



## STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Irvine, CA  
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**STAFF REPORT:** State Park Planning Update

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**SUBJECT:** Report on Classified and Unclassified Units and General Plans

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### OBJECTIVE

This Planning Report provides information on classified units and the major unclassified properties that are part of or associated with the California State Park System. It also provides an update on State Park General Plans and Cornerstone Documents.

### CLASSIFIED AND UNCLASSIFIED UNITS

Two types of properties are inventoried as part of the State Park System -- classified and unclassified properties. Classified properties have a specific, legislatively defined classification approved by the State Park and Recreation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commissions, or, in rare instances, assigned by the California Legislature. There are two kinds of classified units -- standard units that form most of the State Park System and internal classified units that may be located within and as part of the standard units. Internal classified units consist of Natural Preserves, Cultural Preserves, and State Wildernesses. These designations have specific management requirements as defined in the Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5019.68 through 5019.54. There are 265 classified park units and 98 internal classified units.

Unclassified properties are associated with the State Park System but have not been classified by the Commission. Many of these properties are major holdings that will eventually be classified as individual park units and others are smaller properties that the Department holds for various reasons. There are currently 15 unclassified properties in the State Park System.

Five additional classifications are available to State Park System units were created by the Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act of 2000 as identified in PRC section 5019.80. The assignment of marine classifications to specific properties requires the concurrence of agencies other than the Department. In 2010, our first State Marine Park (Cambria SMP) was classified. Two State Marine Reserves (SMR) (Emeryville Crescent SMR and Albany SMR) have yet to achieve the concurrence of the corresponding agency (Fish and Game Commission). There are 22 unclassified underwater areas.

See PRC Section [5019.50 through 5019.80](#) for definitions and classifications of State Park units.

## GENERAL PLANS

General Plans serve as a park unit's primary land use management plan and directly support the California State Park mission by establishing the framework for managing a park's natural and cultural resources, promoting resource stewardship and learning, and delivering high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities. General plans define a park unit's ultimate purpose, vision, and intent for unit management. The landscape-level program document uses goals, guidelines, and broad objectives to guide resource management and visitor services.

General Plans help guide future planning efforts and support funding requests in acquisitions, development, and operations. These plans have a typical lifespan of 20-30 years and are required for a unit of the State Park System before substantial development or a major commitment of resources can occur per [PRC Section 5002.2](#). General Plans are considered a project by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and require an environmental impact report.

Currently, 192 State Parks have General Plans, with 135 State Parks having general plans older than 25 years. Many of these general plans completed in the 1960s only have a resource development map. Eighty-six 86 state park units do not have general plans.

Five state parks are undergoing classification recommendation reports, general plan revisions, or new general plans. Three of which, Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA), Hungry Valley SVRA, and Ocotillo Wells SVRA are under the authority of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission for approval of SVRA(s) general plans. The Delta Meadows and Alameda-Tesla properties are conducting classification recommendation reports; general plan projects will follow. Future general plan projects will occur for Clear Lake SP, Great Valley Grasslands SP, and Onyx Ranch SVRA. Gaviota SP, Refugio, and El Capitan State Beaches will start a combined general plan.

A multi-discipline committee of program managers identified these park units as high priorities for future general plan projects. These include:

Park Unit	District
Andrew Molera SP	Monterey
Armstrong Redwoods SNR	Sonoma- Mendocino

Park Unit	District
Austin Creek SRA	Sonoma-Mendocino
Carnegie SVRA	Diablo Range
Castle Crags SP	Northern Buttes
Colonel Allensworth SHP	Great Basin
Emma Wood SB	Channel Coast
Lake Oroville SRA	Northern Buttes
Mendocino Woodlands SP	Sonoma-Mendocino
Montgomery Woods SNR	Sonoma-Mendocino
Oceano Dunes SVRA	Oceano Dunes
Refugio SB	Channel Coast
San Buenaventura SB	Channel Coast

Park Unit	District
Tesla-Alameda	Diablo Range
Tolowa Dunes SP	No. Coast Redwoods
Wildwood Canyon	Inland Empire

### Cornerstone Documents

Cornerstone Documents (CDs) are foundational planning documents. It summarizes what is known about a park, expanding on the Declaration of Purpose by highlighting its primary purpose(s) and values in detail. CDs are based on research and technical advice from diverse disciplines and input from community stakeholders, including California Native American Tribes. They form the basis for future detailed strategies and projects for park operation and improvements. They are considered dynamic documents subject to revision as new information is discovered about a park or as public recreation values change. Each unit of the State Park System should have a CD because it sets the foundation that serves as the basis of all future decisions for a park.

Four State Parks are developing CDs – Big Basin SP, Trione-Annandel SP, Emerald Bay SP, and Andrew Molera SP. Several other park units will begin their CDs in 2023/2024.

### COMMISSION ACTION(S)

- For information only

### ATTACHMENTS

- State Park General Plans History Chart

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 2022 Planning Milestones Report -- [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=23239](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23239)