

# BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK



*A Century of Resource Preservation and Public Enjoyment*

General Plan Newsletter #2

December 2001

***Planning process is defining how we can best preserve and enjoy Big Basin's unique values and resources***

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is in the third month of an 18-month planning process to develop a long-range general plan for Big Basin Redwoods State Park. General plans are broad policy documents that direct park management and future development. Big Basin Redwoods State Park (which we'll simply call "Big Basin") does not have a general plan, though much planning has been done for this park since its founding in 1902.

The Big Basin General Plan will guide the park's development, management, and public use. Specifically, it will:

- Identify significant natural, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational values and resources
- Determine land uses and visitor activities that are appropriate and compatible with the park resources and surrounding areas
- Establish guidelines for operations, protection, preservation, and interpretation of resources; and development of facilities
- Identify significant environmental effects of land uses and visitor activities and possible mitigations

***Inside:  
What we heard at the  
Planning Workshop!***



Recording public comments at the September 2001 Workshop



Theodore J. Hoover Natural Preserve

Ninety-two people helped us begin planning the future of Big Basin Redwoods State Park at our first workshops held September 26 (at Boulder Creek Elementary School) and September 27 (at Fisher Middle School in Los Gatos).

Staff oriented participants to our planning goals and process, reviewed the Big Basin Redwoods State Park Resource Inventory and opened the meeting up for two hours of public comment on Big Basin planning issues and concerns. Below we summarize the main public concerns we heard at both meetings. Note: A more detailed listing of public comments will be posted on the park's Web site (see page 4 for directions).

### Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation and Management Comments

- Preserve threatened plant and fish and wildlife species and their habitats.
- Exotic plant species threaten native plant communities.
- Main campgrounds have adverse impacts on resources, including marbled murrelets, redwoods, understory, and soils.
- Develop long-range and thorough fire ecology studies and effective policies.
- Consider wilderness expansion and designate well-planned preserves for sensitive resources, such as the Santa Cruz Cypress, and chaparral and wetland habitats.

- Maintain and improve the water quality and health of the Waddell Creek ecosystem and its riparian species.
- Historic structures and sites need preservation.



1930s CCC-built Campfire Center Stage

### Recreational and Educational Resources Management Comments

- Improve interpretive programs and facilities, including interpretive services for children, non-English speakers, the hearing impaired, bikers, and equestrians.
- Expand recreational, camping, and trail opportunities while protecting resources.
- Harmonize, integrate, and/or segregate equestrian, mountain bike, and hiker use of trails.
- Evaluate alternative sites for recreational facility development outside the prime resources and consider cumulative impacts of such facilities and uses.



The Banana Slug: California's unofficial State Gastropod

## Park Management Comments

- Develop and maintain good park-neighbor communications, respect, and cooperation. Abide by land and easement conditions (e.g., Last Chance Road).
- Maintain park facilities, fire roads, and trails in good condition.
- The backcountry needs more ranger patrolling and policing of trash.
- Evaluate and monitor carrying capacity.
- Improve connectivity and compatibility of state park lands with surrounding land uses, including improving value of biodiversity corridors to preserve threatened wildlife.
- Address cumulative impacts and regional influences and issues.
- Stabilize and improve parking at Waddell Beach.



Storm damage to Waddell Beach  
Parking Lot



Staff Resources Inventory continues

## The Resource Inventory

To help guide general plan decisions and proposals to preserve, interpret, manage, and develop Big Basin's resources, we are developing the *Big Basin Redwoods State Park Resource Inventory* of the park's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources. Recognizing that an inventory of such a large and diverse park is never finished, we envision this inventory to be a dynamic "work-in-progress" that will be updated with new information during and beyond this general planning process. The preliminary resource inventory is available on the State Park's web site (see next page for Web site information).

Though the focus of this planning process is on Big Basin, to be effective the general plan will address important surrounding regional influences. The general plan team is working with other public agencies, trusts, adjacent property owners, and groups and individuals to integrate our planning with regional concerns, efforts, trends, and opportunities. The resource inventory includes regional influences on natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities.

## See Web site for Planning Information

To review the *Big Basin Redwoods State Park Resource Inventory*, access the Big Basin Redwoods State Park Web site at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov) and:

- 1) click on "Find A Park"
- 2) select "Big Basin Redwoods"
- 3) click "go"
- 4) click on "General Plan Information" (in right column)

## What's next...

The planning team is currently reviewing our *Resources Inventory* and the public comments we received in order to develop planning alternatives that we can share with you at our next public workshop in early 2002. Generally, all of the developing alternatives appear to involve the following question: *How do we meet increasing demands for public recreation at Big Basin while also improving the protection, preservation, and management of the park's unique natural and cultural resources and protect its special sense of place?*

We have begun outlining various strategies for harmonizing these somewhat conflicting management goals of preservation and use. One strategy is to look at meeting the park's recreational and preservation goals in a regional context. We must think creatively and holistically to arrive at a plan that works well in the coming years with surrounding resources and influences.

### **Here are some of the main issues we are developing alternative solutions for:**

- How to improve the park's ecological, biological, recreational, and educational relationships with neighboring lands, landowners, and jurisdictions.
- How to reduce visitor use impacts on prime resources.
- How to enhance habitats, restore sensitive species populations, and protect the park's native flora and fauna from non-native plants and animals.
- How to improve the park's fire ecology management and cooperation with fire control agencies.
- How changes to the wilderness area and establishing new preserves might affect natural resource values and primitive recreational experience.
- How to restore, adapt, and use historic buildings. How establishing cultural preserves would affect cultural resources.
- How to reduce traffic impacts on intrinsic park values and improve park entrances, circulation, and parking.
- How to better harmonize, integrate, and/or segregate equestrian, mountain bike, and hiker use of trails.
- How to improve park interpretive and educational resources, programs, and facilities.

## The Public Input Process

- ✓ Workshop #1 (September 2001):  
Orientation, Review Resource Inventory, Issues and Concerns
- ▶ Coming in early 2002:  
**Workshop #2**  
**Present and Discuss Alternatives**
- Workshop #3 (early summer 2002):  
Present and Discuss Preliminary Planning Document
- CEQA Public Review/comment on Preliminary Planning Document (fall 2002)
- Park Commission considers approving preliminary plan as final document (early 2003)

## **CEQA Notice of Preparation filed**

Staff has filed the *Notice of Preparation (NOP)*, the first step in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process which this general plan will be following. The *NOP* informs the public of the intent of the lead agency to prepare an *EIR*. We invite you to access the *NOP* on the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Web site: [www.ceqanet.ca.gov/queryform.asp](http://www.ceqanet.ca.gov/queryform.asp)?

If you have any comments on the *NOP* send them to us at the address listed to the right.

## **The oldest California State Park**

Big Basin is California's oldest State Park, established in 1902. Home to the largest contiguous stand of ancient coast redwoods south of San Francisco, the park consists of over 18,000 acres of old growth and recovering redwood forest, with mixed conifer, oaks, chaparral, and riparian habitats. The park has over 80 miles of trails. The Skyline to the Sea Trail threads its way through the park along Waddell Creek to the beach and adjacent Theodore J. Hoover Natural Preserve, a freshwater marsh. The park contains the Waddell Creek State Wilderness and has a number of waterfalls, a wide variety of environments, and many animals and birds. Big Basin's rich and varied cultural history spans thousands of years and includes pre-historic Native American sites, homesteading and logging sites, and many 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps park improvements. Big Basin is located 25 miles northwest of Santa Cruz and 65 miles south of San Francisco.

## **We want to hear from you!**

The Big Basin planning team invites individuals, groups, and agencies to send us your ideas and written suggestions on what facilities and accommodations you think are appropriate to meet future needs for the park. As we move forward in considering

alternatives, we would like to learn more about what recreational services and facilities people want and where they think these should be located from a regional perspective. This can include suggestions for facilities in other nearby state parks and the relocation current Big Basin activities within the park or to other parks in the area.

If you are not currently on our mailing list, and would like to receive the newsletter and notice about future workshops, or if you wish to send written comments, please contact us at this address:

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS  
Robin Ettinger, Northern Service Center  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001  
e-mail: [Retti@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Retti@parks.ca.gov)

Telephone: (916) 445-8905

For park information, please call (831) 338-8860.

For more information about Big Basin Redwoods State Park and other State Park units visit: [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)



Some of your Big Basin Planners at work!