



California Department of Parks and Recreation
Silverado District
19310 Sonoma Highway, Suite A
Sonoma, CA 95476



SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK GENERAL PLAN

SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK

Calendar of Events

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS AT A GLANCE

FALL 2002	WINTER 2003	SPRING/SUMMER 2003	FALL 2003	SPRING 2004
Information Gathering Field Work	Summarize Existing Conditions Discuss Opportunities & Constraints First Workshop & EIR Scoping Meeting	Develop Plan Alternatives Second Workshop Draft General Plan Preparation	Public Review of Draft Plan & EIR	Distribute Final General Plan & EIR Agency Approvals

PARTICIPATION IS THE KEY TO A GREAT PLAN!

Contact Information

If you are not currently on our mailing list (if you received this newsletter in the mail, you are already on the list) and would like to receive planning updates and notice about future workshops, or wish to send written comments, please contact us at:

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Visit Our Website
www.parks.ca.gov



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PARTNERS IN PLANNING

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is developing a new General Plan for Sugarloaf Ridge State Park – and we want your input in charting the course for the park's future! The General Plan will define a long-term vision for the park, identify desired improvements and enhancements, and provide guidelines for protecting its unique natural and cultural resources.

Your participation will help ensure that the plan reflects the community's ideas and suggestions for improving the park. Our first planning workshop is on Tuesday, February 4, 2003. We will discuss the existing conditions of the park and ask you to tell us about your own experiences, ideas and desires for the park's future.

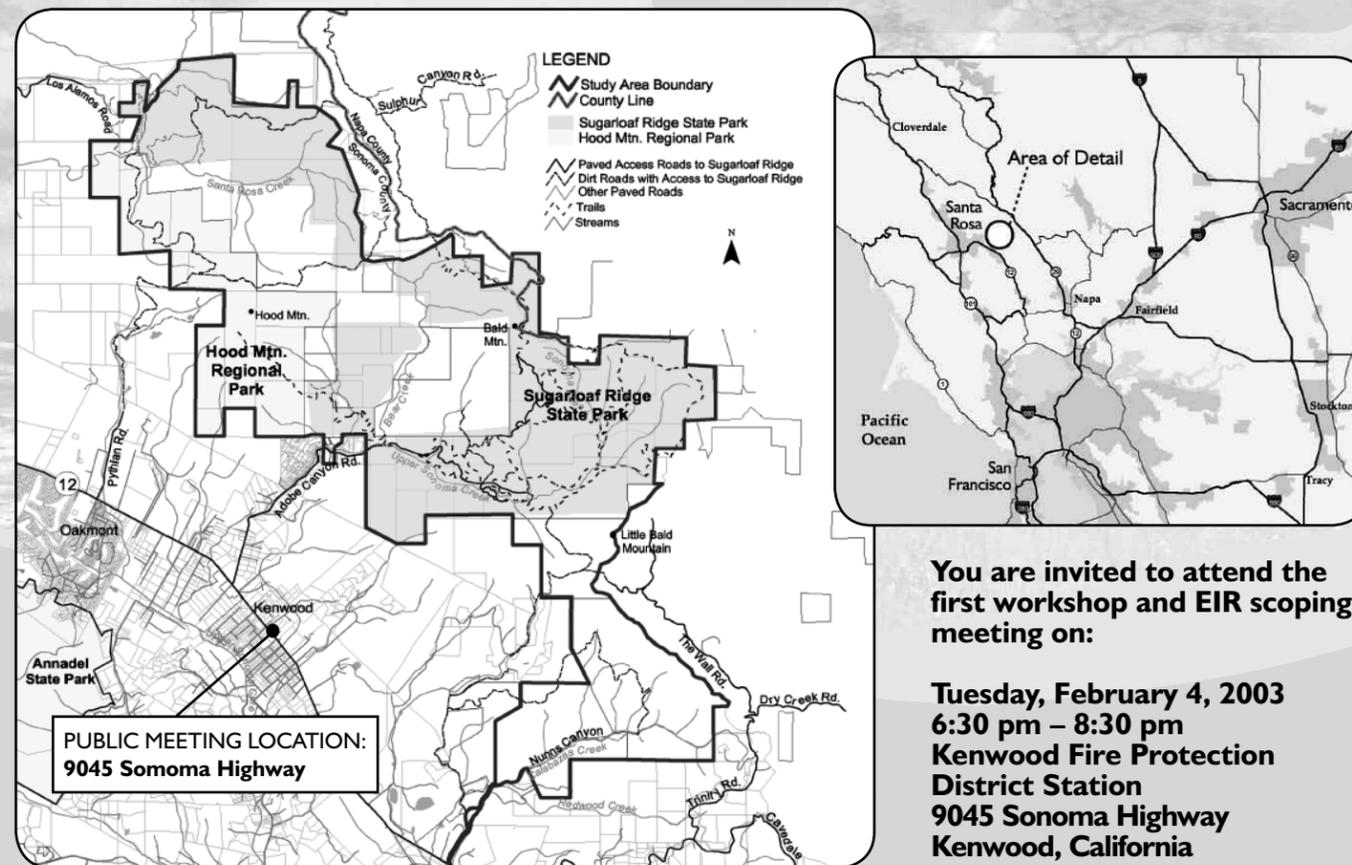
Whether or not you attend the workshop, please fill out and send back the enclosed questionnaire to share your ideas. We hope you will take some time to get involved in planning the future of this magnificent state park. We look forward to hearing from you!

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

Stay Informed: Updates of this newsletter will be published to keep you informed about progress on the General Plan. You may also visit the State Parks Website at www.parks.ca.gov/ to get updated information. To access the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan Website from the main page, go to "Related Links" and click on "General Plans," then under "Related Links" click on "General Plans In Progress," then click on "Sugarloaf Ridge State Park."

Fill Out the Questionnaire: The questionnaire will help us understand your main issues and concerns, including recreation, habitat protection and management, facility improvements, or educational and interpretive programs, just to name a few. Tell us what you like, what is missing, or what could work better. You may fill out the questionnaire online at the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan Website.

Attend the Workshops: We will host the first public workshop for the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Kenwood Fire Protection District station. The workshop will provide a forum for you to learn about the park's existing conditions, discuss the questionnaire topics, identify other issues that are important to you, and suggest park enhancements for us to explore. The first workshop also will serve as the scoping meeting for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which will be prepared along with the General Plan. Please join us!



You are invited to attend the first workshop and EIR scoping meeting on:

Tuesday, February 4, 2003
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Kenwood Fire Protection District Station
9045 Sonoma Highway
Kenwood, California

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

A Park in Transition: Expanding and Improving Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is expanding and evolving. The General Plan process will allow us to evaluate and redefine the park to respond to community needs and priorities. The Bay Area's increasing population is reaching the Sonoma Valley, and cities and towns on the valley floor are growing rapidly. This population growth brings new issues for the park, including increased traffic on Highway 12 and increased recreation demands. Meanwhile, the reputation and popularity of Sonoma Valley wines is growing and the vineyards are rapidly expanding in the area. These pressures from more people and more vineyards in the valley are pressing upon the once plentiful wildlands in the hillsides.



View from Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Visitor Center

In the past few years, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has been actively identifying and acquiring important undeveloped lands in the Mayacamas Mountain Range. In 1996, the District acquired and transferred to State Parks ownership a 1,200-acre portion of the McCormick property for inclusion as part of Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The McCormick property encompasses a large portion of the headwaters of Santa Rosa Creek. The District is also currently in negotiations for part of the 1,200-acre Beltane property. The property, located to the south of the existing park boundaries and accessed by Nunns Canyon Road, could potentially be transferred to the State to become part of the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park lands.

To the west of Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is Hood Mountain Regional Park, operated by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department. The District has recently acquired the Johnson Property which will provide an additional point of access into Hood Mountain Regional Park. In combination, Sugarloaf Ridge State Park and Hood Mountain Regional Park provide more than 6,500 acres of protected wildland habitat on the eastern edge of Sonoma Valley. Because of the similar recreational objectives and proximity of Hood Mountain Regional Park, the plan, through consultation with the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, may also include recommendations for joint management strategies between the two parks.

In this rapidly evolving context, the park's General Plan study area (shown on the front page) goes beyond the existing boundaries of Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, to include surrounding lands that may have an influence on the park's future management. The open space and proximity of surrounding properties support the park-like character and wildlife resources. While the study area includes some surrounding private and publicly owned properties, the plan will only provide specific management guidelines and recommendations for the properties owned and operated by California State Parks.



Camp Butler overlook was a former Boy Scout camp in the 1920s and 30s

The Planning Team

The California State Parks Planning Team has recently hired EDAW, Inc., a planning firm with a worldwide reputation for excellence in environmental planning and landscape architecture. The firm will assist us in preparing the park's General Plan and Environmental Impact Report. Over the past few months, EDAW has been working with State Park's Silverado District, the Sonoma County Agricultural Protection and Open Space District, the Sonoma Ecology Center, LandPaths, and Valley of the Moon Natural History Association volunteers to assess and map the park's existing conditions. We have been collecting data and taking inventory of recreational uses, the park's facilities and environmental resources, including the headwaters of Sonoma and Santa Rosa Creeks, and sensitive wildlife, plants, and cultural resources. Electronic maps and information will be integrated into a geographic information systems (GIS) database that will help form a common knowledge of the park that planners and the public can use to help develop and evaluate plan alternatives.

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Resources

The park offers a range of recreational activities including hiking, camping, mountain biking, equestrian use, picnicking, wildlife, wildflower viewing, and astronomical viewing at the Robert Ferguson Observatory. The park lands are mostly steep rocky hillsides leading to the Mayacamas Mountains ridge, with intervening rolling hills, including "Sugarloaf Ridge," the namesake of the park. The headwaters of Sonoma and Santa Rosa Creeks are contained within the General Plan study area, and the ridges within the park form the dividing line between the two watersheds. Most of the park is near wilderness with the exception of visitor facilities concentrated in the lower Adobe Canyon near Sonoma Creek, trails, fire roads, and occasional homestead remnants.

California State Parks is currently in the process of evaluating existing resources and management opportunities at the park that will aid in the development of the General Plan. Sugarloaf Ridge State Park resources include:

- Headwaters of Sonoma and Santa Rosa Creeks and their tributaries;
- A wide variety of vegetation types important for habitat diversity;
- Special-status species and other wildlife species;
- Historical/cultural resources, including former ranch buildings
- Recreational areas, including extensive multi-use trails, a family campground, group camp, and the observatory;
- Clear, dark night skies for celestial viewing;
- Open space and a feeling of wilderness near growing population centers; and
- Scenic vistas from high peaks, and the near absence of cultivated land.

Native Americans at Sugarloaf Ridge

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is located along the Mayacamas Mountains ridge within the historic Wappo Tribe's sphere of influence. The Mayacamas are near the intersection of lands that were once controlled by three separate groups: the Wappo, Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok. Each group may have shared some access to the



View from Bald Mountain

region. The Wappo lived in villages usually located on a creek or other water source. Villages included one or two sweatshouses in the center of the village - as well as houses of varying size. Village chiefs might be elected or appointed based on the organization of the individual village. Some villages had multiple chiefs, each with different spheres of influence. Seasonal travel to Clear Lake, the Russian River, the Pacific coast and Napa Glass Mountain was common.

The Wappo are considered to be a peaceful group, culturally influenced by the groups surrounding them. However, the Wappo did struggle against the Spanish to avoid being drafted for labor or sent to the Sonoma Mission. By 1850, it was estimated that no more than 500 were left in the Napa Valley. By 1910 sadly, only 73 individuals claimed Wappo membership. Now the Wappo have established a Tribal Council with over 500 people enrolled.

Historic Setting

The Mayacamas region was sparsely populated historically due to steep hills, narrow canyons and difficulty of access. American and immigrant settlement in the area did begin in the mid-19th Century with some homestead patents or claims being filed in the 1870s. Remnants of several family homesteads remain in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

The Luttrell family settled in the area in the 1860s, building a residence and outbuildings near the current ranger residence in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. None of the structures stand today, however evidence of the Luttrells vineyard can still be seen as vertical furrows on a slope northwest of the ranger's residence. Later W.D. Reynolds built a ranch complex and the road through Adobe Canyon. The barn from the Reynolds complex remains today and is used as the Equestrian Center.

The Bear Creek Ranch property, which straddled the Sonoma/Napa county line near the northeast corner of the park, was also used for small-scale farming and ranching, as well as for a center of hunting activities. A shed built in 1942 still stands. The ranch house burned in 1967, though the fireplace and foundation remains still exist.

At the end of High Ridge Trail, beyond Bald Mountain, is "the old red barn." Ray and Bertha Hurd and their 10 children homesteaded 160 acres near the headwaters of Bear Creek between 1914 and 1930. Ray built two cabins, a house, a woodshed and a schoolhouse, as well as the red barn. During that period, there were other families living up in the high country - probably a total of 35 to 40 people. The old red barn and a few remnants of the house foundation are all that are left.

In 1920, the property was sold to the Sonoma State Home, a State-run hospital for the mentally disabled. The Boy Scouts also used the property in the 1920s and 30s, and built a cabin at Camp Butler on a plateau overlooking Adobe Canyon. A fireplace, building foundation, patio area and pond remain from their use. After WW II, the property was leased to a dairy farmer. The property sold again in the 1960s, and in 1971 was sold to the State of California for Sugarloaf Ridge Park.