

## **Past Planning Grant Progress and Future Products**

The California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is made up of various elements, forming a continuous series of studies, analysis and related timely planning documents that both address the state's most important outdoor recreation issues and help plan for California's use of its Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) apportionment. This chapter summarizes recent CORP planning grant activities and also includes brief descriptions of the future surveys, studies, and other documents that are either under way or may be proposed to help develop the next CORP. These planning grant proposals either solve a problem identified in the prior CORP or develop data and decision-making tools that will be essential for completing the next CORP. However, successful completion of these future CORP elements is contingent upon adequate funding, staffing and administrative support.

These recent CORP elements are consistent with the 2002 CORP's Action 1A under Issue 1: The Status of Parks and Recreation. This action item challenges stakeholders to "Commission research to document the economic, social, heritage, cultural, recreational, health, public safety, and physiological benefits of parks and recreation programs and services specific to California." The projects described here include surveys, data collection and analysis, planning studies and public participation efforts, all essential parts of the CORP Program.

The future planning grant products proposed later in this chapter will help address ongoing development and maintenance of the CORP as a decision-making and management tool.

### **Past Elements of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program**

A diverse number of CORP Program projects and planning efforts have been funded and completed since the prior CORP was approved. Brief descriptions for most of the projects are included below - the California Recreation Policy is discussed in a later chapter. Internet links to more information follow each project.

#### Trails and Greenways Planning (Ongoing)

The California State Parks Statewide Trails Program provides public information and technical assistance for trail-related issues affecting all California trails and greenways. Statewide Trails staff also produce trail-related policies, provide support for trails-related grant funding programs, and provide organizational and technical assistance to local trails efforts, including coordinating the annual California Trails and Greenways Conference. Staff completed the California Recreational Trails Plan in 2002, which identifies 12 trail-related goals and lists general action guidelines designed to reach those goals and designates 27 state

recreational trail corridors. More information about the Department's Statewide Trails Program and Planning is available at: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/Trails>

#### Local Needs Assessment (2004)

This project was initiated at the request of the Legislature to help assess the current and future need to acquire parklands and develop new recreation facilities. It assesses the needs and deficiencies in park and recreation lands, facilities, programs and services, provides a performance review of the grant programs administered by State Parks, makes findings, conclusions, and identifies areas recommended for further study to the Legislature and the Administration.

The Assessment is available online at:

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/local\\_needs\\_report.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/local_needs_report.pdf)

#### Central Valley Vision (Ongoing since 2003)

The Local Needs Assessment project confirmed that the Central Valley is under-represented in parks and recreation lands compared to other regions. The Central Valley is experiencing the fastest growth rates in the state, which are projected to grow 24% between 2000 and 2010, and with the population growing from 5.7 million to nearly 12.0 million by 2040. This projected growth makes it essential to plan for the future park and recreation needs of the Central Valley. State Parks' Central Valley Vision project identified and studying high value natural resource lands, key recreation opportunities and solicited public feedback from Central Valley residents to determine the highest priority lands before they become lost to development.

In 2005 and 2006, California State Parks conducted public outreach meetings to help develop the long range Central Valley Vision. The goal was to survey recreational needs, opportunities and services throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. By collecting information on gaps in public demand, expectation and availability of State Park services, amenities and facilities, State Parks will be better able to plan acquisition and development activities over the next 20 years. More information on the Central Valley Vision project is available online at: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=23483](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=23483)

#### The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism (Ongoing)

The independent, non-profit California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism fosters public and private efforts to provide quality sustainable outdoor recreation in California. Its diverse membership includes representatives from the outdoor recreation industries, user groups, environmental organizations, academia, and recreation providers, all united to improve marketing and communication, and increase funding and public support. State Parks is a founding member of the Roundtable. State Parks provides support services and technical assistance to the California Roundtable to help it exchange and gather information and identify the significant issues that face California's park and recreation providers.

### Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

The California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBOR) mission is to encourage California's children to participate in outdoor recreational activities and discover their heritage. Numerous studies have shown that children who participate in outdoor activities are healthier, do better in school, have a better self-image and social skills, and lead more fulfilled lives. The objective of the COBOR is that every child in California, by the completion of their 14th year, has the opportunity to experience each of the following activities:

1. Discover California's Past
2. Splash in the water
3. Play in a safe place
4. Camp under the stars
5. Explore nature
6. Learn to swim
7. Play on a team
8. Follow a trail
9. Catch a fish
10. Celebrate their heritage

More information about the Roundtable and the COBOR can be found online at: <http://calroundtable.org/index.html>

### Planning Coordination and Technical Assistance (Ongoing)

This effort shares information, gathers data, and builds alliances with other recreation providers, non-profits and private interests to develop a coalition of like interests. The Planning Division has provided technical assistance for park and recreation providers on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from surveys, guidebooks, articles, workshops, and studies on current trends and their implications. Some of the technical assistance publications produced since the last CORP are listed below; all are available on the Planning Division Parks and Recreation Technical Services webpage: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/PARTS>

- Tried and True Public Relations and Promotional Tools (2007)
- The Gift of Time: Effective Volunteer Program Management for Local Park and Recreation Agencies (2006)
- Getting a Grip on Grants: A How-to Guide for Park and Recreation Providers (2004)
- Directory of Grant Funding Sources for California Park and Recreation Providers (2004)
- Park and Recreation Professional's Glossary (2004)
- Innovative Practices: Case Studies Suggested by California Park and Recreation Providers Vol.I (2004)
- Paying for Parks: An Overview of Fiscal Resources for Local Park and Recreation Agencies (2003)

- Education Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation: A Survey of California School Superintendents (2003)
- California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation: A Survey of County Boards of Supervisors, County Executives, Legislators and Mayors (2002)
- Business Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation: A Survey of California Chambers of Commerce (2002)

Health and Social Benefits of Recreation (2005)

This publication documents the positive impacts that parks and recreation can have on the physical, mental and social health of individuals and their communities. It includes studies documenting how physical activity helps to control obesity, boost the immune system, diminish the risk of disease and increases life expectancy. Additional studies outline the social benefits of recreation, such as strengthening communities, promoting social bonds and supporting youth by improving their education and deterring them from negative behaviors. The information presented is intended to help local and state park and recreation providers in gathering support for their programs. Educators, law enforcement personnel, and health providers are also encouraged to see park and recreation providers as active partners in support of their mission. This publication is available online at:

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/health\\_benefits\\_081505.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/health_benefits_081505.pdf)

Park and Recreation Trends (2005)

This report examines the trends affecting parks, recreation areas, programs and services, including changes in the size and structure of California's population, changing recreation participation patterns and shifts in recreation styles and preferences. These trends can significantly affect on the adequacy of existing parks and recreation services. By understanding these trends, recreation providers can assess needs and analyze market demands and niches to more accurately identify facilities, programs and services to meet the needs of California's diverse population. Understanding the likely direction of these trends will enable providers to adjust to the type and kinds of parks and outdoor recreation settings that are needed, the facilities and programs that will likely be supported, and the appropriate levels of services to be provided. The Trends document is available online at:

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recreation\\_trends\\_081505.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recreation_trends_081505.pdf)

Wellness and Prevention Task Team (2004 - 2005)

The Planning Division participated on the Wellness and Prevention Task Team, through the California Department of Health Services, to represent outdoor recreation activity as a component in recommendations for implementing the 2003 Strategic Plan for an Aging California Population – Getting California Ready for the Baby Boomers. Once the 2003 Plan was completed, the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) agreed to monitor and update the Strategic Plan. The CCoA convened eleven Stakeholder Task Teams who were charged with identifying and focusing efforts on several top priority recommendations,

developing action plans to support or achieve implementation of these priorities and identifying necessary amendments or additions to the original Plan. The Planning Division served on the Wellness/Prevention Team and contributed to the final written report - Wellness and Prevention Task Team Report to the California Commission on Aging. The report is available online at: [http://www.ccoa.ca.gov/pdf/Wellness\\_and\\_Prevention.pdf](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov/pdf/Wellness_and_Prevention.pdf)

#### Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California (2002)

This statistically valid sample survey of Californian's public opinions on outdoor recreation is conducted every five years, beginning in 1987. The survey results provide valuable trend and point-in-time data on a variety of public attitudes, opinions, and values regarding outdoor recreation opportunities in California and public participation in different types of outdoor recreation activities. The most recent survey included a random sample of over 2,500 California adults and was administered in both English and Spanish. The survey reports from 2002 and earlier are available online at: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=23880](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=23880)

#### **Future Planning Grant Products Already in Process**

##### Study of the Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation in California

This study will address a priority issue identified in the 2002 CORP. This study will include a literature review and analysis of socioeconomic data collected from the recently completed survey of Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California, from the ongoing California State Park Visitor Use survey, and from other agencies, such as the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. An economic model will be used to analyze the data and calculate the preliminary estimated economic contributions for outdoor recreation in California.

Although outdoor recreation generates economic activity that directly or indirectly affects the economy in all fifty-eight counties of the state, parks and recreation programs are often among the first to receive cuts from government budgets. A better understanding of the impacts that parks and recreation have on the economy would help promote and develop sustainable park and recreation resources, contributing to the long-term support and funding for outdoor recreation resources, facilities and services.

When completed, this project will provide data on the potential economic impacts that public outdoor recreation projects could have on state and local economies and will contribute to a better understanding of these impacts, both of which will help state and local governments identify and prioritize public outdoor recreation project proposals to address their outdoor recreation needs.

### Alternative Camping Survey

This survey will evaluate State Parks' alternative camping program, including an alternative camping project funded through an earlier LWCF grant. The study will help determine whether the alternative camping program is addressing the needs identified in the prior CORP and is responsive to California's changing demographics.

Changes in California's demography, coupled with growing tourism and new recreational activities, have created unprecedented demands on park and recreation service providers. Outdoor recreation is growing in popularity, but trends show that traditional camping is less desirable particularly to Baby Boomers, retirees, and new immigrants who have little knowledge of traditional forms of camping. The explosion of Baby Boomers reaching senior citizen status also increases the need to have facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities, especially mobility impairments. State Parks has considered what type of facilities could be developed to meet these changes while generating additional revenues. In response, the Department has implemented a pilot program incorporating new and existing alternative camping facilities. Forms of camping have become very popular in state parks across the country, such as tent cabins, yurts, floating camps and other facilities, since they provide customers with a way to enjoy camping with minimal effort, equipment or experience with more traditional camping facilities.

The survey results will support and maintain future CORP efforts through their use as a decision-making tool to guide future federal, state and local alternative camping project. The results could also be used to evaluate future LWCF applications for alternative camping projects.

### Statewide Trails Research and Planning

This project will identify opportunities for local recreation providers to augment their existing trail systems using trail information gathered through research and assessments of the regional trails and trail systems in California.

The prior CORP identified the need for this information as part of an update of the 2002 California Recreational Trails Plan. Three major goals of the Trails Plan are supported by this research and planning grant project:

- Evaluate the status of previously secured easements for the California Riding and Hiking Trail and evaluate the feasibility for continuance of the trail's expansion.
- Promote and encourage the incorporation of trails and greenways development and linkages into all local and statewide land use planning processes.
- Prepare regional and statewide inventories of existing, planned and potential trails.

This planning project has two objectives:

- Identify opportunities and needs for local agencies to provide connections within their own trail system or to connect to systems within their region. Rights-of-way opportunities along the historic California Riding & Hiking Trail (CRHT) in Southern California (Riverside County) and Northern California (San Mateo County) will be identified that could meet the trail needs in these communities. The data on these ownerships will identify potential opportunities for local and regional recreation management agencies to improve trail connectivity by incorporating these rights-of-way into their local and regional trail systems. The plan prepared for the CRHT in these counties will serve as a model for use in other parts of California.
- Provide geographic and attribute data for the existing 27 California Trail Corridors throughout the state and report on the missing links in these corridors. The data will allow local agencies to identify opportunities for expanding their trail systems or linking to other regional systems and statewide Trail Corridors and help them provide increased trail access for nearby communities, cities or regions. The collected trails data, including maps, current management information, and website links, will be shared with local agencies and posted online to improve public and agency access to regional trail information.

#### CORP Evaluation and Strategic Plan

The Grants and Local Services Division and the Planning Division will evaluate the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program and develop a long-range Strategic Plan to direct future CORP Program development.

California's CORP preparation process has changed little over the past decades. Improvements in planning processes and technologies support a comprehensive review of the state's CORP Program. Planning improvements made possible by the dramatic changes in information and public involvement technologies, such as GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and web-based social networking systems have not yet been incorporated in CORP processes. If the CORP program is to remain relevant to the state's ever-changing demands and its complex organization, its periodic review is essential.

The CORP evaluation will assess the Plan's effectiveness in shaping outdoor recreation provider decisions, track the implementation of CORP actions, and provide a compilation of best planning and implementation practices for developing the Strategic Plan. The long-range Strategic Plan will include a CORP road map and procedure guide. The CORP road map will identify improvements in processes and products to enhance the CORP's relevance to outdoor recreation providers, offer useful recommendations and information, and document outcomes of CORP-related actions. The procedure guide will describe best practices, recommend sequences for carrying out CORP activities and suggest timelines and processes for future CORP preparation.

## **Additional Future Planning Grant Possibilities**

Although no planning grant applications have been submitted for these project proposals, and more specific recommendations for future CORP activities will be developed during the CORP evaluation and strategic plan process, the following conceptual CORP elements are briefly described here as possible future planning grant projects.

### Recreation Benchmarks

California State Parks proposes to develop a set of benchmarks for local park and recreation areas and facilities in the state. Benchmark measurement could include the average travel time to a park or recreation areas, or the acreage of neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 residents.

### California Recreational Trails Plan Update

The Statewide Trails plan was completed by Statewide Trails Program staff in 2002 and identified 12 trails-related goals and the general action guidelines to reach those goals. An updated plan would use the 2002 plan as a guide, incorporate additional information and recommendations about trails in the state.

### Children in Nature Campaign

A series of public presentations ('Speakers Bureaus') around the state are being planned by California State Parks to both educate park users and stakeholders about the 'nature deficit disorder', the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights and the goals and objectives of the Children in Nature Campaign. During each presentation, campaign staff will be collecting data on the existing 'children in nature' programs, to evaluate the supply of youth programs, publicize the currently available programs, expand the program information of the Campaign and make it available to recreation providers, and to encourage recreation providers statewide to adopt, develop or expands these types of programs.

### Cool Parks Initiative

State Parks is addressing climate change with a three-pronged approach that involves adapting to climate changes, mitigating activities that might be contributing to climate change and educating others about climate change. The Department is playing a statewide leadership role in planning for climate change by developing a collection of tools, resources, strategies and actions focusing on climate change 'adaptation' that would inform and direct State Parks (and statewide) planning, operations and visitor services. The resources being developed are intended to help land management decision-makers in local, regional and state governments prepare for climate change by recommending a detailed process for climate change preparedness and planning.

Technical Assistance on New Recreation Facilities

State Parks is developing a series of Recreation Opportunity Bulletins describing new forms of outdoor recreation. Future bulletins will provide a reference for State Park staff and other recreation providers statewide to use for expanding the visitor's outdoor recreation experience.