trail and at trail access points; trail signage; public outreach events; social media messaging campaigns on trail rules and etiquette; and other informational and educational outreach strategies that aim to engage all trail user groups.

We also recognize that increased use of the Browns Ravine Trail may necessitate improving and expanding the parking at the trailhead access points and the District is prepared to implement these changes as needed. Once the CIU is implemented, State Parks will monitor trail use including an changes in use patterns on the Browns Ravine Trail and adjust our management of the trail accordingly.

The purpose of a Change-in-Use is to increase access for different user types. The proposed Browns Ravine Trail CIU aims to improve access and connectivity for bikes and is not intended to be a revenue generation project.

17. Summary of Comments Regarding Preserving Non-bike Trail Opportunities/Visitor Experience

- We keep accommodating more and more bike trails without thought to the others who use the trails and would love to have a place that is peaceful and less dangerous. Keep the relatively few limited use trails the way they are, as a safe space for hikers and equestrians to enjoy the outdoors at a slower pace without the risk of collisions.

- We need outlets for bike riders, but we also need to preserve quiet (i.e., slow, non-mechanized) trails for a nature-based experience where the scenery can be taken-in with reflection and wonderment. Browns Ravine Trail currently provides that experience. Perhaps additional trails can be built/maintained with the assistance of bike groups in this area to satisfy the desires of those seeking this type of recreation.
- Adding bikes to the trail will change the experience for hikers and equestrians. They must always be watching for bikes rather than enjoying their surroundings.
- Where are the trails for hikers that are safe and bike free? There are over 50 miles of bike trails where walkers are constantly expected to seed the way to bikers. Please do not invade one of the only trails left mostly free from bikers.
- The communities adjacent to Folsom Lake are home to many horses owned for recreational purposes. Equine use and the supporting industry have a significant impact on the regional economy. It is important to maintain equine presence and recreation in our State Parks by preserving existing equestrian/pedestrian trails, such as the Browns Ravine Trail, and not changing all trails to multi-use.
- The Browns Ravine Trail is one of the last safe havens for hikers and equestrians in the Greater Sacramento metro area, where trails, in general, are increasingly congested with bicyclists.
- Maintaining the existing prohibition on bicycle use on the Browns Ravine Trail preserves a safe trail opportunity for hikers and equestrians.

Master Response

State Parks recognizes that the trail user experience is important, and that mixing different trail uses can affect this trail experience. The trail modifications and other management measures are designed to provide for trail safety and sustainability, but we understand that the user experience can nonetheless be altered.

One of the goals for the FLSRA trail system articulated in the 2010 FLSRA General Plan is to provide broad public benefit by accommodating diverse trail uses and abilities. The Browns Ravine Trail CIU was evaluated not only to determine if the particular trail was suitable for the proposed CIU, but also within the context of the larger FLSRA trail system. The intent is to provide a variety of trail experiences at FLSRA and not to necessarily convert all trails to multi-use. Whereas the particular conditions and attributes of the Browns Ravine Trail make it suitable for a CIU, other trails within FLSRA may not be found suitable. Other change in use requests will be evaluated as part of the ongoing Folsom Area State Parks Road and Trail Management Plan.

18. Summary of Comments Regarding Trail User Conflicts and User Groups Getting Along

- If everyone has a legal right to be out there, there will be fewer negative encounters between user groups.
- Similar trails in the region have been multi-use for decades without conflict. Cronan [Ranch] and Magnolia Ranch are all multi-use trails and have had no issues. Why isn't Browns Ravine multi-use as well?
- Mountain bikes should be allowed on Browns Ravine Trail. All trail users get along.
- Trail users, whether a hiker, runner, mountain biker, or equestrian, are able to co-exist along the vast trail system of Folsom Lake SRA.
- The vast majority of cyclists are reasonable, follow the rules, and respect other users.
- When you "outlaw" a trail, you only get "outlaws" riding the trail. If you open up the trail you will get a more typical and diverse group of cyclists.
- Bikes and horses are incompatible for safe and enjoyable trail experiences, and few equestrian trails in the Greater Sacramento metro area forbid bicycles.
- To feel safe riding inexperienced horses, equestrians rely on trails that disallow bicycles.
- Public lands should not be made unsafe for one group or groups of users (i.e., equestrians and pedestrians) to serve the "wants" of one group (i.e., bicyclists), while ignoring the "needs" of another group.
- Trail users have, and can continue to, peacefully share this section of trail.
- Hopefully the Folsom Lake Trails Advocacy Group, FATRAC (Folsom Auburn Trail Riders Action Coalition), and the Equestrian and Hiking communities can come together on a way to open this trail for multi-use.
- Many bikers are not considerate of hikers and equestrians, and if allowed bikers will displace hikers and equestrians on the trail.
- Is there a possibility of only allowing experienced equestrians and horses access to this trail?
- Many hikers have dogs, and it is difficult to get out of the way of bikes.

Master Response

As noted in the response, above the focus of the CIU evaluation is to determine if the requested CIU can be implemented and still provide for trail safety and trail sustainability. The proposed trail modifications and other management measures will serve to assist in providing for safety and sustainability.

It is recognized that a CIU may affect the trail use experience for some users. Providing a variety of trail use opportunities and experiences is a goal of State Parks, The FLSRA GP/RMP and the FLSRA RTMP. The management measures include greater presence on the trail, educational signing and social media messaging focused on trail safety and etiquette and many other public outreach efforts to promote safe and considerate trail use. This will include engaging with different trail user groups. A key goal of this public outreach is to get trail users to buy into obeying the park rules and regulations (e.g., dogs are required to be on leash), and following trail etiquette (e.g., trail passing protocols). Through the implementation of this CIU and the development of the FLSRA RTMP, State Parks intends to develop programs and partnerships with trail user groups, including a multi-user trail patrol to assist in these efforts. The success of this CIU is in part dependent on all trail users practicing safe and considerate trail use to assist in providing the best trail experience for everyone.

It is not possible for State Parks to limit trail use to “experienced” equestrians, horses or mountain bikers. It is the responsibility of all trail users to ensure that their equipment, skills, conditioning and animals are suitable for the trails they choose to use.

19. Summary of Comments Regarding Monte Vista Trails

- Please do not allow bikes in the Monte Vista Trail area.

Master Response

The Browns Ravine Trail Change-in-Use Project is evaluating a change in use only for the Browns Ravine Trail between Browns Ravine and Old Salmon Falls. The Browns Ravine Trail does traverse the perimeter of the Monte Vista area as it loops around Higgins Point and eventually connects to Old Salmon Falls. The Browns Ravine Trail connects to the Monte Vista Trails in several locations. The Monte Vista Trails and other change in use requests will be evaluated as part of the FLSRA Road and Trail Management Plan. The proximity of these trails and connections will be considered, along with all of the other CIU factors, in evaluating the Monte Vista Trails for a CIU in the RTMP