



California State Park and Recreation Commission

June 11, 2024

West Sacramento, California

Learn more and participate in the process at:

InterpretingSuttersFort.org

Presenters

- Commitment to Change: Inclusive, Complex, and Accurate (Fraser, 5-10 mins)
- Developing an Interpretation Master Plan (Fraser, 5-10 mins)
- General Plan Amendment (Finley, 5mins)

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The Call for Change



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The First Step

- “STATE PARKS EMBRACES CALLS FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE AND LOOKS FORWARD TO TELLING A BROADER, MORE INCLUSIVE STORY OF SUTTER’S FORT IN CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICANS, AS WELL AS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH PARK PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE PUBLIC.”

Inclusive, Complex, and Accurate

State of California – Natural Resources Agency

Memorandum

Date : October 28, 2020

To : Sutter's Fort SHP Visitors

From : John Fraser, Capital District Superintendent

Subject : Interim Interpretive Management Principles—Sutter's Fort SHP

Like many historic sites in California, Sutter's Fort State Historic Park has not shared the full, complex, and often dark history of 19th century California, its often awful consequences for California Native Americans, and the role played by John Sutter in that story. This has led to an unbalanced perspective of the 19th century and the exclusion of those for whom sites such as the Fort represent suffering.

We embrace calls for fundamental change and are looking forward to telling a more complete history of Sutter's Fort in consultation and partnership with California Native Americans. Based on these engagements, we are working to change how we tell the stories of what happened, including a new interpretive master plan, new exhibits, and new educational materials for student programs.

Until our evaluations are complete, the following Interim Interpretive Management Principles will guide our interpretive operations:

- Strive to provide interpretation that is inclusive, complex, and accurate.
- Refrain from programs, demonstrations, or activities that involve visitors, students, volunteers, or staff portraying historical characters of any era, ethnicity, or nationality.
- Refrain from the use of Living History concepts that promote narrow perspectives of 19th century history.
- Provide ongoing corrections to all historical information presented at Sutter's Fort SHP; using the best of contemporary scholarship to change insensitive, inappropriate, or inaccurate information.

2021

Sutter's Fort SHP Interpretive Management Plan (DRAFT)



Fraser, John@Parks

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What is Interpretation?

- Rather than just providing factual information, Interpretation is the use of educational experiences and materials that frame and **reveal meaning and relationships** related to a particular historical resource.
- Signage, talks, tours, displays, pamphlets, activities, demonstrations, etc.

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What is an Interpretation Master Plan?

- Supplements the Park's General Plan with **more specific guidance on interpretive approach** and programs.
- An important foundation for the development **of new interpretive programs and facilities.**

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How has history been interpreted at the Fort?

- The Fort's role and the interpretive tools used in telling the history of California have **changed many times** since 1839.
- To learn more about different interpretive periods since the Fort's founding, explore the 'Interpretive Timeline' on the project website.

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Why does interpretation at the Fort need to change?

- A Statewide Initiative : **'Reexamining Our Past'**
- Outdated interpretation planning documents with an **overreliance on a narrow set of interpretive tools** that are not well suited to communicate complex, inclusive, and accurate histories.
- Addressing and **remediating the exclusion of indigenous histories** and acknowledging how the site represents a painful reminder of **generational trauma that continues today**.

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What is the Interpretation Master Plan seeking to accomplish?

- Convey a **complex, inclusive, and accurate** exploration of the Fort and its role in the history of California.
- Provide framework for visitor experiences that are **analytical, reflective,** and inclusive of California's diverse and complex history.
- Support the Fort in becoming a **'Laboratory of Learning'**

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How was the Plan developed?

- A Statewide Initiative : **'Reexamining Our Past'**
- Consultation with **tribal leaders**
- Iterative process of revision **incorporating best practices in interpretive and educational programming** and the most up to date and relevant research
- Current process of **stakeholder and public input** on the Draft Plan

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What is in the Plan?

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Executive Summary

Chapter 1. Interpretive Direction

This chapter states the mission, purpose, and vision statements associated with the interpretive management plan. It presents a set of interpretive themes and periods, as well as educational frameworks and standards.

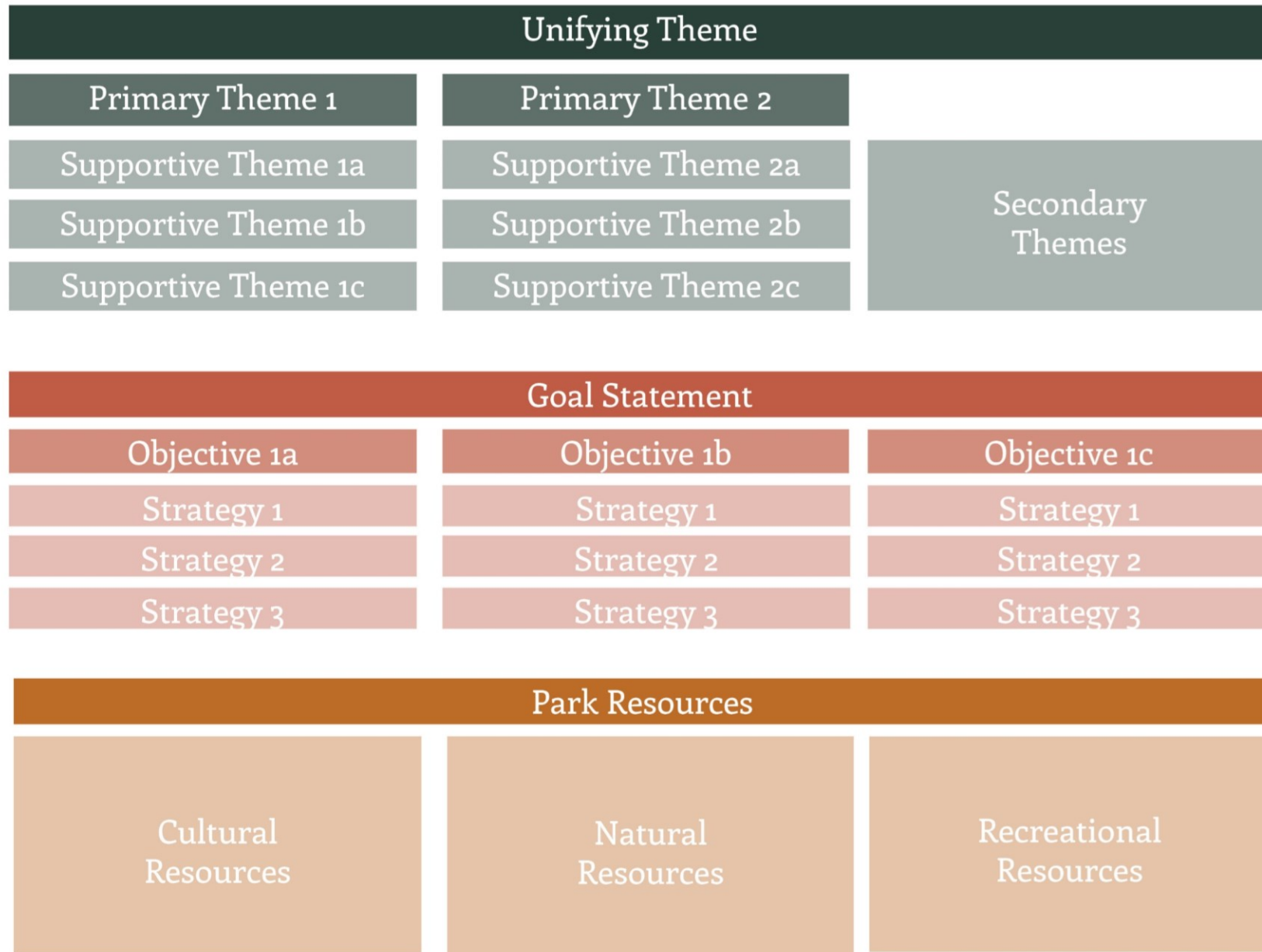
Chapter 2. Recommendations

This chapter presents 11 goal statements, each goal is supported by 2-4 objectives, each objective is supported by a series of implementation strategies

Chapter 3. Planning Foundations

This chapter presents and reiterates the purpose of the interpretive management plan, provides an overview and of park planning history, and summarizes park resources.

Chapter 4. Summary of Analysis



Unifying Theme

Built on the traditional lands of **Nisenan and Miwok people**, Sutter's Fort catalyzed a pattern of change in California leading to the introduction of diverse immigrant communities, disruption of Native life, and ultimately a **forced convergence of cultures that affects present day** California relationships and reveals Sutter's Fort's controversial legacy as an institution.

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SUTTER'S FORT STATE HISTORIC PARK

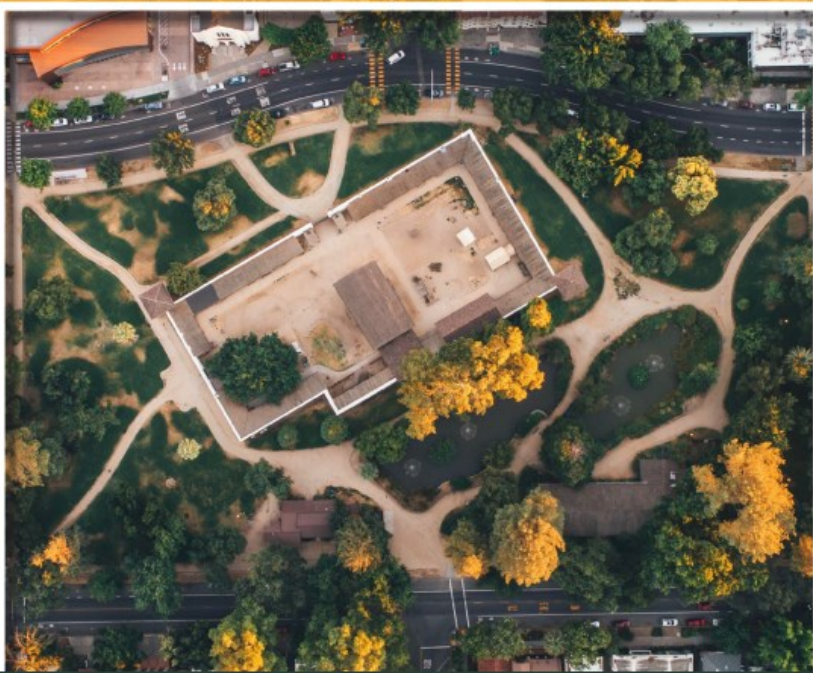
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

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GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

KICK OFF IN SEPTEMBER 2023



Sutter's Fort State Historic Park

Interpretation Master Plan

PAC Review Draft
July 2023



Objective:

Amend Plan to allow inclusion of interpretive guidance highlighted in the IMP.

Strategy:

In consultation with Capital District and Sutter's Fort SHP staff, review the 1990 General Plan and identify areas within the document where policies and recommendations exist which would contradict with or limit the implementation of the IMP.

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General Plan

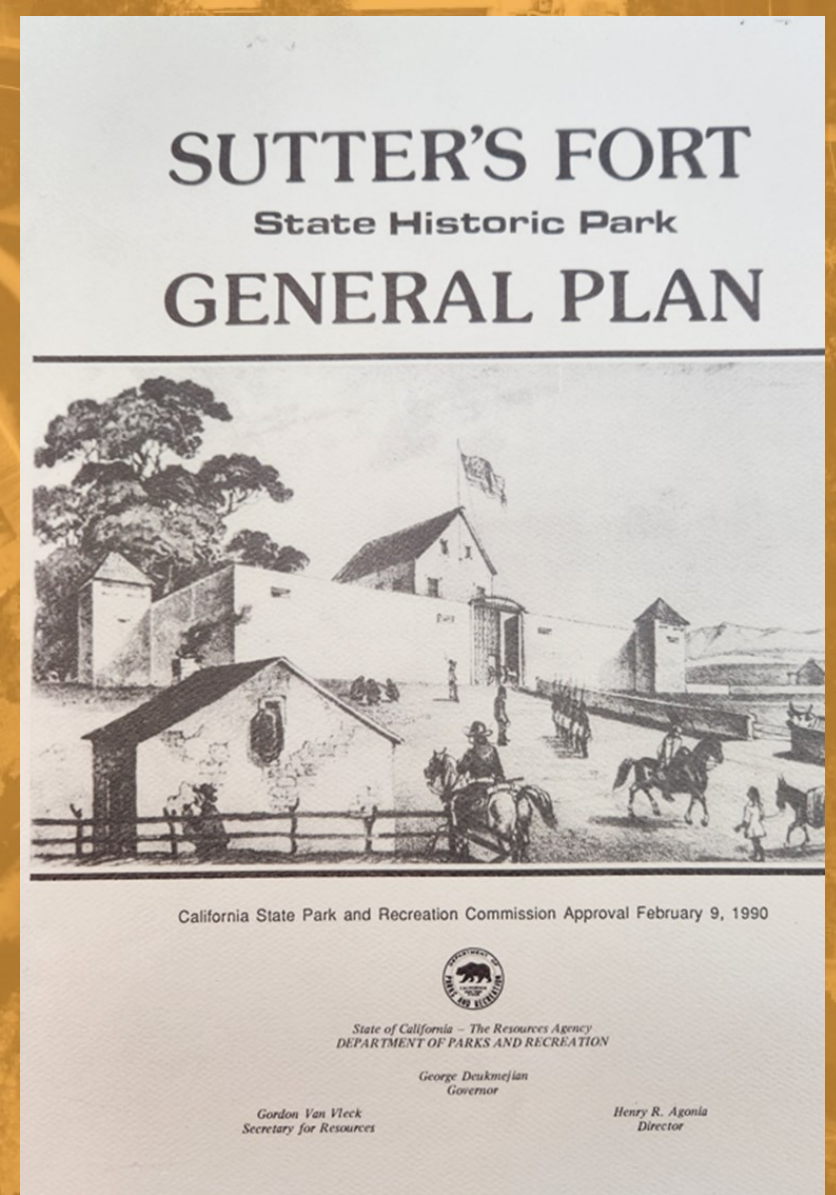
Adopted by the State Park and Recreation Commission in February 1990.

Guided park operations towards a living representation of an 1840s fort.

Interpretation primarily focused on both John Sutter and the Pioneer/Euro-American experience.

Declaration of Purpose:

“The purpose of Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park is to make available to the people the site of the first Euro-American settlement in the Sacramento Valley of California, and the site of the California Pioneer Memorial, by preserving, restoring, and rehabilitating its historical facilities and interpreting its significance to the Mexican and American history of California.”



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AMENDMENT SUMMARY

- Highlights the need for an amendment since the development of the IMP and approval by PAC.
- Describes the purpose of the amendment.
- Summarizes the amendments:
 - General Amendments –
 - Appropriate identification of California Native Americans.
 - Recognition that rooms are now more flexible in use and purpose.
 - Discuss that “living history” is now a tool for interpretation and not the primary tool at the park.
 - Cultural Resources –
 - Updated Ethnography section from the IMP
 - Natural Resources –
 - Updated landscaping policies to include broader interpretation.
 - Use of the California State Indian Museum
 - Removed language that proposed repurposing the museum space into a visitor center and staging area to enter the Fort.
- Discusses the update to the Interpretive Element with sections of the IMP.

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INTERPRETATION ELEMENT

- The Interpretation Element of the General Plan adopts much of the IMP including:
 - **Expanded Interpretive Periods**
 - **Update to the themes of interpretation.**
 - **Flexibility in the use of interior rooms and exterior spaces with an enhanced set of interpretive tools.**
 - **Addition of a Scope of Museum Collections Statement (not included in the 1990 Plan)**



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What this Amendment DOES NOT DO



- No structural alterations or additions to the existing footprint of the fort.
- No recommendations activities that would cause ground disturbance.
- No recommendations to abolish living history concepts.

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An aerial photograph of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, showing the fort's walls and surrounding urban area. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. A dark green rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing white text. Another dark blue rectangular box is at the bottom right, containing white text.

Recommended Commission Actions:

- 06-2024 – Consider adopting the General Plan Amendment for Sutter's Fort State Historic Park

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