



April 6th, 2011 Spring Presentation & Open House

Draft Access & Trails Concept Plan Map & Land Use Plan Overview



A well attended spring open house on April 6, 2011 provided a third opportunity for the community to provide input into the development of the Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park Land Use Plan. Prior opportunities for community input into the planning process have included the June 2009 scoping meeting and the 2009 on-site trail use survey, as well as letters and email correspondences received by the District. Information provided from this community input has helped to guide the development of the draft *Access & Trails Concept Plan Map* presented at the April 6th meeting.

The meeting began with staff providing a brief overview of the land use planning process and the proposed access and trails improvements identified in the draft *Access & Trails Concept Plan Map*, which will form one component of the Land Use Plan for the 7,352 acre parkland property. The proposed improvements will include: opening over 2,200 acres of parklands to the public now in land bank status, providing opportunities for three new access points and adding 12 miles of narrow and service road trails for a total trail system of 62 miles of trails. The proposed access and trail system will incorporate about 2 miles of unsanctioned trails, and involve closing nearly 10 miles of service road and unsanctioned narrow trails and reducing the width of about 4 miles of service road trails to create narrow trails. The plan also proposes picnic areas, back-country camping sites, and view and interpretive opportunities.

Following the presentation over 100 attendees visited the four poster stations. The poster stations gave participants an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments regarding the *draft Park Access & Trail Concept Trail Plan Map*; District recreation and interpretive programs; and park operations and management. A summary of this community input is provided in this newsletter and will be taken into consideration as the Land Use Plan is more fully developed.





Community Input on the Draft Access & Trails Concept Plan Map

ACCESS



Which staging areas will be opened first? Opening of additional access points is contingent on adoption of the Land Use Plan, development of infrastructure improvements and staff availability to manage new parkland areas. A prioritization plan for future access points openings has not been determined.

Can proposed entries be opened sooner as hike/bike access points before staging area infrastructure is built? This may be a possibility at locations where existing trail(s) connect to proposed access points.

Will there be public access at Devany Canyon & Las Positas Road (Garms)? Yes, public access to Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park from Devany Canyon (walk/bike-in access only) and Las Positas Road (full staging area) are proposed. From these points visitors will be able to access northern features in the park including Tehan Falls and the North Ridge Trail.



Will there be public access from Kilkare Rd? No, public access to Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park from Kilkare Road is not proposed in the draft plan map. While Kilkare Road is a public road, the Kilkare Homeowner's Association owns a parcel of land located between the terminus of Kilkare Road and the park. Existing District emergency and maintenance vehicle access will be retained.

How will the Sunol (Tyler) staging area (southeastern access point) design address neighborhood needs? The Sunol Staging area will provide public access to Sunol Ridge. Consideration for local neighbors may be addressed in several ways including: landscape screening separating park use from residents; directional, identity and regulatory signage; gated entry; boundary fencing; vehicle visitor turn around when gate is closed; and a security residence to provide additional park oversight. Additionally, routine maintenance activities will include: litter clean-up and recovery from illegal acts such as dumping and vandalism, similar to other park access points, to create a pleasing gateway into the park.

Will there be public access from Palomares Road? With the pending purchase of the 995-acre Owen property there could be potential access from Palomares Road. Potential access will be studied when the land is fully acquired.

Will there be public access from Niles Canyon Road? Access from Niles Canyon Road is not being considered as part of this Land Use Plan since there is no direct connection to the park. The Calaveras Ridge Trail, which traverses the length of Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park, will eventually connect Sunol-Ohlone Wilderness and Las Trampas Regional Wilderness and Briones Regional Park with Pleasanton Ridge covering a distance of approximately 29 miles. Access across Niles Canyon Road will be considered as part of that regional trail plan. In addition, the District will also continue to pursue opportunities to provide regional trail links to Garin and Vargas Plateau Regional Parks.

Could trail connections be provided between Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park and the Laurel Creek and Moller Ranch trail systems? These are public trails located on private homeowner's association lands within the City limits of Pleasanton. The District would be interested in working with these homeowners and the City of Pleasanton to make this connection if these parties expressed an interest.

Will there be a traffic study of potential impacts of the proposed access points along Foothill Road? Traffic will be one of the components of the environmental analysis that will be conducted for the Land Use plan in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Road width and traffic volumes will be considered as part of the analysis.





Community Input on the Draft Access & Trails Concept Plan Map

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Community Recommendations - Draft Access & Trails Concept Plan Map. Access and trail recommendations will be considered within the context of the overall access and trails network balancing desired visitor experiences, environmental sensitivity, and park management objectives. Community recommendations include:

Trail Routes

- Accessing Tehan Falls from South Trail is more sustainable
- Add a narrow trail connection between Tehan Falls & North Ridge Trail & Sinbad Creek Trail
- Connect with Niles Railway
- Create flowing single-track w/lightning fast spaghetti turns
- Include trails through shady areas
- Keep “bootleg” trail connecting North Ridge Trail & “BB” Trail
- Keep “bootleg” trail leading north from Oak Tree Trail paralleling Sycamore Trail
- Long single tracks, over one mile in length
- Lower impact trails—loop trail (near access points)
- More bike trails with jumps
- More narrow, windy trails with features e.g. rock garden
- Retain single-track trail between North Ridge Trail & Bay Leaf Trail
- Ridge trail through the Schuart property a high priority
- Technical biking trails

Ancillary Facilities

- Add more picnic/bench sites
- Add right-of-way signage instructions
- Etiquette and yield signage needed

Staging/Access

- Add paved ADA trails at staging areas
- Larger staging area needed for mountain bike races
- Open Tyler Ranch service road/trails to mountain bikers and hikers before staging areas are completed
- Safe access: Road Safety, Tyler Ranch

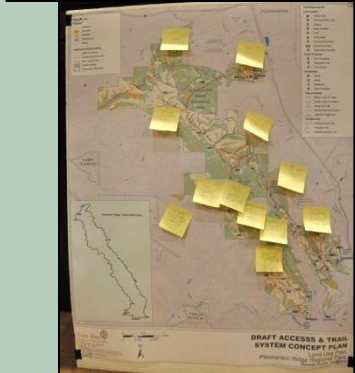
Trail Use, Maintenance & Management

- Clear signage is needed
- Cook Canyon Trail & Bay Leaf Trail - single track maintenance needed
- Direct water run off trails to prevent erosion
- Keep bicycle use within established trails
- Make sure there is adequate hiking trail access
- More horse trails (with bikes prohibited)
- Trails that are designated “bike only”

Stakeholder Meetings

- Plan a Tyler Ranch community meeting for residents west of Kilkare Rd on Foothill Rd

Will there be wheelchair access at Garms? Each of the staging areas will provide Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant parking, toilet and picnic facilities. The steep, rugged terrain and distance between the existing staging areas creates challenges in creating inclusive access to this unique outdoor environment for many park visitors: the disabled, young children, and older adults. To help offset the challenging access to the ridge tops, ADA compliant loop trails approximating one mile in length near the Foothill and West Las Positas Staging Area are being considered for inclusion in the draft *Access and Trail Concept Plan Map*. In addition, trail signage will include information following the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP), an inventory tool that provides information on trail conditions including grades, clearances and trail surface conditions that will help guide visitors’ decisions regarding use of more challenging trails within the interior of the park.





Community Input on the Draft Access & Trails Concept Plan Map

TRAIL MANAGEMENT



How will the trails be built? The plan calls for incorporating existing trails into the trail system where appropriate to minimize: resource habitat disturbance; soil displacement; and permitting requirements associated with new construction. Where new trails are identified to provide a trail hierarchy with several loop options and/or to lead to a destination they will be designed with gently rolling curves generally following the contour of the land. This type of design will encourage a range of uses and facilitate dispersing water off the trails in a manner that will minimize displacement of sediments into creeks and ponds. Service road width trails will be machine built using heavy trail building equipment such as graders, excavators and compactors. Narrow trails may be built using Sweco machines with finish work completed using hand tools or they may be built entirely with hand tools. Construction choices may be dictated in part by the availability of volunteers to help with trail building efforts, the type of terrain and the sensitivity of the site. In some areas trails may be narrowed or closed and rehabilitated. Closing and naturalizing or narrowing trails will require as much attention and planning as constructing new trails to stop unwanted visitor traffic. Steps to restore an abandoned trail or narrow a trail section to its natural condition may include formal closure, stabilization, recontouring, revegetation and monitoring.

What type of volunteer support is anticipated? Successful implementation of the plan will require community involvement to achieve the full potential of Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park. Therefore, the Land Use Plan will also propose educational and interpretive programs and outreach to the community to strengthen ties with park users, members of the community, volunteers, other agencies and organizations. This may include volunteer patrol on foot and by bike and horse. It may also include coordinating with local organizations working through the District's volunteer programs including the Ivan Dickson Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program to help maintain trails, restore closed sites and teach safe trail use.

Will the Land Use Plan include a vegetation management program (e.g., removal of invasive plants such as Scottish Broom)? The District's Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) for Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park will include a range of control measures to promote environmentally safe, cost effective and sustainable pest management practices to reduce the invasion of exotic species that will ensure public and employee protection and benefit native plant communities.

What is the District's role in managing roads shared with neighbors?

Park management and operations are directed in part through a number of easements, licenses and memorandums of understanding (MOU) with tenants, private parties and public entities. Contained within the boundaries of Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park are several private properties. Access to the private properties is provided through non-exclusive easements that grant the private landowners access through the park within specific, designated right-of-ways. Most of these easement access roads provide for joint private vehicle access, service and emergency vehicle access and non-motorized recreation (hiking, dog walking, biking, equestrian use). In addition, an MOU with the City of Pleasanton creates a seamless recreational trail experience for park visitors traveling through Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park and Augustin Bernal Park along the Ridgeline Trail.





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TRAIL EXPERIENCE



Will all of the narrow trails be open to all users (hikers, bicyclists, dog walkers, and equestrians)? Almost all of the trails (narrow and service road width) providing access to and within the interior of the park are proposed to be open to all users with the exception of the Woodland Trail, which will be retained as a hike/equestrian only trail. The District is currently reviewing each of the staging areas in more detail as the staging areas serve as both gateway points into the larger, more wild and challenging terrain and as destination points. Within these somewhat constrained areas the District is looking to create family-friendly places allowing for picnicking and for trail experiences where people can safely gain hiking and riding skills. Trails near staging areas may include short hike-only loops, as well as shared narrow and service road width access to the more challenging interior ridgeline trails.

What facilities and uses will be considered for the backcountry camp? One pack-in back country camping area is proposed along the Sinbad Creek Trail between Trail Junctions 23 (Sinbad Creek Trail) and 24 (Bay Leaf Trail). In keeping with the multi-use trail system, this site would be available by reservation on a first-come basis for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Level camp pads and potable water are available at this site. Proposed improvements would be limited to picnic tables, vault toilet(s), food/supply storage cabinets, bike racks and horse ties and water troughs. To minimize potential siltation and/or significant increases in runoff that could degrade water quality and adversely impact aquatic resources back-country camping, infrastructure and recreation activities would be located a minimum of 100 feet from Sinbad Creek.



Community Recommendations - Recreation, Interpretative Programs

Camping- Be aware of fire danger & clean-up requirements
Education programs
Geology
Historical Olives
Historical: Stories, heritage, Native Americans, significant themes
Naturalist-led hikes and bike and equestrian rides

Notify residents before events, meetings, uses
Public Relations: Oral Histories
Restore Barn (horse barn at old farm house)
Self-guided tours
Support system for large events (runs, etc.)
Technology applications

STAYING INVOLVED & CONNECTED

There are several easy ways for you to keep informed and learn about the plan progress and upcoming meetings:

- Sign up on the e-mail mailing list: plan_pleasantonridge@ebparks.org
- Visit our website at the following link: www.ebparks.org

NEXT STEPS

Summer – Fall 2011 - LUP & CEQA PREPARATION

