

December 12, 2003

All Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Persons

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
BIDWELL-SACRAMENTO RIVER STATE PARK
PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN / DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) for the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (Park) Preliminary General Plan (General Plan). The Department is the lead agency, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), responsible for preparation of this document.

Project Location:

The Park is located approximately 6 miles west of the City of Chico in the northern Sacramento Valley. The Park consists of four discontinuous subunits that straddle the Sacramento River between State Route 32 and the mouth of Big Chico Creek. The Irvine Finch River Access area is located on the west side of the river in Glenn County, while the Pine Creek Landing, Indian Fishery, and Big Chico Creek Riparian Area subunits are situated east of the River in Butte County.

Project Description:

The project consists of the proposed approval of a new General Plan for Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park. The General Plan will guide future management direction at the Park over an approximate 20-year planning horizon. The lack of an existing general plan, proximity to abundant conservation-oriented lands managed by other State and federal agencies and public-interest organizations, and the consideration of potential property additions to the Park emphasize the need for a plan that establishes the future vision of the Park.

The General Plan contains a comprehensive and integrated set of park-wide goals and guidelines for the long-term management of the Park that focus on protection of environmental resources, enhancements to visitor use and opportunities, and improvements to administration and operations of the Park. In addition, the General Plan provides a spatial dimension to Park planning through the use of area concept planning, which includes area-specific management and facility prescriptions for the subunits and potential property additions that have been considered in the planning process. A range of new recreation facilities are proposed at the Park, which include, but are not limited to, overnight campgrounds, day-use areas, trails, and a visitor center.

Summary of Impacts:

The DEIR provides a program-level analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan. For the most part, significant environmental effects of the project are avoided through the set of park-wide goals and guidelines, many of which are founded on principles of environmental stewardship and resource protection. However, implementation of the General Plan could result in the conversion of agricultural land designated as "Important Farmland" to non-agricultural uses (i.e., restoration of natural habitat and recreation); conversion of this farmland represents a significant and unavoidable environmental impact of the project.

Public Comment Period:

The 45-day public comment period for the Draft EIR begins on December 12, 2003, and ends on January 26 (comment letters must be postmarked by January 26, 2004). Copies of the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR are available for review at the Department's offices in Sacramento (see address below), the Northern Buttes District office (400 Glen Drive, Oroville CA 95966), Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park (525 The Esplanade, Chico CA 95926), and at the Chico Branch of the Butte County Library (1108 Sherman Avenue, Chico CA 95926). Electronic copies of the Preliminary General Plan/Draft EIR are posted on the project website (http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22600) and can be requested by contacting the Department below. Please submit comments in writing to the following address:

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Northern Service Center
One Capital Mall, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814
Contact: Wayne Woodroof