



Big Basin Redwoods State Park

General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

General Plan Newsletter: February 2010



Overview

Big Basin Redwoods State Park is the result of a group of visionary people who worked to preserve these grand and ancient trees and the surrounding landscape. Despite being the oldest California state park, Big Basin Redwoods has never had a general plan.

California State Parks is currently in the process of preparing a General Plan in order to provide a template for future park management, resource protection and visitor use. Public input is an important part of this planning process.

The general plan serves as a framework for the management and use of park lands, and articulates the desired future conditions for natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences that will best fulfill the park's purpose.

This plan considers the park as part of a larger regional, ecological and cultural system and involves park neighbors, neighboring communities, and other open space land managers. It is a blueprint for the future that will guide the detailed planning and day-to-day decision making that will follow.

Park Planning Continues

We want to share our progress with you and gather your thoughts and ideas before we continue work on the general plan.

These past few years, our Department has gathered information to plan for the future of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The Planning Team continues to analyze information on the park's natural and cultural resources, facilities,

and visitor preferences in order to gain a better understanding of the natural and cultural resources and recreational uses within the park. In previous public meetings, we heard several ideas and comments. We've compiled these thoughts, updated our maps with existing

You're invited to an Open House

The park staff will be hosting two meetings presented in an "open house" format in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. We invite you to preview our resource information, explore the draft concept alternatives and discuss your ideas, concerns and thoughts with the planning team.

Thursday, February 4, 2010
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Fisher Middle School Library
19195 Fisher Avenue
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Saturday, February 6, 2010
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

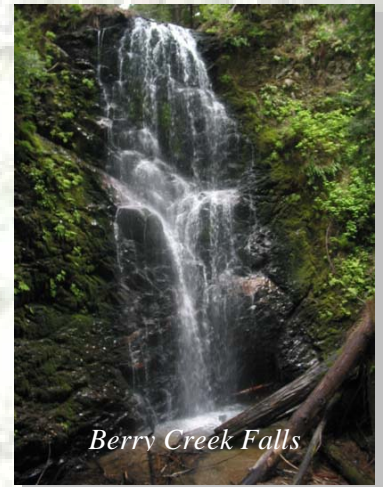
Felton Community Hall
6191 Highway 9
Felton, CA 95018

conditions, evaluated issues and developed long-range goals and conceptual alternatives for the park.

In this newsletter on page 3 (and at the open house), the planning team presents three concepts that describe different visions for

management of park resources and potential opportunities for visitor experiences. By developing these concepts and alternatives, the planning team is able to explore different ways that the park could be managed. With your thoughts and ideas, we expect that a new alternative will emerge.

Your feedback will help refine the long-range goals and priorities for park management and development, and guide the planning team in developing the preferred alternative. In this newsletter and on our website, you will find summaries of the work we have accomplished so far.



Where we are in the Planning Process

This will be our first public meeting since 2003 for the planning of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. With your input on the planning concepts, the Planning Team will develop a preferred alternative. The process steps for plan preparation and completion are outlined below:

Evaluate Alternatives

Public Open House February 4th and 6th

Obtain public input and feedback on planning concepts and alternatives
 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping of planning issues
 Public comment on proposed acquisition of adjacent properties (Little Basin)

Preferred Alternative

Summer 2010

Analyze additional information and develop a preferred alternative
 Present preferred alternative for public review and comment
 Hold additional stakeholder meetings and planning workshop

Preliminary General Plan / Draft EIR

Fall- Winter 2010

Analyze the potential environmental impacts of the preferred alternative
 Prepare and distribute a Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR
 for the 45-day public review and comment period

Final Environmental Impact Report

Spring 2011

Finalize EIR based on public and agency reviews
 Prepare Department responses to public comments and distribute Final EIR

State Park and Rec. Commission Hearing

Summer 2011

Present General Plan/Final EIR to the Commission for consideration and approval
 Print and distribute Final General Plan

Planning Alternatives

Three management concepts have been developed to guide our planning and the evaluation of alternatives. These concepts represent the “potential” for future management, development and use in each of the five planning zones listed below. They are not intended as stand-alone alternatives, but they help us focus on the different possibilities, perceived benefits and potential environmental effects if implemented. The following represents a “snap-shot” of major elements of each alternative concept. More detail is provided on our Big Basin General Plan planning webpage: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/BigBasinGP>

On the webpage you will find an alternatives matrix for your review that provides a more detailed summary of planning considerations related to each concept in each of the following zones.

- **Park Headquarters**
- **China Grade (north) and Saddle Mountain (south) Entrance**
- **Rancho del Oso (RDO)**
- **Wilderness and Backcountry**
- **Little Basin (proposed addition)**

ALTERNATIVE 1

Connecting People with Big Basin

The emphasis of this concept is to engage the community and potential visitors in the enjoyment, understanding and stewardship of the park’s resources and values.

- Preserve and interpret the old growth redwood forest and wildlife habitats.
- Provide additional park facilities, where appropriate, to increase public access and recreation opportunities.
- Establish a welcome center and administrative office at south entrance on Hwy 236 (Saddle Mtn.).
- Rehabilitate lodge and historic buildings for adaptive uses.
- Introduce cabins along North Escape Road and in the Sky Meadows group camp area.
- Provide shuttle system and parking.

- Improve public access and develop additional camping facilities at Rancho del Oso (RDO).



Marbled Murrelet Interpretation

ALTERNATIVE 2

Preserving and Enjoying the Redwood Forest

The emphasis of this concept is to preserve, enhance, and promote the management and enjoyment of the natural resources that contribute to the park’s significance and identity.

- Relocate or remove some existing development, activities or services to preserve the redwood forest.
- Reduce visitor capacity and use intensity, and emphasize natural resource appreciation.
- No new development in the Headquarters (HQ) historic core area.
- Reduce parking and traffic congestion in headquarters area.
- Rehabilitate lodge for a multi-use interpretive facility.
- Emphasize multi-use trail access into RDO and consolidate park operations and interpretation at the existing nature center.

ALTERNATIVE 3

Preserving Big Basin’s Cultural Heritage and Traditions

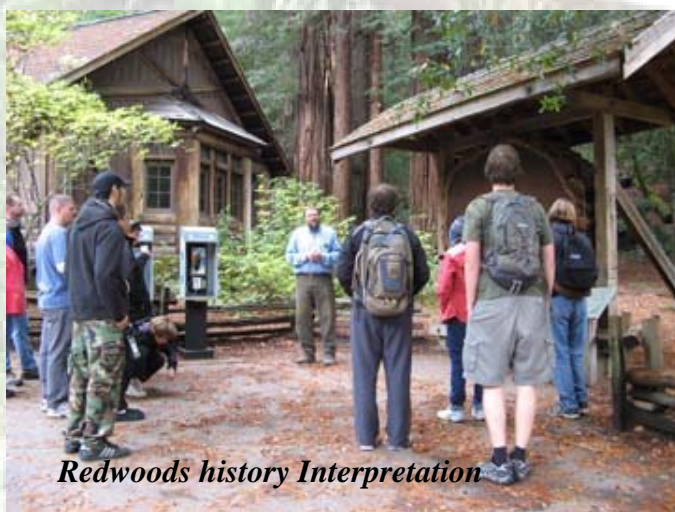
The emphasis of this concept is to focus on the preservation and interpretation of the park’s

cultural resources and old growth redwood forest, with opportunities for traditional park activities and programs.

- Preserve historic buildings, landscapes, archeological sites, and old growth forest.
- No new structures in the HQ historic core area.
- Designate HQ area and Sky Meadows Residences as National Registry Historic Districts, with an increase in interpretive program activities and rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic buildings.
- Maintain traditional campground reservations and information counter at park headquarters.
- National Historic Landmark District for the entire original 3,800 acres.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative will be developed later this year following an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative concept, including consideration of public comments. The preferred alternative may be similar to one of the conceptual alternatives or a combination of elements selected from the various alternatives. The preferred alternative will be developed with supporting goals and guidelines in the Preliminary General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report.



Contact Information

As we move forward, we encourage you to stay connected and be an active participant in this planning process. There are a number of ways to contact us and obtain planning information.

Mailing address:

California State Parks
Planning Division
Big Basin Redwoods SP Planning Team
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Email address:

generalplan@parks.ca.gov

Big Basin Redwoods SP General Plan Webpage:

<http://www.parks.ca.gov/BigBasinGP>

Contacts:

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Chet Bardo, Santa Cruz District Superintendent
(831) 335-6390



With your continued interest and support, we will develop a plan that enhances your experiences of Big Basin Redwoods State Park while preserving the extraordinary natural and cultural heritage.