

7

**THE ROAD MAP:
FOCUS AREAS**

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide consisting of several overlapping, stylized mountain peaks in various shades of blue and teal, set against a dark teal background.



View from the Yuba Rim Trail
Image Credit: Max Whittaker

Introduction

Recommendations for recreation enhancements and projects across the county have been organized into a set of eight focus areas. This chapter presents more detailed descriptions for each area's need, the desired outcomes and goals, recommendations, case studies, mapping and diagrams, potential funding strategies, and project-level actions to support achieving focus area objectives.

The improvements associated with the focus areas touch every region of the county and address the entire recreation system of Nevada County.

Focus Area: Community & Regional Park System



Focus Area Summary

Continue to enhance facilities at existing parks. Provide playgrounds or gathering spaces, where appropriate. Provide a new regional park in Bear River Recreation & Park District to meet growing need and demand of residents to access regional and local park facilities within an easily accessible distance via transit, bike/ped paths, or driving.

Need and Importance

While the rural areas of Nevada County are rich in open space, there is still a need for community-based parklands and play facilities to meet the need for access to parks that offer fields, play areas, shaded seating, tree-lined walking paths, and other similar amenities. For example, residents in the southwestern part of the county reported that they are lacking access to community-based park facilities.

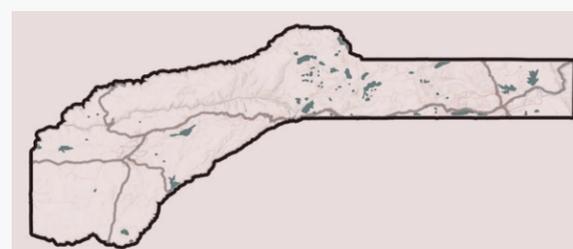
Park access is often measured by how many residents live within walking distance of a park. This metric is appropriate for urban areas and cities, but it is less applicable in rural locations where locating parks within a half-mile or even a mile of every resident would be cost-prohibitive due to the dispersed nature of rural counties, the density of development, and expressed needs of the local population. A 2003 study of Small

Community Park & Recreation Planning Standards in Colorado (Consulting 2003) and recommendations from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the American Planning Association (APA) acknowledge that park access should be based on demand from communities and a variety of factors such as culture, demographics, density, and development patterns. Benchmarking, surveys, and community conversations are recommended as tools to guide park development.

Inventorying and benchmarking of park facilities show that communities of similar size to the unincorporated communities of Nevada County most often provide playgrounds, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, multi-purpose fields, dog parks, community gardens, and soccer fields. These facilities and related access to trails with off-leash access are found within each of the recreation and park districts except the



Existing baseball fields at Western Gateway Park



Town of Washington (Twin Ridges Recreation Benefit Zone), which has the lowest population density.

Although the basic inventory needs are met for the unincorporated areas of western Nevada County, feedback received during multiple community engagement efforts indicate strong support for additional regional park space, maintenance of facilities, and additional access to organized play facilities. The evaluation of park access in the Bear River Recreation & Park District shows a need for a regional park. Additionally, a high-level assessment of Western Gateway Regional Park indicates a need for continued reinvestment to address deferred maintenance. Opportunities exist to continue to update Oak Tree Community Park facilities and their connection with on-site community facilities, such as the library.

LEGEND

FACILITIES

- Parks with Organized Rec (Public)
- Parks with Organized Rec (Private)
- Open Space park/trailhead

POPULATION DENSITY

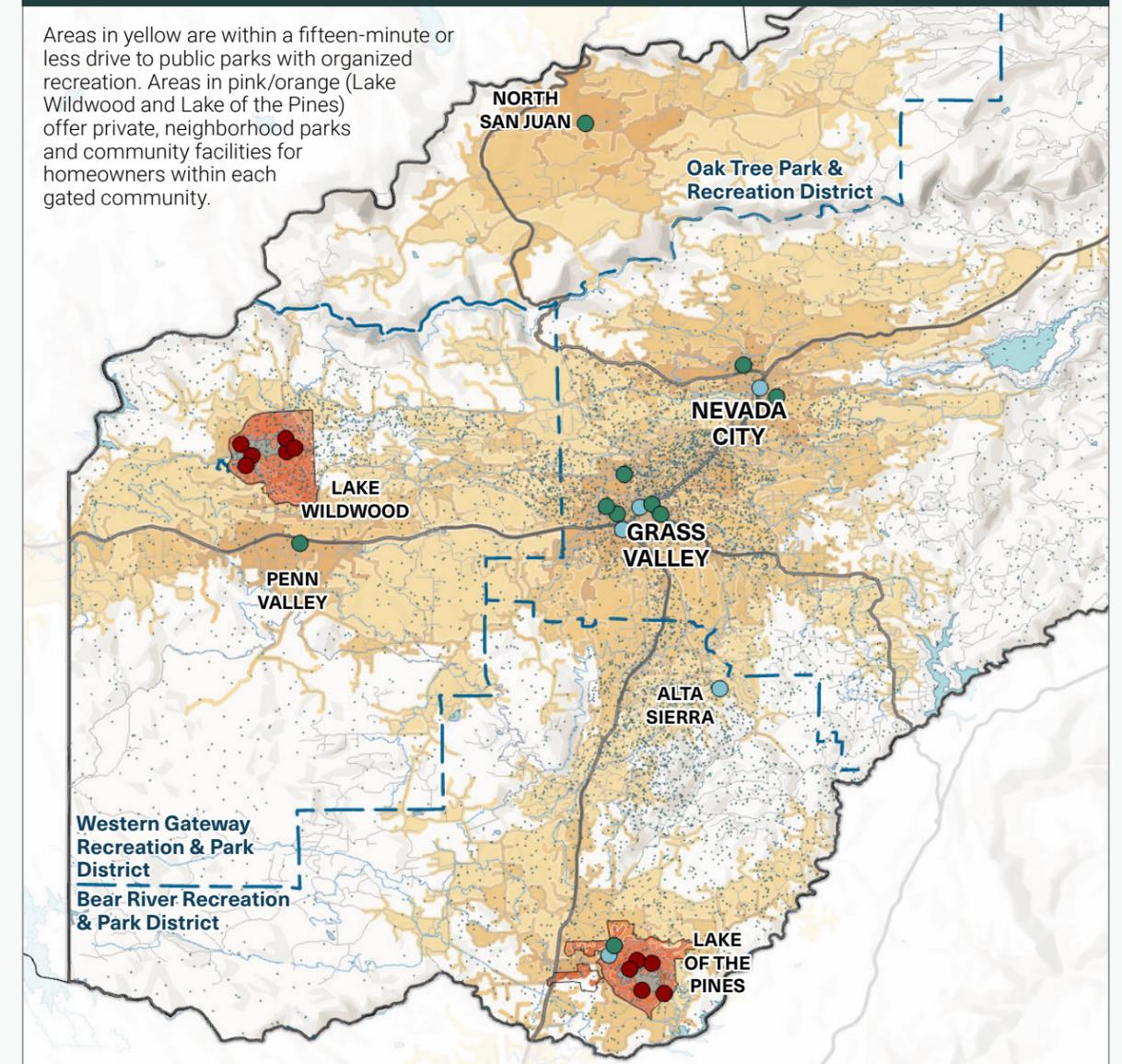
- 1 dot represents 10 people

DRIVING TIME TO A PARK

| PUBLIC | | PRIVATE | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| 5 Minutes or less | | 5-10 Minutes | |
| | | | |
| 5-10 Minutes | | 10-15 Minutes | |

PARK ACCESS IN WESTERN NEVADA COUNTY RECREATION DISTRICTS

Areas in yellow are within a fifteen-minute or less drive to public parks with organized recreation. Areas in pink/orange (Lake Wildwood and Lake of the Pines) offer private, neighborhood parks and community facilities for homeowners within each gated community.



Community & Regional Park System

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Having a regional park within a 10-to-15-minute drive of county residents, as well as listening to and meeting the unique needs of each community, is a key step for equitable park access for all community members.

A well-designed regional park offers many benefits. It provides a place where residents meet, which improves community connections. It offers spaces where people of all ages can walk or play and be physically active to reduce stress and improve mental health. It can provide shade, reduce ambient temperatures, clean the air, filtrate water, and reduce fuel loading to mitigate wildfires. In rural communities, regional park access closer to home reduces vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, access to parks often aligns with opportunities for recreation programming that can support youth development and reduce social isolation for seniors.

The three images below show popular write-in project ideas†



Pickleball



Splash Pad



Youth Playground

† Survey respondents were asked to select their three top priorities for organized recreation and play from a list.
‡ Survey respondents were asked to write in what recreation or resiliency project they think is needed in Nevada County.

| Organized Recreation Priorities |
|---|
| Western Gateway Area |
| #1: Update/maintain fields and facilities (17.5%) |
| #1: Recreation Center and/or Resiliency Hub (17.5%) |
| #2: Restrooms (14.3%) |
| Oak Tree Area |
| #1: Pickleball (22.2%) |
| #1: Update/maintain fields and facilities (22.2%) |
| Bear River Area |
| #1: Update/maintain fields and facilities (18%) |
| #2: More neighborhood park space (16.9%) |
| #3: Community Garden (13.5%) |

| Top Project Ideas‡ |
|---|
| Western Gateway Area |
| #1: Pickleball Courts (18.4%) |
| #2: Splash Pad (10.4%) |
| #3: Equestrian Facilities (7.9%) |
| #3: OHV/Motorized Single-Use Dirt Trails (7.9%) |
| Oak Tree Area |
| #1: Plans and Policies (30%) |
| #2: Playground and Youth Park Amenities, Park Accessibility, User Comfort, Resource Preservation, New or Improved Signage (10%) |
| Bear River Area* |
| #1: Overall Trail Connectivity (12.9%) |
| #2: Pickleball Courts (11.4%) |
| #3: Park Improvements/Additions (10.0%) |
| #3: Multi-Use Dirt Trails (10.0%) |

* In addition to survey feedback, Bear River Recreation & Park District leadership has communicated strong interest in a **skate park** from schools and students.

Community & Regional Park System

Recommended Strategies

- Evaluate potential properties for feasibility to meet park access needs and work with partners to determine appropriate mechanism to acquire property.
- Develop a network of community parks that aligns with the existing Area Plan.
- Conduct an in-depth facility assessment and capital improvement plan for Western Gateway Regional Park to detail deferred maintenance, schedule priority repairs and investments, and summarize park facility investments on a 1- to 3-year, 5- to 7-year, and 10- to 15-year horizon.
- Evaluate special assessments for each recreation and park district in western Nevada County.



Gary D. Clarke Turf Field programmed by Bear River Recreation & Park District

Top 3 Recreation Facilities Needed or Needs to be Improved:

Percent of respondents that included the facility as needed or needs to be improved

| Bear River RPD | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Permanent Restrooms | 92% |
| Paved Paths | 86% |
| Unpaved Trails | 81% |

| Western Gateway RPD | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Permanent Restrooms | 70% |
| Teen Center | 56% |
| Unpaved Trails | 54% |

| Oak Tree PRD | |
|---------------------|------|
| Permanent Restrooms | 100% |
| Paved Paths | 86% |
| Teen Center | 80% |

| Nevada City | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Paved Paths | 78% |
| Bike / Roller / Skate Park | 76% |
| Unpaved Trails | 71% |

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 3

Community & Regional Park System

FEATURED PROJECT

Oak Tree Community Park Master Plan

The San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center campus and Oak Tree Community Park parcels serve as a space for community members to gather, recreate, learn, and play. The campus, owned by Twin Ridges School District, was built around 40 years ago and was re-purposed in recent years to fill the void in family-oriented community services. The services include Pre-K education, childcare, food distribution, clothing exchange, and more.

The park parcel, owned by Oak Tree Park & Recreation District, includes the San Juan Ridge Community Library where community members attend programs, check out books, access Wi-Fi, and use on-site computers. Additionally, a large multi-purpose field with a pavilion, track, and recently added playground is frequently used for sports and events. Adult and youth sports leagues as well as schools use the field for games and tournaments. Both the school campus and Oak Tree Community Park provide many critical resources to the community.

There is potential for educational loop trails, sharing the area's history and culture.

- In-person charrette site walk



Library and annex building overlooking the pond



New playground at Oak Tree Community Park funded by Prop 68



Learning center with small outdoor gathering space

Community & Regional Park System

Oak Tree Community Park Master Plan



How Oak Tree Community Park & School Campus Jointly Functions as a Resiliency Hub:

- Shelters and Services:
 - ① Library
 - ② Learning center
 - ③ Annex building
 - ④ Schools, childcare, and resource center
 - ⑤ Indoor event space
- ⑥ Fire and emergency evacuation area (CAL FIRE, CHP) - helicopter landing area
- ⑦ Fenced property for livestock evacuation
- ⑧ Multi-purpose sports fields
- ⑨ Playgrounds
 - Indoor and outdoor spaces for events, activities, and programs
- ⑩ Community garden space
 - Public Services - food bank, sign up for medicare/medicaid, computer and Wi-Fi access, etc.
 - Spaces for youth, school, and adult sports

Community & Regional Park System

Oak Tree Community Park Master Plan

Things That Need to be Addressed

- Deferred maintenance on existing facilities (buildings, roads, pathways) and drainage issues on the southern edge of the sports field
- Restoration of wetland and pond (removal of invasive species)
- Larger operating budget
- Additional shade near gathering spaces and near the field/playground
- Better screening on the east side of the Oak Tree Community Park parcel
- Existing play areas near the resource center to be renovated or replaced
- Food prep station and laundry facility
- Spaces for gathering, learning, and working outdoors
- Parking and restroom near sports fields
- Additional playground equipment for ages 3-5

Opportunities

Short-Term

- Improve connection between the Oak Tree Community Park parcel and the school parcel - pave roads and establish accessible pathways
- Add wayfinding and signage at the main entrance and throughout both parcels

Long-Term

- Address deferred maintenance on existing facilities
- Restore wetland and pond
- Open restroom north of the existing learning center to support the community and future events
- Renovate or expand staff housing
- Add workforce development pods with Wi-Fi and power
- Add playground equipment for ages 3-5
- Enhance existing large gathering spaces and field to generate revenue from outside the community

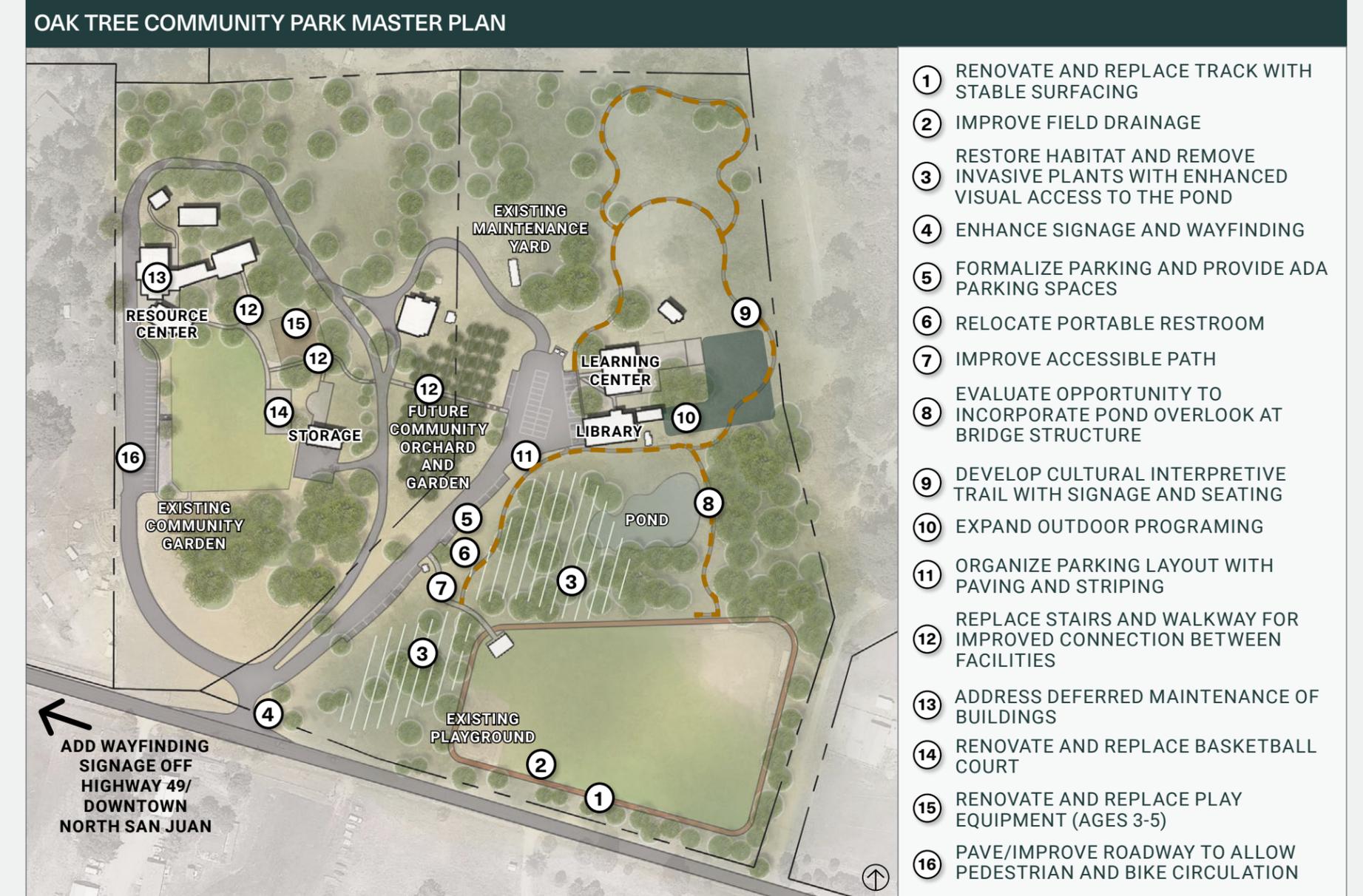


Mural painted by a community member

During the in-person charrette event the top priority needs for the site were identified as follows:

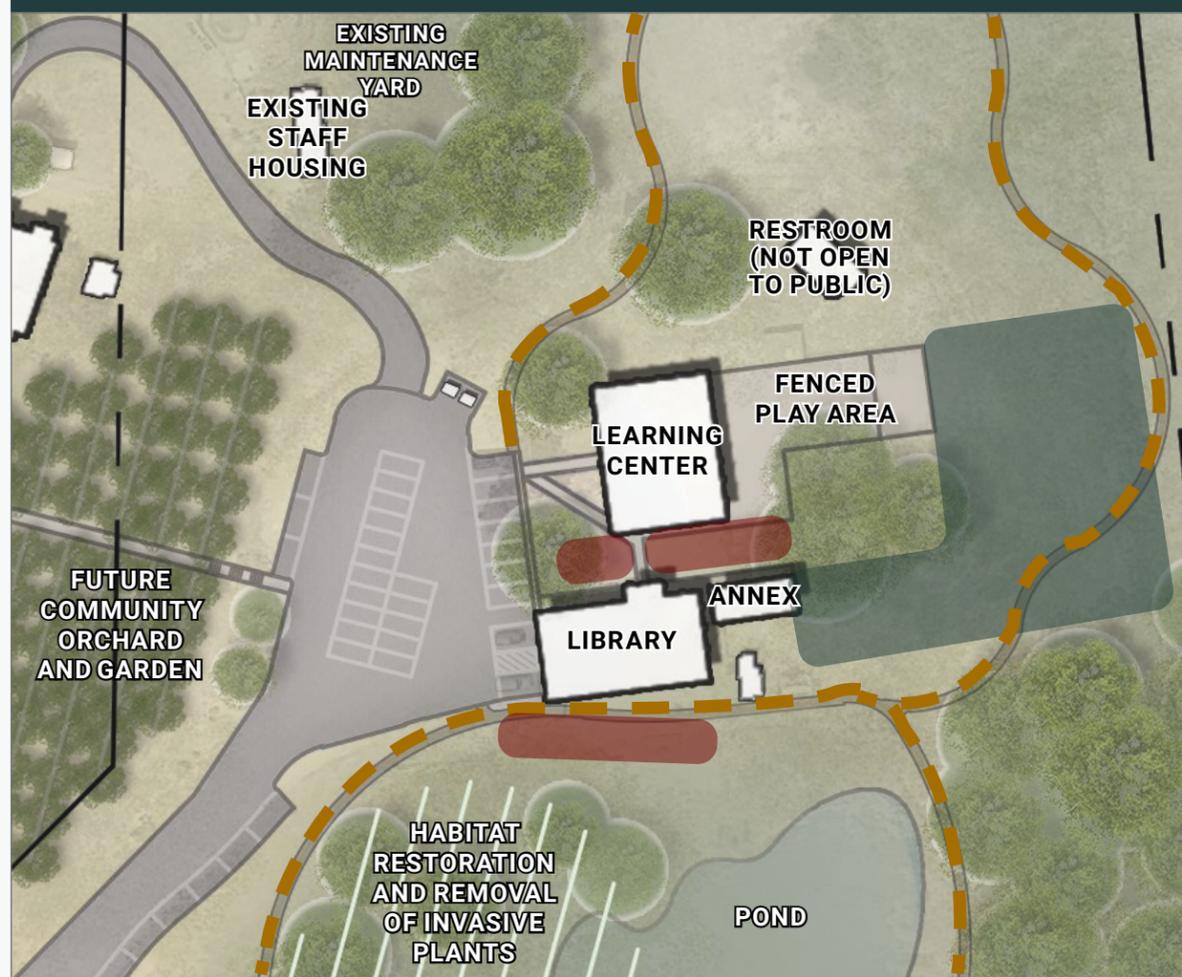
1. Maintenance
2. Awareness
3. Funding

Community & Regional Park System



Community & Regional Park System

OAK TREE COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN - LIBRARY & LEARNING CENTER



OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- EXPAND OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING**
 - Gathering area - potential for small revenue generating events

- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PODS WITH WI-FI AND POWER**
 - Serve as shaded gathering areas or work space
 - Wi-Fi extension is needed



Factors to Assess Park Opportunity Areas:

Size

- Consider the footprint of fields, activities, courts, structures, and support spaces around the amenity

Terrain

- Need a flat space for good drainage

Spatial Requirements

- Consider regulation playing sizes

Site Orientation

- Courts and fields should be orientated north-south

Tree Canopy & Vegetation

- Consider playability in sun and heat

Surfacing Material

- Consider the durability of material

Adjacent Uses

- Nearby schools or residential and if it's compatible to adjacent uses

Vehicular Access & Parking

- Visitation for event and daily use

Facilities & Utilities

- Access to restrooms or drinking fountains, shade, and seating

Unique Site Opportunities

- Potential to access water features, views of scenery, or walkability

Community & Regional Park System

Implementation Approach

Regional parks generally do not have a revenue source to pay for maintenance unless they include a space that can charge rentals. This includes fields for organized team ball sports, picnic grounds, and covered amphitheaters. Facility rentals help offset park costs, but ongoing maintenance will require an additional funding source.

A new regional park for Bear River RPD may be eligible for the Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisition and/or development programs.

Addressing deferred maintenance of Western Gateway Park could use volunteer support or grant funding. Plans for a RV park to generate revenue for the park have been developed and received grant funding. Exploration of an updated special assessment to address staffing and maintenance needs should be conducted.

Park improvements at Oak Tree Community Park have recently been funded by Prop 68 grant funds. Future improvements may also be grant funded or seek community funding support.

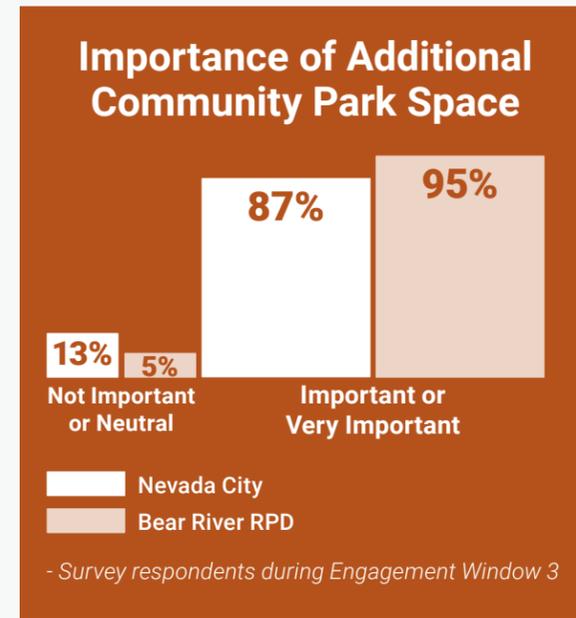
Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the Community & Regional Park System Focus Area are listed below and the following page. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|--|
| Project Name | Description |
| Truckee-Donner RPD: signage enhancements | Update signage and expand branding at parks and facilities. |
| Truckee-Donner RPD: pickleball courts | Determine site location and construct 17 pickleball courts from funds raised by the Truckee Pickleball Club. |
| Western Gateway RPD: hire on-site park host | Develop a business plan and hire an on-site park host for Western Gateway Park – expand responsibilities for on-site caretaker. |
| Bear River RPD: investigate opportunities for partnerships for low-cost gym space (underutilized warehouse space) | Evaluate the opportunity for community partnerships to retrofit unused or underutilized indoor space for use as indoor gym/court to accommodate programming demands. |
| Western Gateway RPD: develop deferred maintenance/capital improvement plan | Develop a capital improvement program to address deferred maintenance needs and enhance underutilized areas, such as resurfacing of the tennis/pickleball courts, and irrigation improvements. |
| Western Gateway RPD: pedestrian and bike path circuit throughout the park | Provide a paved, ADA ped/bike path loop of various stacked lengths to link park elements and offer an accessible path with shade and seating. |
| Bear River RPD: add restroom adjacent to playing fields at Magnolia Sports Complex | Provide vault toilets at Magnolia Sports Complex. |

Community & Regional Park System

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Description |
| Oak Tree PRD: Community Park maintenance and site improvements | Maintenance and facility enhancements, such as improved track, interpretive path, covered seating and tables for Wi-Fi access, and paved parking and roadways. Enhance pedestrian facilities and connection with adjacent Twin Ridges school site and Family Resource Center, to create a “campus” for Recreation and Resiliency in an underserved community. |
| Western Gateway RPD: New RV park (with business plan) and improved ballfields | Proposal to implement project that is funded through the Rural Recreation & Tourism grant program to include new RV Park, enhanced facilities, improvements to ballfields, and signage. |
| Bear River RPD: additional park space | Develop new regional park facilities to meet level of service demands and provide access to local park facilities (such as playgrounds, picnic and bbq areas, paths, sports courts, open lawn areas, and pickleball facilities). |
| Truckee-Donner RPD: Rocker Memorial Skatepark expansion | A grassroots effort to construct a brand new, 25,000-foot skatepark in Truckee, California. This new park complements the adjacent existing park by adding state-of-the-art street features along with more diverse beginner and expert terrain. |
| Truckee-Donner RPD: playground access in unincorporated Nevada County | Coordinate with outlying, rural areas outside of the Town of Truckee to determine support and need for neighborhood access to a playground and open lawn area for play. Consider incorporating as part of community development in Soda Springs or Serene Lakes. |
| Grass Valley Bike Park: design and construction | The bike park is proposed at the City’s property at the north east corner of Sutton Way and Idaho Maryland Road in Grass Valley with site amenities including restrooms, parking, trails, creek restoration. |



Truckee River Regional Park

Focus Area: Recreation Outposts

Focus Area Summary

Invest in coordinated facilities and improvements at intersection and recreation corridors in western Nevada County that provide gateways or central locations for recreation access and visitor/stewardship information and serve as a starting point for recreation experiences. Coordinate with partner organizations at key locations to host ambassadors or distribute recreation resources, packages, or safety materials.

Need and Importance

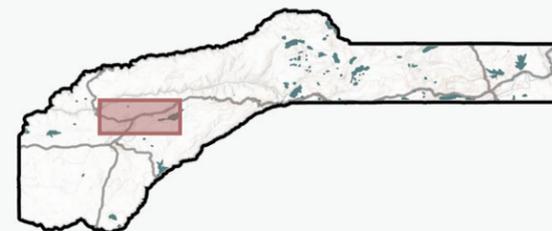
Highway 20 is a recreation corridor that passes through the Tahoe National Forest and alongside private lands to connect the county from east to west: Yuba Pass/Lake Spaulding/Bear Valley to Scotts Flat Reservoir/Nevada City/Grass Valley area. Many recreation opportunities can be accessed from the corridor. However, knowing where or how to find these experiences or how to appropriately access the Yuba River is not readily apparent. Recreation information is easier to locate in the eastern part of the county than in the central and western portions.

The Highway 20 intersection with Highway 49 and Uren Street has been the focus of a multi-modal corridor plan study to evaluate alternatives to make the area safer and easier for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The intersection provides a gateway to recreation opportunities to the east, west, and north. In 2022, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) awarded over \$19 million of funding for two grant applications to implement project improvements, such as sidewalks, a shared-use path, roundabouts, and other intersection enhancements.

In addition to the funded transportation improvements, the USFS offices located along SR 49 (northwest of the Highway 20/



South Yuba River



Highway 49/Uren Street intersection) will be relocated to a County parcel through a lease agreement. The nexus of planned and funded projects presents a singular opportunity to leverage the investments to create trail connectivity and to brand and bring awareness of the surrounding recreation experiences.

People looking for recreation opportunities use technology to search for information, but visitor centers, digital kiosks, and gateway signage are still valuable touchpoints to share resources. Users want information, but they do not want to track it down. Key junctions, such as the Highway 20/Highway 49/Uren Street intersection and lodging sites offer locations to provide interactive and up-to-date maps and materials.

The Highway 20 intersection with Pleasant Valley Road is another opportunity for a gateway node. Pleasant Valley Road directly links the major thoroughfare to South Yuba River State Park and one of the most visited river attractions, the Bridgeport Covered Bridge. The road also connects to Highway 49, north of the Highway 49/South Yuba River Crossing. Signage and information at or near the gateway would help distribute responsible recreation information.

An additional location at Highway 49 and Combie Road would support the Greater Higgins Area Plan recommendation for designating the area as a rural gateway. An outpost could intercept visitors to both the Bear River and Yuba River.

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Comprehensive, easy-to-find recreation information has been shown to improve a user's experience which in turn can foster environmental stewardship and responsible recreation while supporting economic growth. The Highway 20/Highway 49/Uren Street intersection offers an accessible location for a recreation gateway to regional destinations. The planned multi-modal corridor project will improve safety and connectivity. Integrating signage, wayfinding, and recreation partnerships as part of the project can leverage public dollars to build a sense of connection between people traveling through the area and the destinations they can explore.



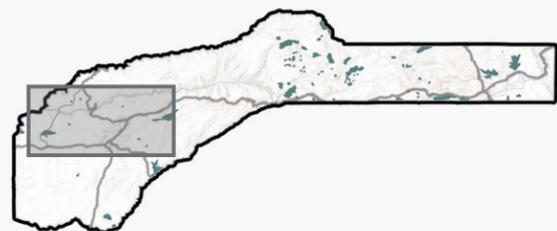
Mountain biking trail

Recreation Outposts

A 2016 study on the effectiveness of community-based visitor centers revealed that even with the increasing importance of digital/web-based information, visitor centers are still regularly used and an important piece of a communication strategy. The information shared in a local visitor center was also shown to influence a user's trip planning and change the places they recreated at and the local businesses they visited.²

Incorporating recreation information into the existing or planned facilities of the County or USFS reduces the need for a separate building while yielding the potential benefits associated with improving communication with recreation users. It may also highlight local businesses and appropriate recreation sites along the Highway 20 and 49 corridors and provide information on sustainable recreation access for the South Yuba River.

2 2016. Effectiveness of Community-Based Visitor Information Centers. Lee, Woojin; Yoo, Kyung Hyan; and Gretzel, Ulrike PhD. Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally. 58.



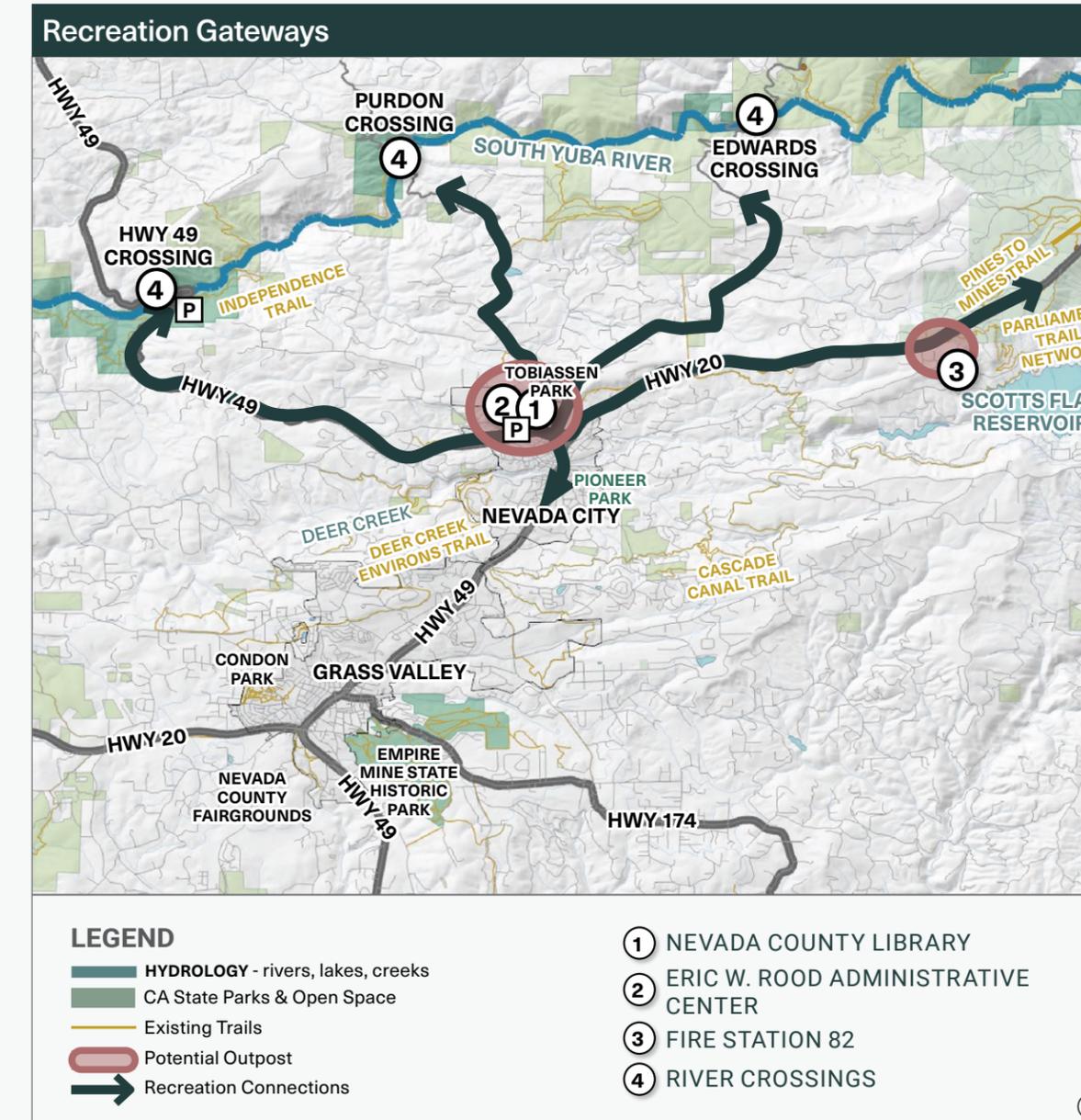
Recommended Strategies

- Integrate recreation gateway signage and wayfinding in the Highway 49 Multi-modal Corridor Plan and Active Transportation Plan improvements.
- Coordinate with USFS, the Chambers, the County of Nevada, and nonprofit organizations to evaluate how a concierge/ambassador program might work.
- Determine the best location for the concierge/ambassador within the gateway location (e.g., USFS offices as a visitor center or the Rood Center).
- Develop coordinated and consistent recreation experiences in materials to convey stewardship and safety information on Go Nevada County tourism platform.
- Coordinate distribution of materials at user touchpoints (e.g., visitor centers, lodging, dining, retail, reservation and tourism websites).
- Expand and scale concept to other "recreation intercept" gateways such as Highway 49 at Combie Road.



South Yuba River access point with limited parking and constrained turn around areas

Recreation Outposts



Case Study

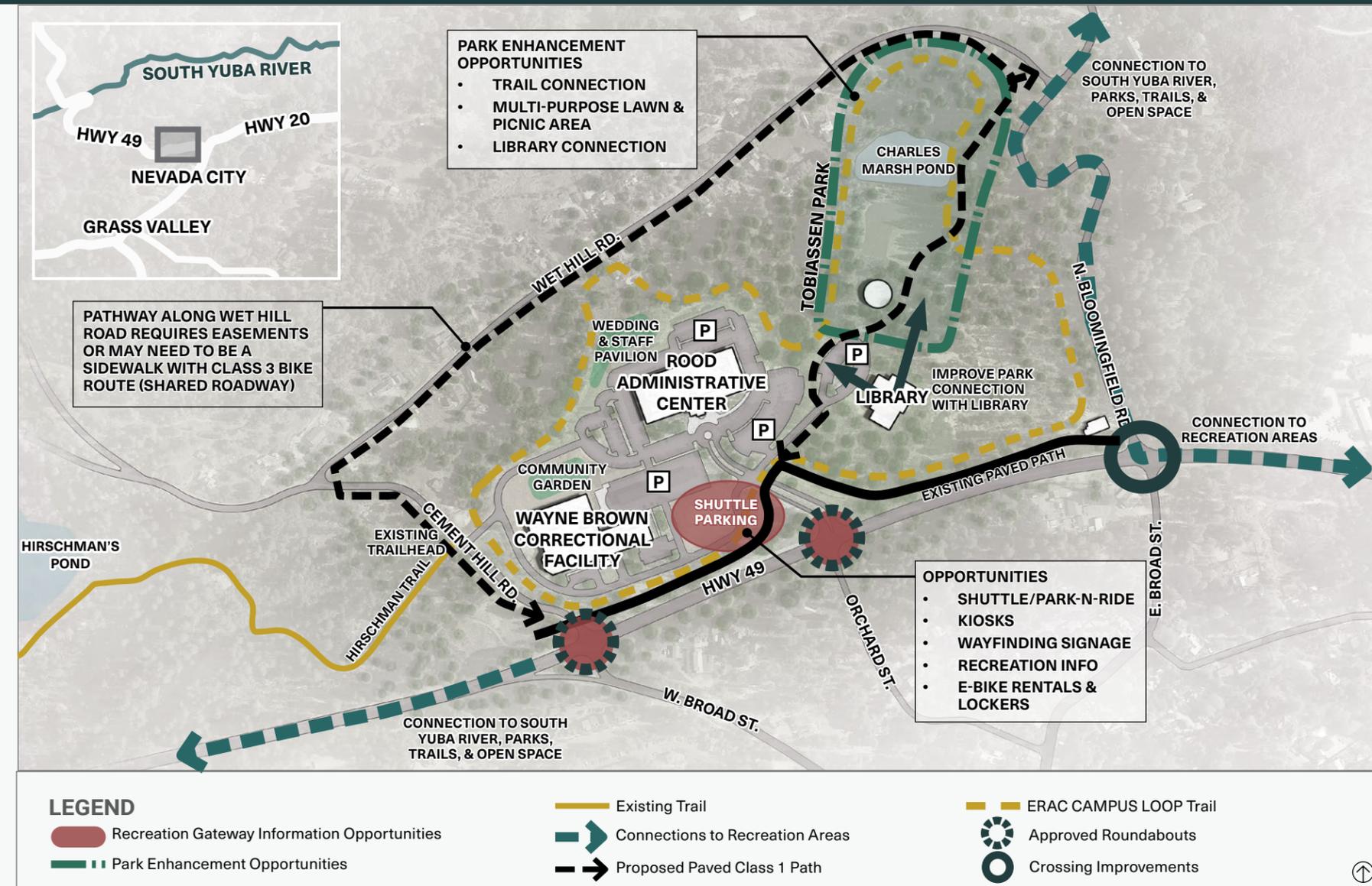
Mammoth Joint Visitor Center, CA

The Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center and Ranger Station, jointly operated by the Inyo National Forest, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, the National Park Service, and the nonprofit Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association, serves as a valuable initial touchpoint for visitors. It offers a diverse selection of local books, guides, recreation maps, and locally-made gifts. The center, staffed by knowledgeable personnel and volunteers, provides up-to-date information on trail conditions, fire updates, camping details, bear-canister rentals, informational brochures, and wilderness permits, enhancing the overall visitor experience in the area.

The welcome center also includes ample parking for access to trails (Connector Trail, Shady Rest Path, Knolls Loop, and Town Loop) that connect to local parks, campgrounds, and open spaces nearby. The U.S. Forest Service Auditorium is adjacent to the welcome center and provides a flexible space for community meetings, festivals, movie nights, and events, such as the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival.

Recreation Outposts

FEATURED PROJECT: Rood Center - Proposed Recreation Outpost



Recreation Outposts



An Interagency Visitor Center in Inyo County is staffed by a combination of USFS, National Park Service, BLM, and Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association employees.
Image Credit: Yelp

Implementation Approach

A central location for recreation access information and materials will capture economies of scale by coordinating with federal, state, county, chamber, and nonprofit partners.

Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the Western Nevada County Recreation Outpost focus area are listed in the table on the following page. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

Recreation Outposts

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Western Nevada County: continue and expand Recreation Ambassador Program | Host ambassadors at designated recreation outposts/ gateways to distribute recreation resources, packages or safety materials. |
| Station 82 parking and signage improvements | Develop trailhead and information facilities at the west county gateway, adjacent to the Pines to Mines trailhead. |
| Rood Center recreation improvements and wayfinding | Invest in coordinated wayfinding and signage. |
| Western Nevada County recreation outpost planning and development | Invest in coordinated facilities and improvements along the HWY 49/HWY 20 intersection and recreation corridors that provide recreation access and visitor/ stewardship information. |
| Pleasant Valley Road recreation outpost planning and development | Invest in coordinated visitor information facilities and improvements along the Pleasant Valley Road corridor to intercept visitors/users and provide improved information regarding access to the South Yuba River and other area recreation destinations. |
| Combie Road / Greater Higgins recreation outpost planning and development | Invest in coordinated visitor information facilities and improvements along the HWY 49 at Combie Road intersection that includes visitor/stewardship information regarding access to the Bear River and other area recreation destinations. |



South Yuba River

Focus Area: Towns to Towns Trail System



Towns to Towns Trail System

Focus Area Summary

Develop a connected system of paved and natural surface trails that link the communities of Nevada County to one another and to key community destinations, such as parks, libraries, schools, open spaces, lakes, rivers, healthy food access, and essential programs/services. Prioritize high level right-of-way for ped/bike/multi-use paths that are safely separated from traffic and provide for an encouraging, safe, and easily accessible experience of use. Promote multi-modal use and showcase regional trail systems including Pines to Mines Trail and Wolf Creek Trail.

Need and Importance

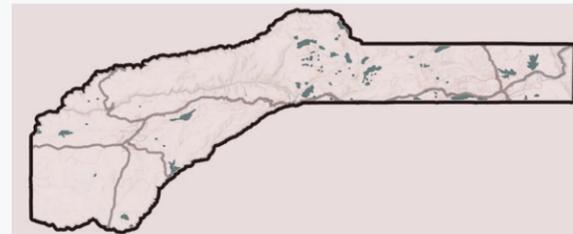
The system of trails across Nevada County is a mixture of hard and soft surface facilities. Community planning efforts at the regional and local scale seek to connect destinations with off-road infrastructure. As such, trails provide both utilitarian and recreational purposes. Existing trails are owned and maintained by a multitude of agencies and organizations including County of Nevada, the Bear Yuba Land Trust, California State Parks, the U.S. Forest Service, the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee. Some of the most popular trails include the historic Independence Trail, founded by Naturalist John Olmsted as the first wheelchair accessible wilderness trail

in the country, Empire Mine State Park trails, and Donner Summit Canyon trails.

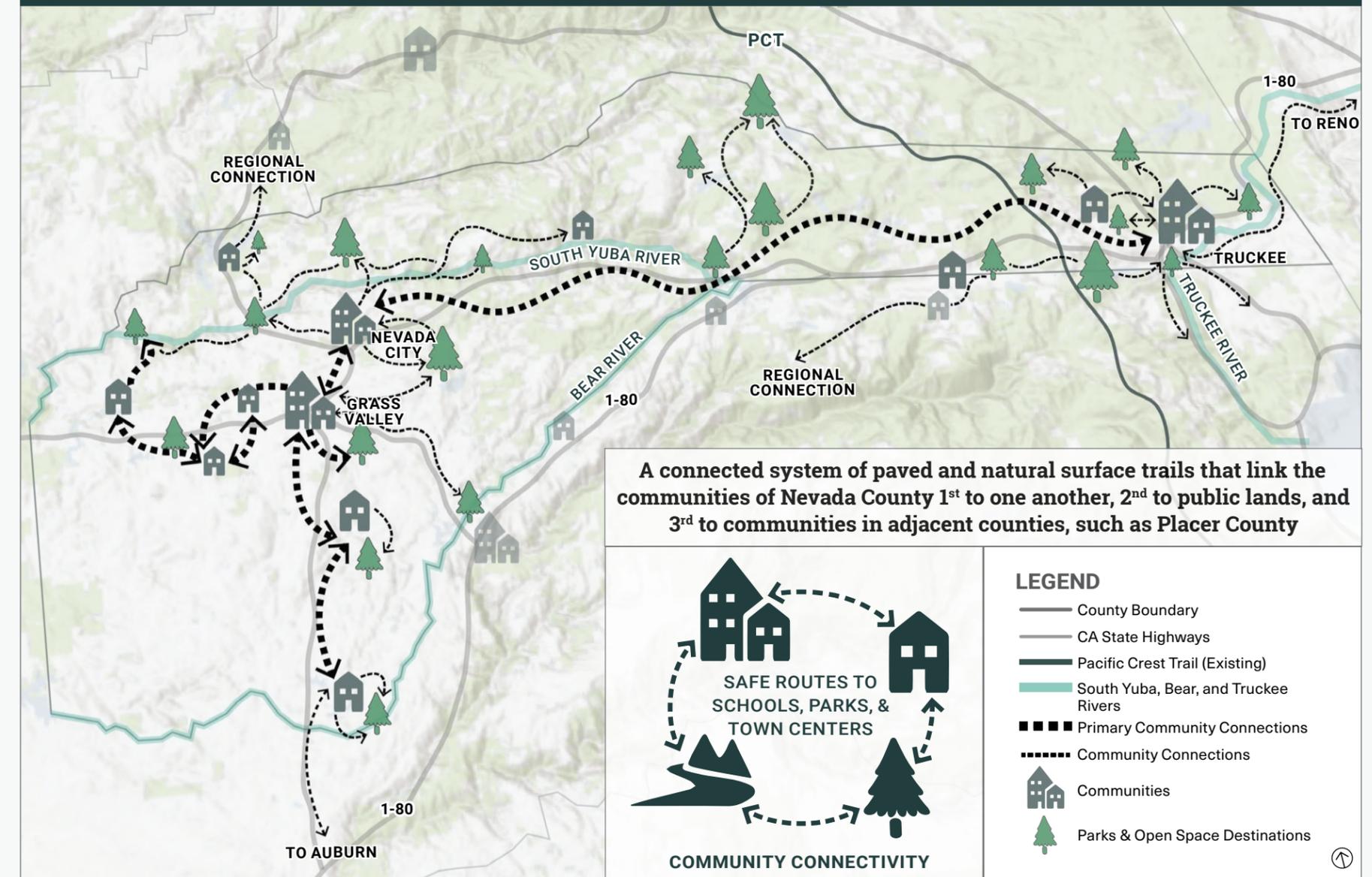
The 2018 Nexus Study estimates 217 linear miles of maintained trails within western Nevada County. The existing linear miles of maintained trails was obtained by totaling the length of trail segments provided in the County's Trails GIS shapefile provided on the County's Open Data platform. The data reflects input from a variety of sources, including the Tahoe National Forest and Grass Valley. This estimate may include maintained and accessible trails on state, federal, or private property.



Deer Creek Tribute Trail



Vision of Town to Towns Trail Connectivity



Towns to Towns Trail System

Truckee Trails Bikeways Master Plan (2015)

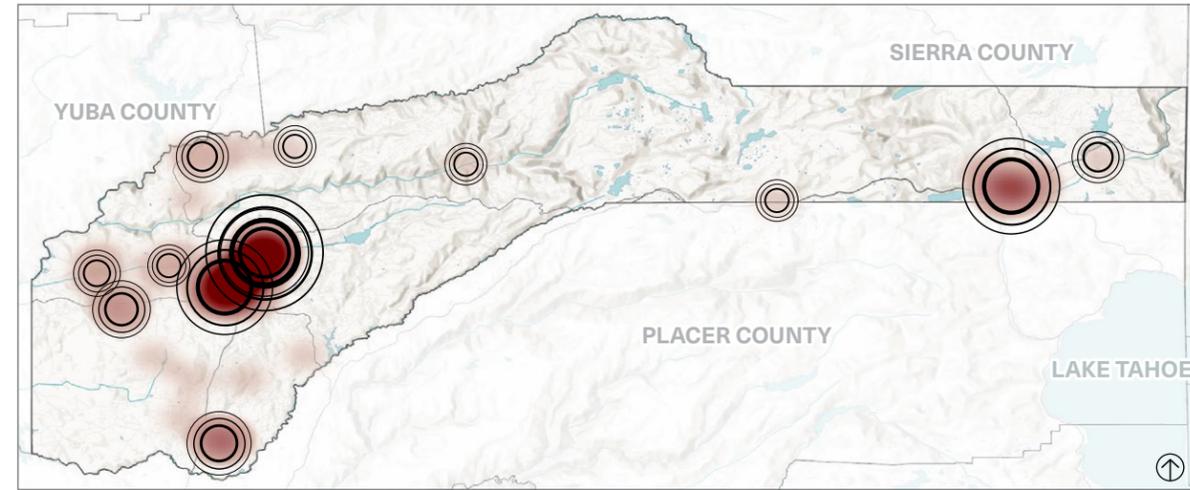
Within eastern Nevada County, Tahoe Donner Association (TDA) consists of more than 60 miles of multi-use trails which were documented in TDA's 2022 Trails Plan. Separately, the Town of Truckee's 2015 Trails and Bikeways Master Plan identified 101 miles of existing paved and dirt trails with an additional 67 miles proposed to provide connectivity and recreation opportunities. The Town has plans to update the 2015 Trails and Bikeways Master Plan, which will likely lead to documentation of increased numbers of existing and planned trail mileage. Trails are also located on federal and state lands as well as provided by area land trusts and resort operators.

Results of the first countywide recreation and resiliency survey revealed the value residents place on trail access. Trails such as the Pioneer Trail, Independence Trail, Memorial Overland Emigrant Trail, Deer Creek Tribute Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, and the Truckee River Legacy Trail were highlighted as the most popular recreation sites.

Although there is an impressive network of trails in the eastern half of the county, both local and regional trail connections are needed not only to make communities more accessible to one another but to bring people to their day-to-day destinations safely. Stakeholders and survey respondents often noted the lack of trail connectivity as a barrier to recreation.

Trails and shared-use paths create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities by providing people of all ages with attractive, safe, accessible, and low- or no-cost places to cycle, walk, hike, jog, or skate. Pathways help people incorporate movement into their daily routines by connecting them with places they want or need to go. Counties that encourage physical activity by making use of linear corridors can see a significant effect on public health and wellness as well as economic opportunities for renewal and growth.

Requests for paved and dirt trails, trail amenities and programming, and overall connectivity represented 37.7 percent of all write-in survey responses. Trails and their associated amenities were most highly



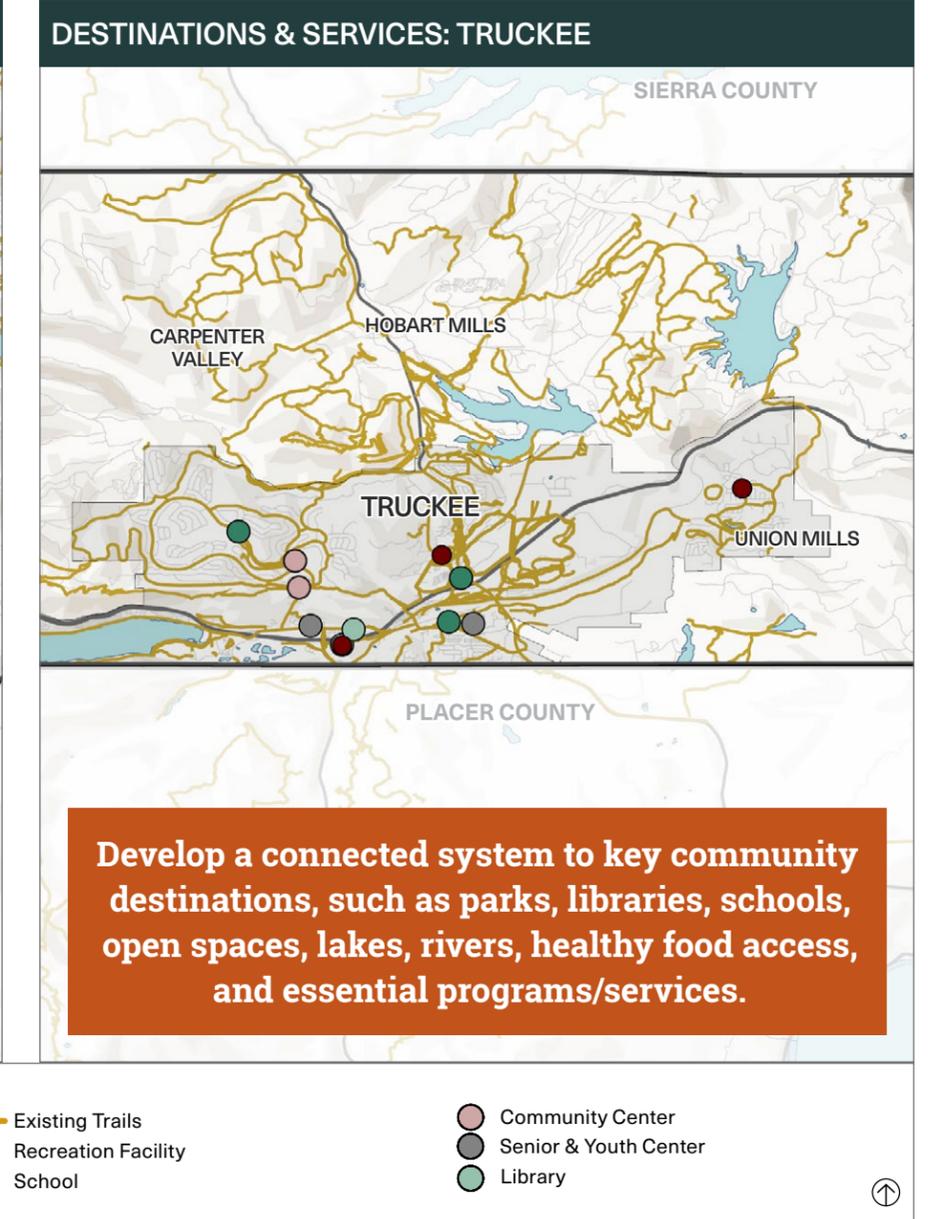
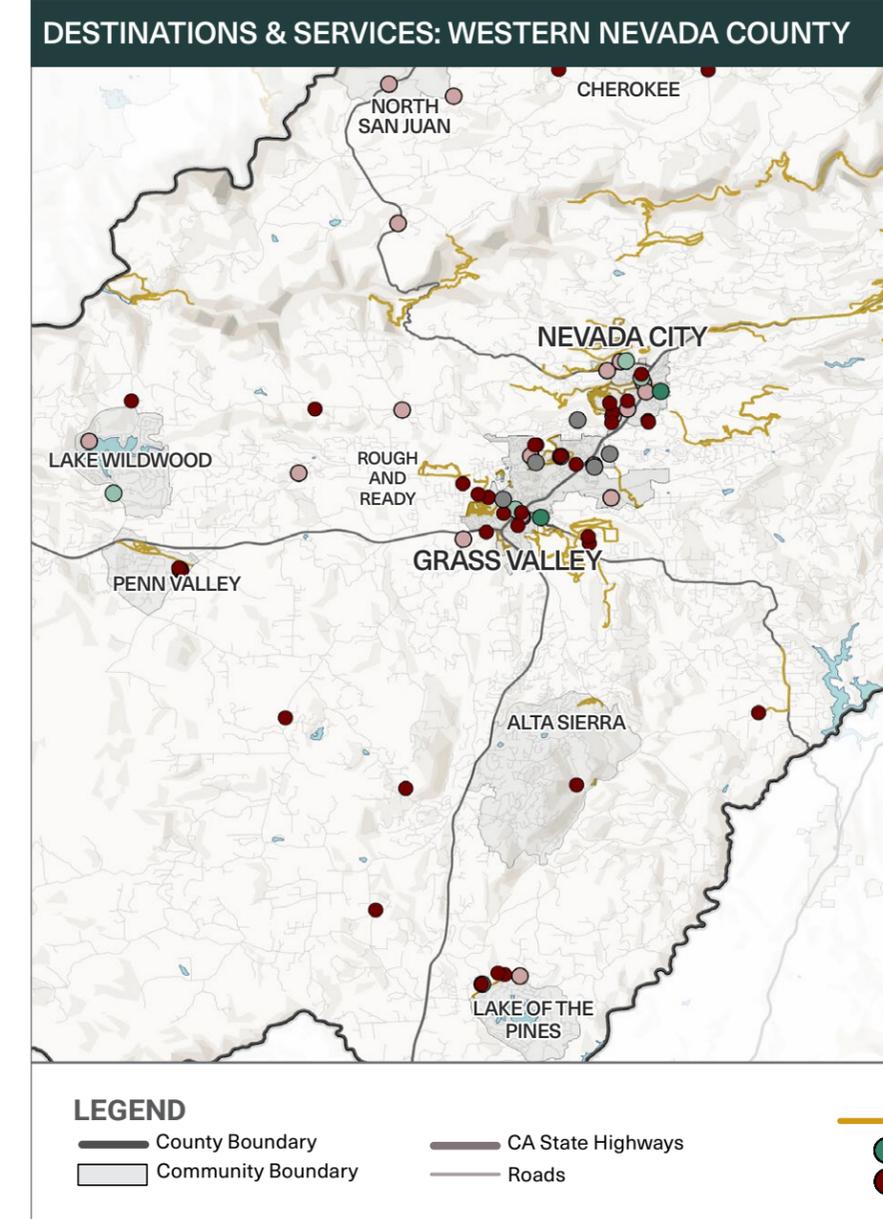
Destinations & Services Heatmap: Senior Centers, Youth Centers, Schools, Recreation Facilities, Library, Community Centers

“Nevada County needs increased trail connectivity and accessibility to bring multiple trail systems together, allowing for safer and more high caliber outdoor recreation opportunities.”

- Survey respondent during Engagement Window 2 (Project Ideas)

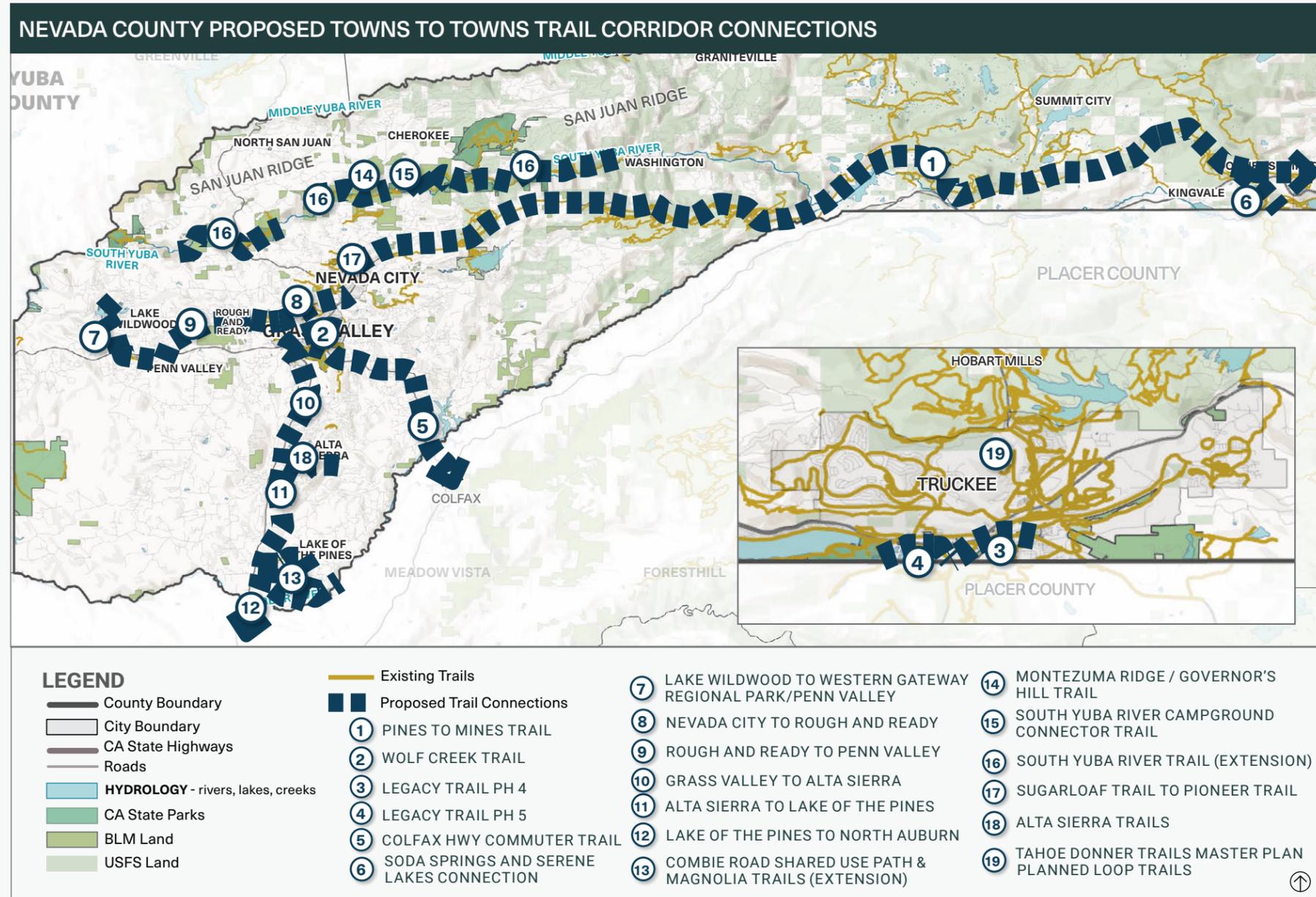
prioritized in Twin Ridges, with 81.8 percent of write-in survey responses discussing trails, and in Nevada City with 49.5 percent.

Towns to Towns Trail System



Develop a connected system to key community destinations, such as parks, libraries, schools, open spaces, lakes, rivers, healthy food access, and essential programs/services.

Towns to Towns Trail System



Towns to Towns Trail System

Nevada County Active Transportation Plan (2019)

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

A variety of planning documents, including the Nevada County General Plan and the Nevada County Active Transportation Plan, identify a goal for a comprehensive and integrated trail system. In particular, priorities include connecting residents to essential services, community destinations, and linkages between towns and cities. These connections should be made in collaboration with countywide partners and property owners.

The County respects residents' private property rights. Therefore, this Plan does not identify specific trail alignments for connectivity. Instead, it focuses on identifying the destinations that should be linked and the steps to work through to create a multi-use trail network (both paved and unpaved trails) that will connect Nevada County



Dirt Trail in Nevada County

communities to each other and to public lands throughout the region.

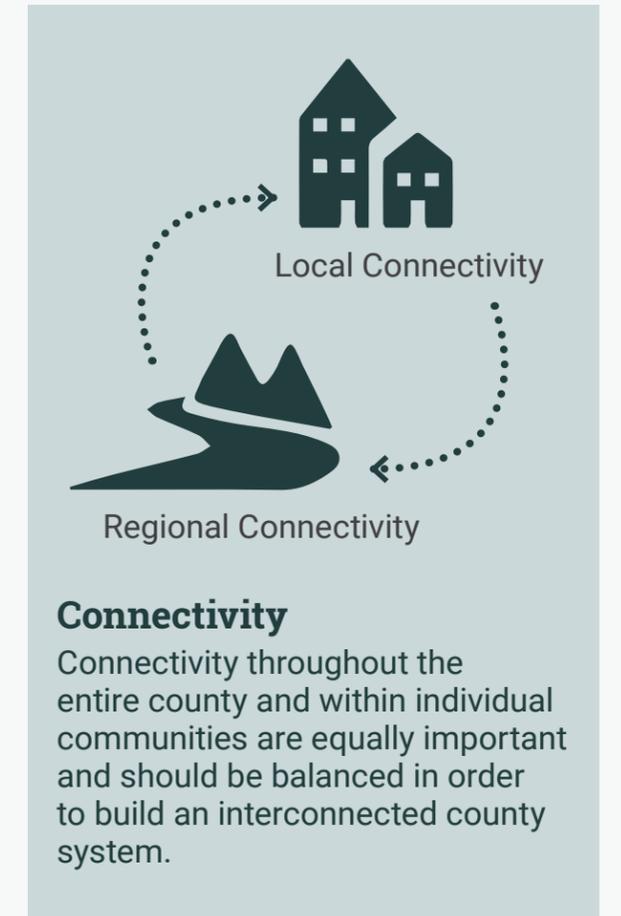
Work to advance a connected trail system has been underway. Projects such as the Pines to Mines Trail are examples. The Pines to Mines Trail includes approximately 72-miles of multi-use native surface trail system to link Nevada City to Truckee. Environmental analysis of the project was certified/finalized in March 2024.

States, cities, and national organizations across America have documented the economic impacts of trails. Trails are indicators of communities where people want to live and generate economic investment and jobs. In Nevada County, partner agencies and organizations are working across jurisdictional lines to plan a comprehensive, connected trail system that supports goals for transportation, recreation, and wellness while realizing economic opportunities and creative placemaking.



Trail in the Tahoe National Forest

Trails can be aligned within designed shaded fuel breaks and standards for trail maintenance can expand the area of fuel mitigation on either side of a trail. This allows elements of shaded fuel break design to be incorporated into the trail corridor which may improve the ability to control and fight wildfires.



Towns to Towns Trail System

Recommended Strategies

- Support the completion of the Pines to Mines Trail and connection to Nevada County Government Center via Sugarloaf Trail.
- Support the reconstruction of Independence Trail.
- Support the completion of existing planned trail systems in publicly-owned lands or rights-of-way.
- Identify and provide maintenance strategies for existing trail network.
- Identify existing user-created trails that are heavily used and do not conflict with private property, existing trail connectivity, or sensitive environments.
- Work with NID and the BYLT to identify potential trail access easements along appropriately identified canal alignments.
- Build upon existing paved and unpaved trail system and priority connections.
- Develop trailhead nodes or gateways where trails enter/leave communities to welcome users to communities and to direct them to destinations and trail connections, i.e. Pleasant Valley Road – HWY 20 – Penn Valley Drive intersection.
- Evaluate more detailed trail connection opportunities between community zones.
- Create linkages with clear community destinations (e.g, schools, parks, density of employment or shopping areas).
- Identify and support the development of trailheads.
- Identify gaps between destinations and work with property owners to evaluate potential future connectivity and conservation easement opportunities.

Note: Refer to the Sustainable Recreation & Communications Focus Area for strategies and projects related to consistent trail signage and wayfinding.



Independence Trail
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust

38% of respondents to the second countywide survey selected 'Trail Connectivity' as one of their top 3 priorities for outdoor recreation in Nevada County

Towns to Towns Trail System

Case Studies

Sierra Buttes Connected Communities

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship (SBTS) is a nonprofit organization in the Lost Sierra region that has become a focal point for addressing issues of lost pride, a declining economy, and job losses. Historically reliant on resource mining, the region now sees an opportunity for economic revitalization through the establishment of a connected trail system. The Connected Communities Project proposal aims to create a multi-use single track connecting 15 communities in the northern Sierra with mainstreet trailheads. This diverse trail accommodates biking, motor-biking, hiking, horseback riding, and more and is envisioned as a catalyst for increased economic activity.

Sustainable recreation is emphasized throughout planning for and developing the connected trail system. Additionally, the initiative involves collaboration with local experts such as trail builders, wildlife biologists, archaeologists, hydrologists, geologists, and forest service managers, all of whom share a commitment to responsible land use. The project is financially supported by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and grants, enabling the development of a trails master plan for



planning, strategically designed to attract visitors and foster economic and community growth.

To encourage community engagement, the initiative proposes the implementation of a trail registration system, similar to a passport, along with punch cards to incentivize stops in towns. The overarching goals include fostering community pride through recreation, learning from the past, and driving sustainable progress. The outlined steps involve building a comprehensive trail system, creating employment opportunities, and sustaining the region for future generations.

The Connected Communities Project is a collaborative initiative led by federal land managers, SBTS, and community partners. The project spans economically disadvantaged communities in California's Plumas, Sierra, Butte, Lassen, and Nevada

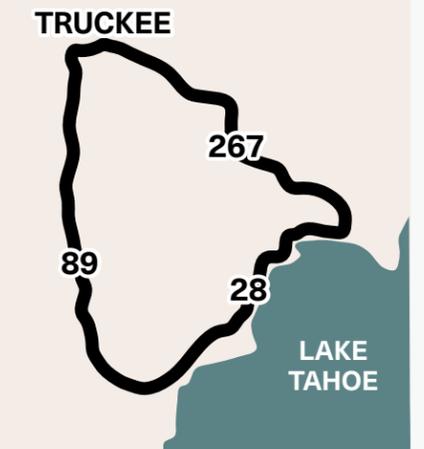
Plumas, Sierra, and Lassen counties. The plan encompasses a linear trail system and individualized town/community

Counties, as well as Washoe County, Nevada. The project from start to finish involves planning, environmental review, trail creation, and maintenance with the goal of diversifying recreation, providing economic stability, and supporting fire recovery and prevention efforts. The initiative aims to create a learning landscape for outdoor and environmental education programs, including youth employment and volunteer participation. The visionary goal is to establish a multi-use signature route, the Lost Sierra Route.

The Project involves collaboration with five federal land agencies—the Lassen, Plumas, and Sierra National Forests, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests, and the Bureau of Land Management. The initiative comprises four main components, focusing on identifying ideal trail corridors, conceptualizing capital improvement projects, highlighting Recreation Zones for additional planning and development, and establishing desired conditions for fuels reduction and restoration within future project planning areas. The project acknowledges the crucial financial support from various sources, including the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Friesen Foundation, California Off-Highway Vehicle Division grants, and contributions from Outdoor Industry partners, SBTS volunteers, and donors.

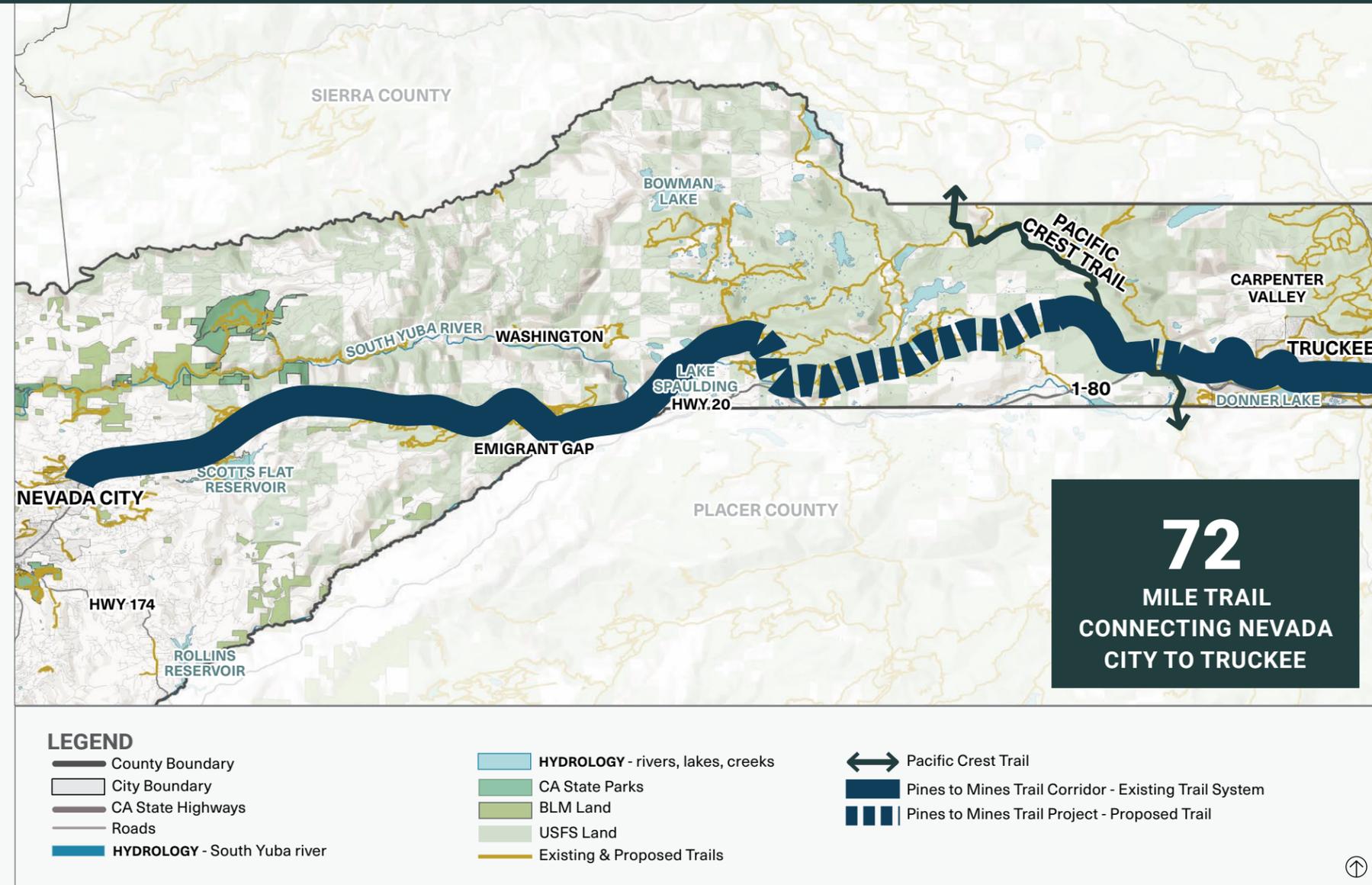
Truckee Tahoe Resort Triangle

The Truckee Tahoe Resort Triangle is a 62-mile continuous loop of trails that will follow Highway 267 from Truckee to Kings Beach, Highway 28 along the west shore of Lake Tahoe, and Highway 89 from Tahoe City to Truckee. These corridors are frequently used by outdoor enthusiasts for hiking, biking, skiing, and camping. This trail system stemmed from a vision to enhance public access while preserving the natural environment. Collaboration with numerous partnerships such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Placer County, and Northstar California / Vail Resorts were extremely important in the plan's completion. When implemented, this paved trail system will ensure a safe way to travel while maximizing the visitor experience.



Towns to Towns Trail System

FEATURED PROJECT NO. 1: Pines to Mines Trail



Towns to Towns Trail System

Proposed Pines to Mines Trail

The Pines to Mines project, led by the USFS Tahoe National Forest, is a significant conservation and recreation initiative in the northern Sierra. The 72-mile dirt path will connect Nevada City to Truckee. The project aims to protect open space, including tributaries to the South Yuba River, fostering diverse habitat management for wildlife, forest health, and recreation.

A majority of the proposed Pines to Mines Trail utilizes 50 miles of existing trail. The planned 22-mile section will connect two existing trails. The trail will boast miles of stunning vistas and guide users past remote lakes, canyons, and meadows. The western end of the Pines to Mines Trail connects to the existing Pioneer Trail in Nevada City and the eastern end connects to the Donner Lake Rim Trail that winds through Truckee and other unincorporated areas. There are several existing trailheads for entrance/exit with the potential for additional trailheads if needed.

The inclusion of Class 1 e-bikes as an approved use on the trail expands access to individuals that may not be able to walk or ride a traditional bicycle as far or long. E-bike technology has the potential to include user groups of all ages and attract more diverse users to explore public land in a socially and ecologically responsible way.

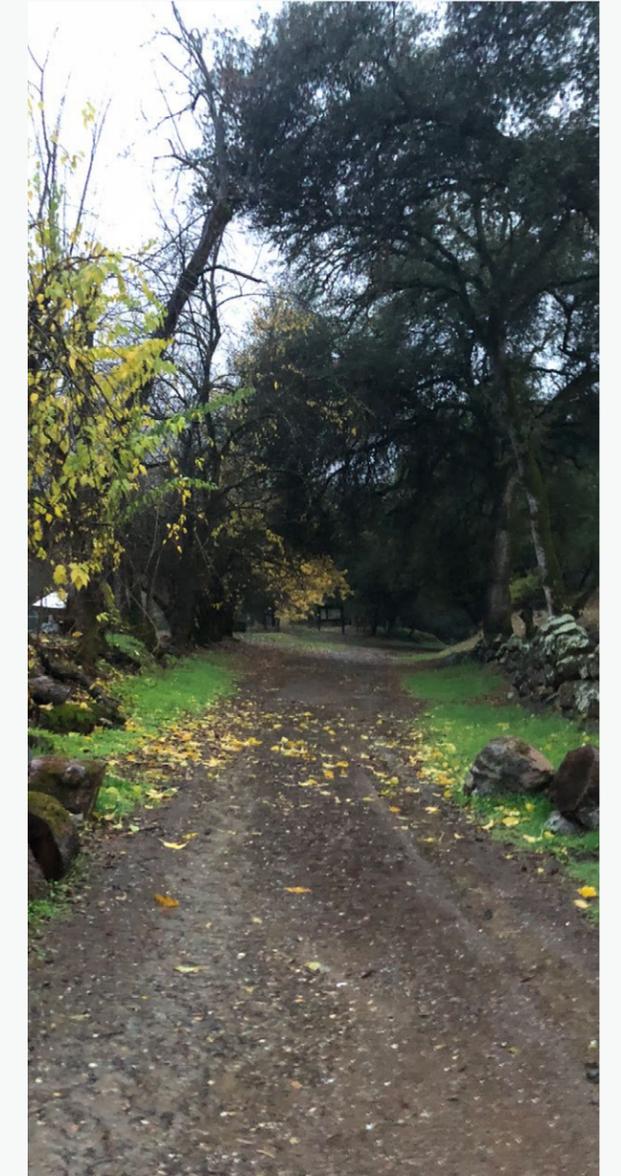
Class 1 e-bikes are equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider

is pedaling and ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches the speed of 20 mph. Studies completed during project analysis indicated that Class 1 e-bikes are similar to traditional mountain bikes in terms of components, relative speeds and impacts to trails.

Completion of the new Pines to Mines Trail segment is contingent on available funding and resources. Tahoe National Forest (TNF) will continue to work with partner groups to identify grant opportunities and funding sources to complete trail construction and recreation facility improvements such as increased signage and trailhead infrastructure. Trail proponents and partners that have assisted TNF in project development, funding and implementation include Bear Yuba Land Trust, Bicyclists of Nevada County, County of Nevada, Gold Country Trails Council, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Truckee Trails Foundation, and the Trust for Public Land.



Image Credit: the Tahoe National Forest



Trail in Nevada County

Towns to Towns Trail System

FEATURED PROJECT NO. 2

Wolf Creek Trail

Wolf Creek Trail is a proposed trail system approximately 2.3 miles long that roughly follows the alignment of Wolf Creek through the City of Grass Valley from its southern limits to the northeast corner of town. With a goal to establish the primary spine for pedestrians and cyclists, the trail offers a convenient option for the community and visitors to use non-motorized travel through Grass Valley. This proposed trail is located entirely within existing public right-of-way and will connect residential neighborhood and commercial uses. The map to the right and graphic below depict the various planned trail segments.

Trail Segment 2

Freeman Lane to south of Neal Street Safeway parking lot

Trail Segment 3

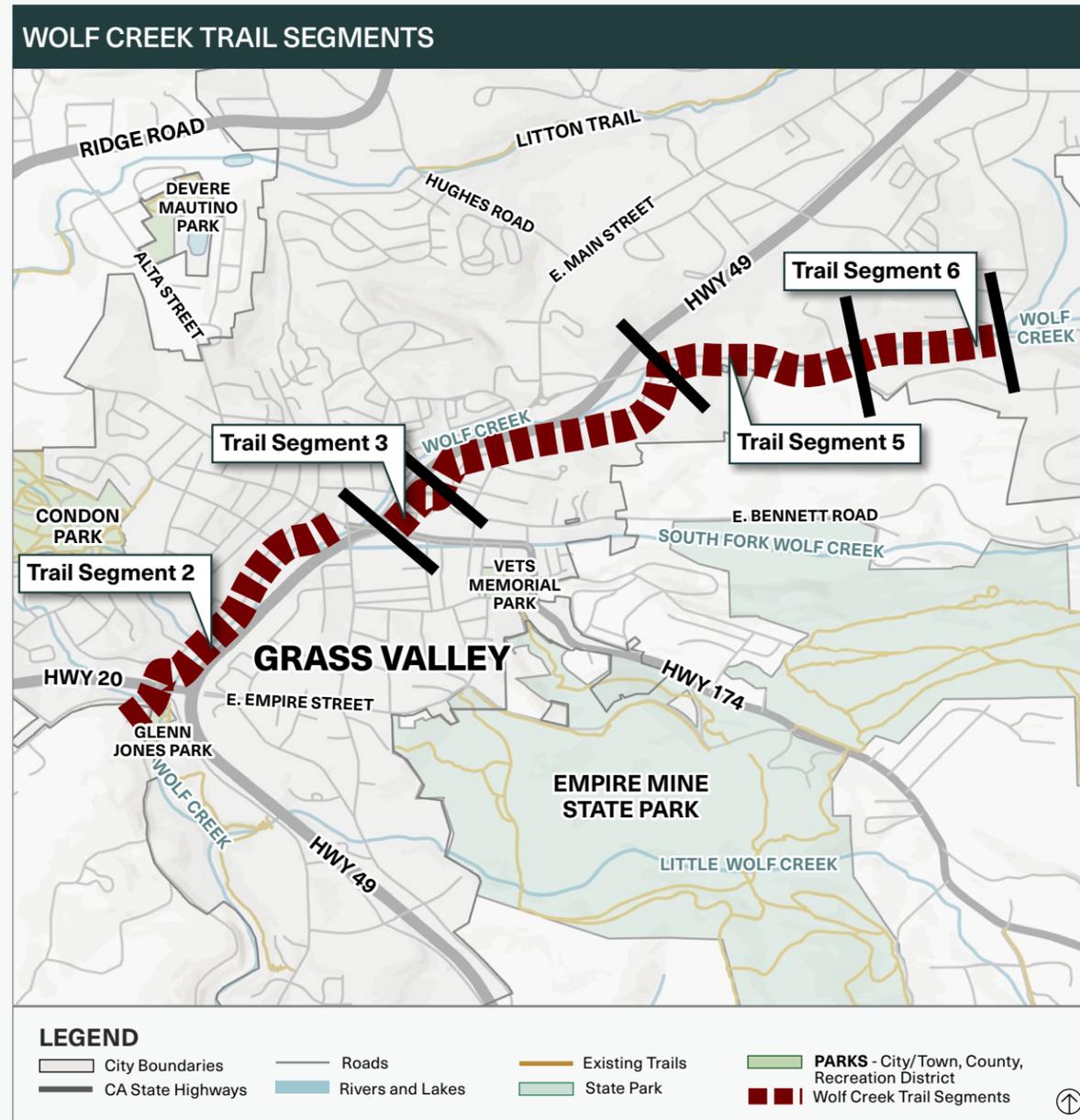
Colfax Avenue/Hwy 174 to Bennett Street along Hanson Way

Trail Segment 5

Railroad Avenue to Centennial Drive along Idaho Maryland Road

Trail Segment 6

Centennial Drive to Sutton Way along Idaho Maryland Road



Towns to Towns Trail System

Implementation Approach

Funding and planning for unpaved multi-use trails and shared-use/Class 1 path systems can be modeled after the Connected Communities Project led by Sierra Buttes Trails Stewardship. The trails cross land owned by a multitude of parties including private individuals, USFS, special districts and tribes. Most of the funding to date has come from Sierra Nevada Conservancy grants and private donors. The biggest challenge for the project is funding necessary CEQA and NEPA work prior to securing implementation funding and beginning construction.

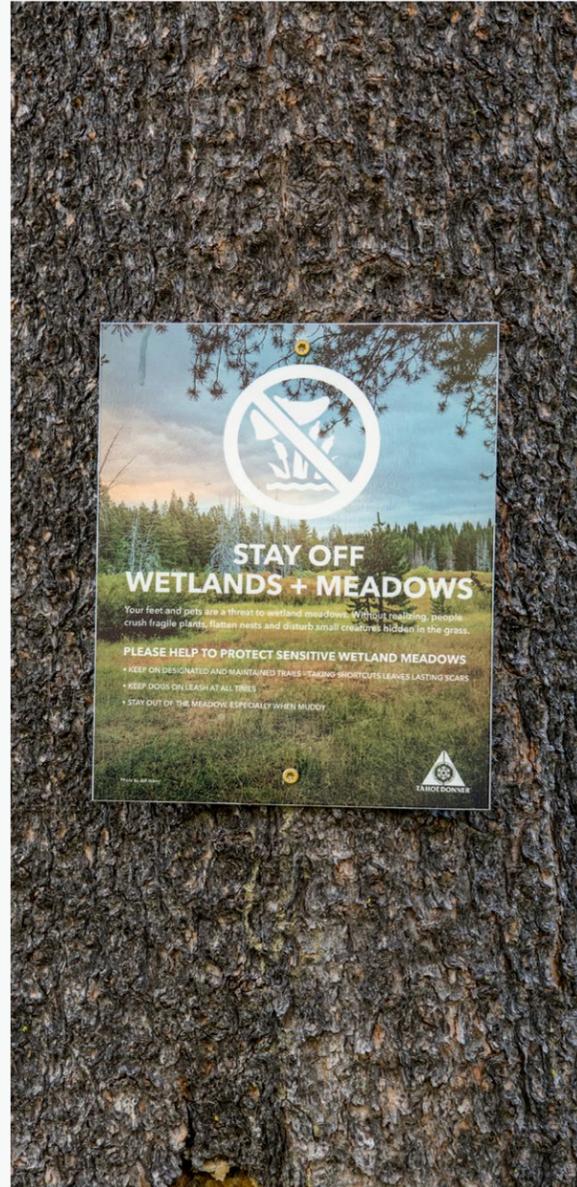
Leveraging nonprofits and trail builders to secure funding for the construction of these trail and shared-use systems as well as maintaining them in the future will be imperative. It is necessary to involve local nonprofit organizations and businesses due to the apparent economic impact of adding trails.

Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the Towns to Towns Trail System Focus Area are listed to the right and pages that follow. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

| Project Recommendations | |
|--|--|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Combie Road / Magnolia Trails shared-use paths | Add shared-use path along Combie Road from SR 49 to shared-use path along Magnolia Road in front of Bear River High School and park facilities. |
| Interagency trailhead needs and maintenance partnership study (to include surface/signage upkeep, waste and service needs) | Explore creating a shared staffing resource between all agencies that maintain and own trails or trailheads. Staff can create efficient operation schedule for maintaining trails, which helps to promote consistency with experience, information, and amenities provided. A partnership example to explore includes USFS and Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association (TAMBA). |
| TNF trail strategy | Develop a coordinated trails plan for priority trail alignments for Tahoe National Forest lands in Nevada County. Plan should outline the conceptual trail alignments for a connected and accessible multi-use dirt trail network to align priorities between partners, incorporate public feedback, and build capacity to move trail projects forward in a collaborative way. |
| Pines to Mines Trail | Construct a new 18-22 mile trail section as part of the Pines To Mines Trail connecting Truckee and Nevada City, CA. The new trail would connect the 'Hole In The Ground Trail' to the 'Grouse Ridge Trail' in the Tahoe National Forest. |

Towns to Towns Trail System

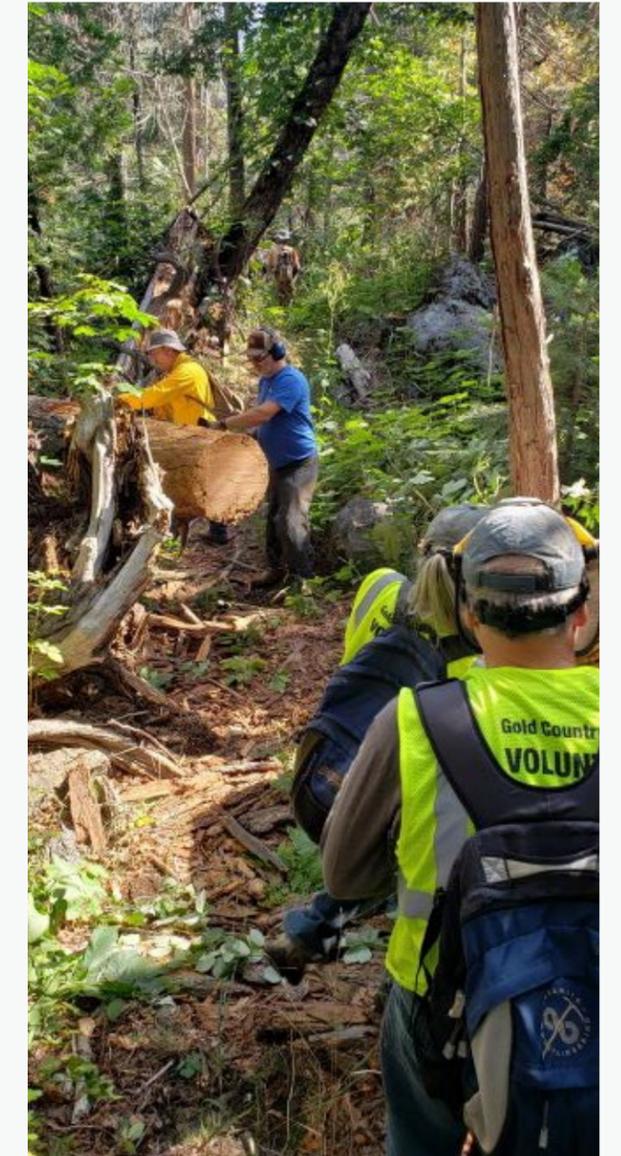


Tahoe Donner Wetland Protection Sign

| Project Recommendations | |
|--|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Grass Valley: Wolf Creek Trail | Construct shared-use path (3.5 miles) through Grass Valley - follows Wolf Creek from Allison Ranch Road at Freeman Lane to Sutton Way and Idaho Maryland Road with trailhead at Sutton Way/Idaho Maryland Road. |
| Truckee Legacy Trail phase 4 (project underway) | Connect the Truckee Regional Park along Brockway Road to South River Street alongside the south side of the Truckee River and crossing to the intersection of Highway 89 South and West River Street (2 miles plus bridge). |
| Truckee Legacy Trail phase 5 | Connect phase 5 of the Legacy Trail to the Donner State Memorial Park along SR 89 and Deerfield Drive, and travel through the Planned Community 1 (Coldstream Specific Plan) development (2 miles). |
| Trail connection between Soda Springs and Serene Lakes neighborhoods | Create a Class 1 trail along or off the road between Soda Springs and Serene Lakes Neighborhood (1.5 to 2.5 miles). |
| Lake Wildwood to Western Gateway Regional Park/Penn Valley | Develop shared-use path connection along corridor between Lake Wildwood and Western Gateway Regional Park (3 miles). |
| Trail connection between Nevada City to Rough and Ready | Develop a shared-use path along corridor near Rough and Ready Highway and Ridge Road from Nevada City to Rough and Ready (7 miles). |

Towns to Towns Trail System

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|--|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Trail connection between Rough and Ready to Penn Valley | Develop a shared-use path along corridor near Rough and Ready Highway and Ridge Road from Rough and Ready to Penn Valley (5 miles). |
| Towns to Towns Trails feasibility study for trail easements | Conduct a study to establish feasibility of trail corridors to connect Nevada County communities and to connect communities to public lands through a mix of paved and unpaved trails. |
| South Yuba River: campground connector trail | Reconstruct and realign the trail from South Yuba River Campground on BLM lands to approximately ¼ mile east of Edwards Crossing Bridge. |
| Montezuma Ridge / Governor's Hill Trail | Develop a natural surface trail that connects the rural neighborhoods between Purdon Road and Jackass Flats to the business area in North Columbia. A trail easement was donated to the BYLT and will allow the trail and the surrounding site to be maintained as a fuel break (2 miles). |
| South Yuba Trail extension | Extend sections of the South Yuba Trail as natural surface. Trail extensions follow the Western Nevada County Non-Motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan, including West, East, and Northeast. |
| Sugarloaf Trail to Pioneer Trail | Extend the Pioneer Trail connecting the Pioneer Trail, Sugarloaf Mountain Open Space, and Nevada City (2 miles). |



Trail building volunteers creating trails
Image Credit: Gold Country Trails Council

Towns to Towns Trail System

| Project Recommendations | |
|--|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Tahoe Donner Trails Master Plan planned loop trails | Construct priority natural surface, shared-use, and multi-use path connections in Tahoe Donner (15 miles). |
| Alta Sierra trail connections | Develop multi-use paths and natural surface trails connecting neighborhoods in Alta Sierra (6.5 miles). |
| Trail connection between Grass Valley to Alta Sierra | Develop a shared-use path from Grass Valley to Alta Sierra, connecting communities. Utilize buffered bike lanes along low-volume roads where needed with a goal of exploring a long-term connection along Wolf Creek (5 miles). |
| Trail connection between Alta Sierra to Lake of the Pines | Develop a shared-use path from Alta Sierra to Lake of the Pines, connecting communities. Utilize buffered bike lanes along low-volume roads where needed (9 miles). |
| Trail connection between Lake of the Pines to North Auburn | Develop a shared-use path from Lake of the Pines to North Auburn, connecting communities. Utilize buffered bike lanes along low-volume roads where needed (6 miles). |
| Colfax Highway commuter trail | Create a buffered bike lane connection along Hwy 174 corridor from Grass Valley to Colfax (14 miles). |



Trail building volunteers maintaining trails
Image Credit: Gold Country Trails Council

Focus Area: Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network



Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Focus Area Summary

Strengthen ability for local and regional buildings, facilities and parks to serve a range of community recreation and resiliency needs (e.g., public libraries, fire stations, community centers, fairgrounds, Sierra College, and schools). Identify enhancements needed to maximize use and function during normal operations, emergencies, and post-disruption recovery. Leverage private and nonprofit partnerships.

Need and Importance

As a rural county, residents are dispersed across the county's varied landscape. The highest concentration of residents are typically located around the incorporated town/cities (Town of Truckee, Grass Valley, and Nevada City) with other population clusters found in Lake Wildwood, Penn Valley, Alta Sierra, and Lake of the Pines.

According to the County's 2016 Community Health Assessment, residents of outlying communities may travel up to 30 minutes to reach "town." This can be difficult for a variety of reasons, including lack of a personal vehicle, absence or limited public transportation, and dark, narrow mountain roads which can be challenging for inexperienced drivers. Although the county is replete with natural open space, its rural character means that many facilities and

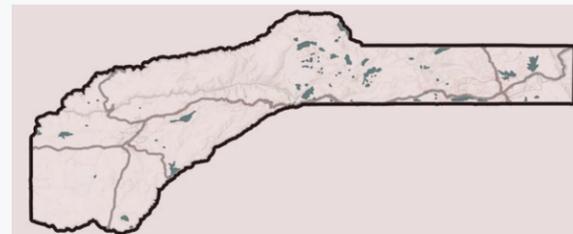
services, recreation programming, spaces for community gathering, or places that play a critical role in emergencies and recovery may not be easily accessed.

Parks and recreation are vital to community health and well-being. Access to these spaces, programs, and services remains essential to community vitality and is a key factor in advancing health equity, improving individual and community-level health outcomes, and enhancing quality of life.

During day-to-day operations, recreation and resiliency hubs provide trusted gathering places that connect every member of the community to essential programs, services and spaces that are essential to health and well-being. They remove barriers and bridge



Existing Cooling Center at the San Juan Ridge Community Library



gaps to help people access vital health and social resources, ensuring people can thrive.

During and after times of disruption, the hubs offer a central point for gathering, assembling resources, and providing consistent communication. This is increasingly important given Nevada County's risk for wildfires due to vegetation conditions, complex topography, the potential for critical fire weather, and ample ignition sources from human and natural causes. Wildfires lead to direct and indirect impacts such as smoke exposure, poor air quality, access restrictions and closures, recreation infrastructure damage, and post-fire impacts including hazard trees, landslides, and debris flows.

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Multi-use public buildings that provide safe access and services during emergencies is a trend in public funding. These resilience hubs ideally include cooling and heating equipment for relief from extreme heat or cold, emergency backup power, cold storage for food, cooking facilities and high-speed broadband and are resistant to seismic, floods, wildfire or other natural hazards.

There are **245,740 acres** of land in Nevada County that are considered to be in a "very high fire severity" zone.

During day-to-day operations, libraries and local community buildings can provide access to recreation resources such as free or rental equipment and supplies, programming access, or community meeting/programming space.

The objective is to provide a network of community facilities throughout the county which can effectively work at the nexus of recreation, community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social equity while also providing opportunities for communities to become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during, and after disruptions.

Community facilities typically require enhancements and upgrades that improve their capacity to provide service in all three operating conditions (everyday, disruption, and recovery). Upgrades can range in complexity and cost. Some enhancements may be as additional space for offering resources.

Operating Conditions and Potential Services

Everyday Mode

In everyday mode, resiliency hubs provide their usual health and social benefits to the community.



Disruption Mode

Disruption mode occurs during, or immediately after, disruptions to provide emergency supplies and services.



Recovery Mode

In recovery mode, resilience hubs connect the community to much-needed resources needed to restore day-to-day life after the disruption.



Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Upgrades typically fall into five main categories:

- **Resilient Programming and Services:** Offering recreation and community programming that builds relationships, promotes community preparedness, and improves residents' health and well-being.
- **Resilient Structure and Site:** Strengthening the resilience of the facility to ensure that it meets operational goals in all conditions.
- **Resilient Power:** Ensuring reliable backup power to the facility during a hazard while also improving the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of operations in all three operating modes (i.e., normal, disruption, and recovery).
- **Resilient Communications:** Ensuring the ability to communicate within and outside the service area during disruptions and throughout recovery.
- **Resilient Operations:** Ensuring personnel and processes are in place to operate the facility in all conditions.

While upgrades and services carry additional capital and operating expense for the facility, these investments can generate financial sustainability and social returns not only for the facility, but also for the surrounding community.

▶ There are many existing facilities throughout Nevada County that have the potential to serve as resiliency hubs with appropriate upgrades.

Existing Community Facilities in Nevada County

The following is a list of potential recreation and resiliency hub locations:

- Arts & Cultural Centers
- Community Centers
- Family Resource Centers
- Food Distribution Centers
- Fire Stations
- Schools, Libraries, and Museums
- Recreation Centers
- Senior and Youth Centers

Bear River RPD Area

- Alta Sierra Elementary School
- Arete Charter Academy
- Bear River Community Theater
- Bear River High School
- Bear River Library
- Christian Encounter High School
- Cottage Hill Elementary School
- Higgins Fire Station
- Higgins Lions Community Center
- Higgins United Methodist Church
- Magnolia Intermediate School

Grass Valley

- See page 210

Nevada City

- See page 210

Oak Tree PRD Area

- Ananda Living Wisdom School
- Grizzly Hill School
- Mountain Valley Child & Family Services
- North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center
- North San Juan Community Center
- Oak Tree Community Park
- San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center
- San Juan Ridge Community Library

Western Gateway RPD Area

- Clear Creek Elementary School
- Lake Wildwood Community Center
- Old Historic Kentucky Flat Community Hall
- Penn Valley Church
- Penn Valley Community Center (site under development)
- Penn Valley Fire Station
- Penn Valley Library
- Penn Valley Rodeo Grounds
- Ready Springs Partners Family Resource Center
- Ready Springs School
- Rough and Ready Grange Hall
- Vantage Point Charter
- Western Gateway Park
- Williams Ranch School

Twin Ridges Area

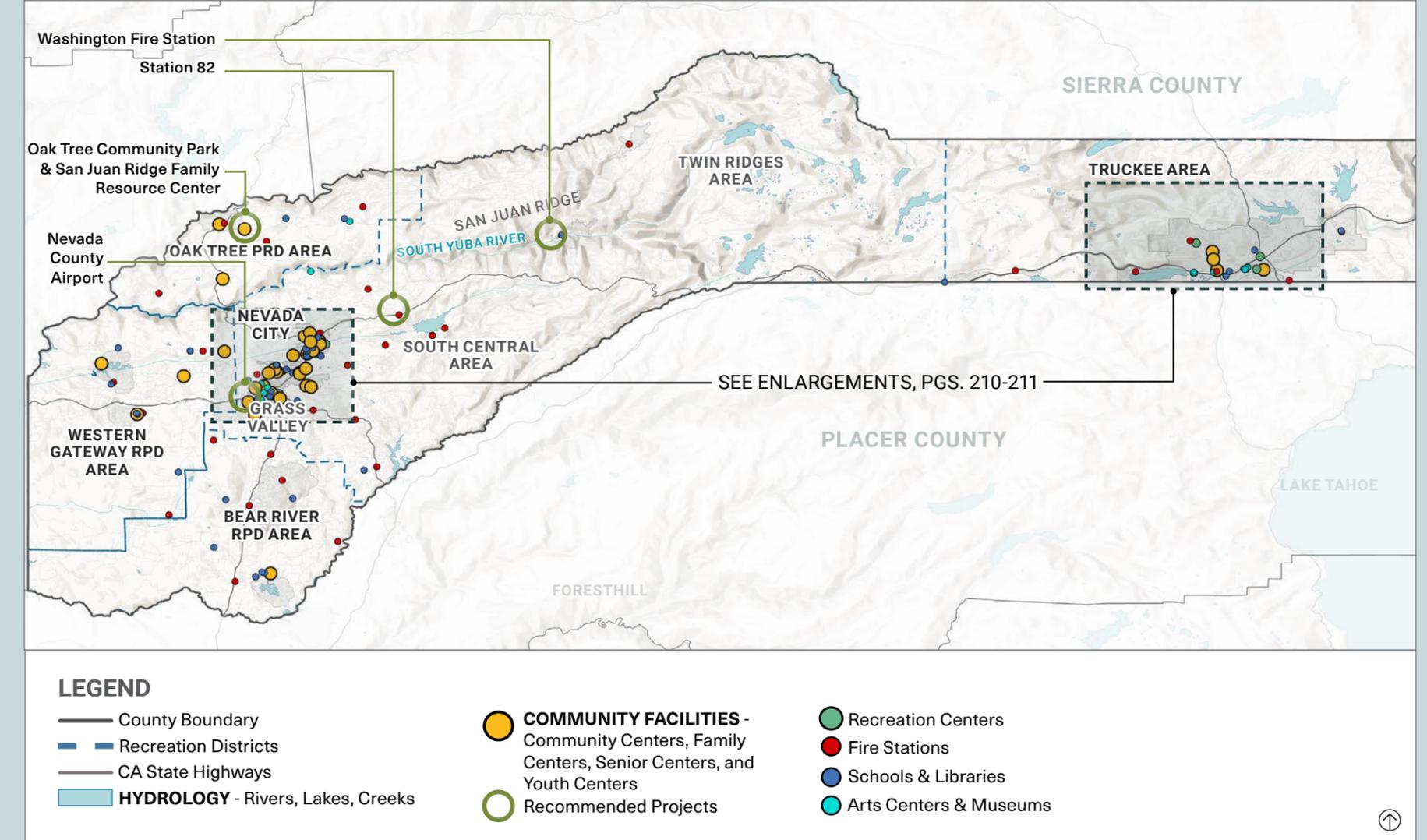
- Graniteville Fire Station
- Washington Fire Station 1
- Washington School

Truckee Area

- See page 211

Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACROSS NEVADA COUNTY

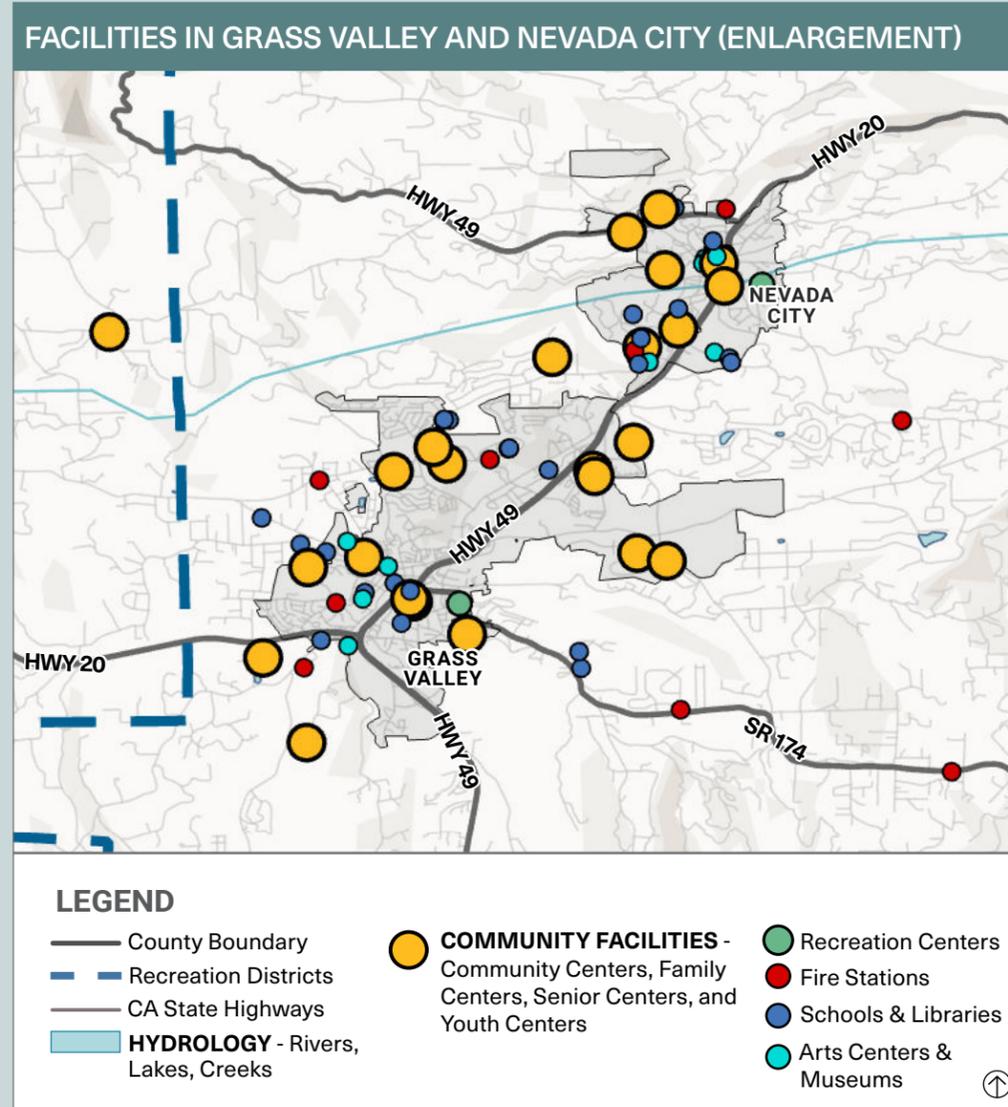


Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Existing Community Facilities in Grass Valley and Nevada City Area

- Bell Hill Academy
- Bitney College Preparatory High School
- Chicago Park Elementary and Community Charter School
- Deer Creek Elementary School
- Forest Charter School
- Gold Country Senior Services (site under development)
- Grass Valley Charter School
- Grass Valley Elks Lodge
- Grass Valley Library
- Grass Valley Museum and Cultural Center
- Grass Valley Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Building
- Lyman Gilmore Middle School
- Madelyn Helling Library
- Margaret G. Scotten School
- Miners Foundry Cultural Center
- NEO Youth Center
- Nevada City Elks Lodge
- Nevada City Vets Hall
- Nevada County Government Center
- Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum
- Nevada Union High School
- Peace Lutheran Church
- Ponderosa Hall at Nevada County Fairgrounds
- Saint Joseph's Cultural Center
- Seven Hills Middle School
- Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning
- Sierra College – Nevada County Campus & Library
- Silver Springs High School
- Station 81 Fire Station (Cascade Shores)
- Station 82 Fire Station (Hwy 20 @ Scotts Flat Road)
- The Center for the Arts
- The North Star House
- Union Hill Elementary School
- Union Hill Middle School
- Yuba River Charter School

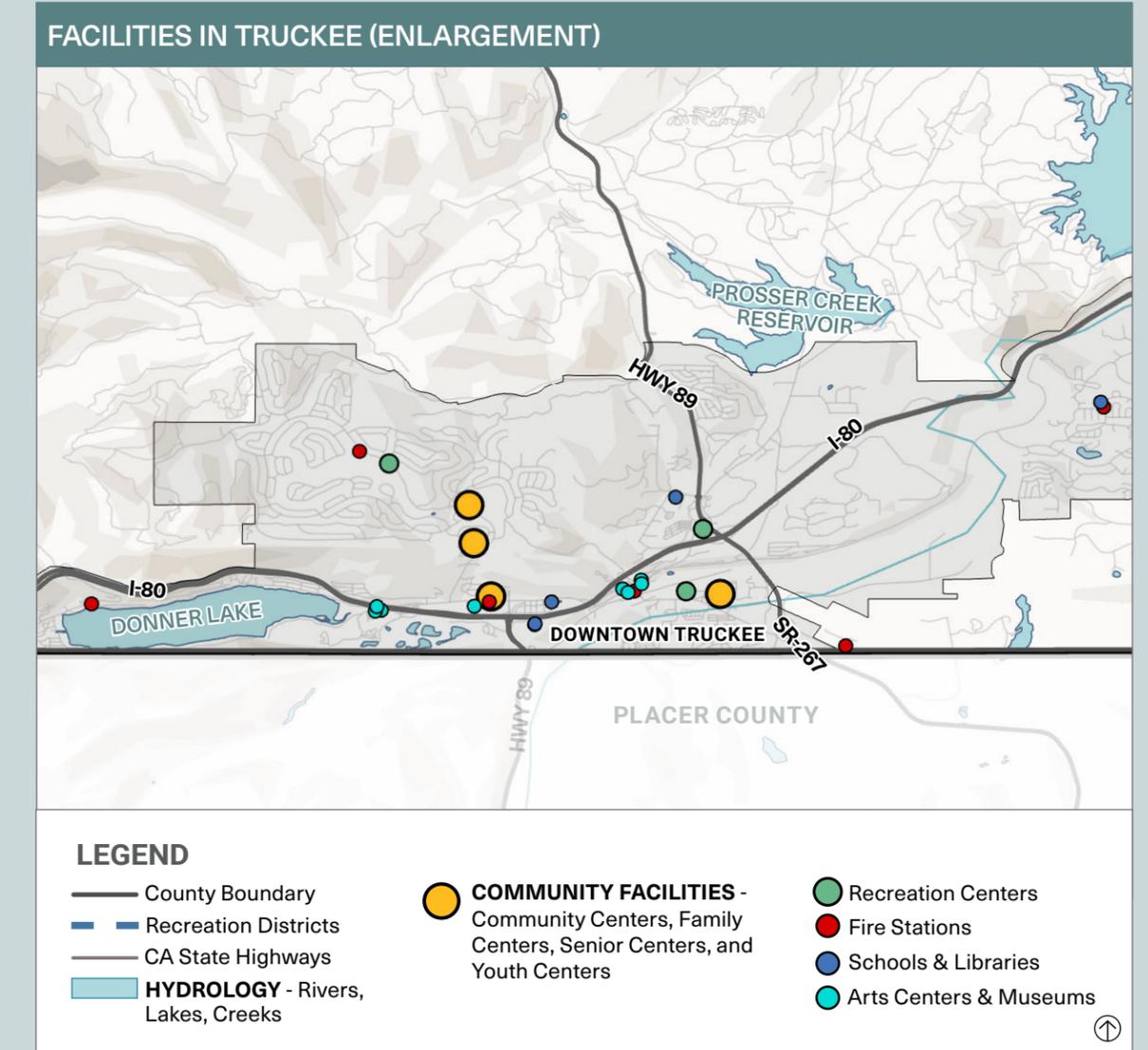
See Chapter 4 - Facilities Overview on page 116 for additional sites



Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Existing Community Facilities in the Truckee Area

- Truckee Area**
- Alder Creek Middle School
 - Community Arts Center
 - Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center
 - Donner Summit Historical Museum
 - Donner Trail Elementary School
 - Gateway Mountain Center
 - Glenshire Elementary School
 - KidZone Museum
 - Northwoods Clubhouse & Pool
 - Sierra College - Tahoe-Truckee Campus and Library
 - Trout Creek Recreation Center
 - Truckee Community Arts Center
 - Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District Recreation Center
 - Truckee Library
 - Truckee Railroad Museum



Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Case Studies

West Oakland Resiliency Hub, California

The West Oakland Resiliency Hub aims to connect with, support, and strengthen existing networks of neighborhood churches, schools, parks, community organizations, and crisis responders.

Existing buildings and outdoor spaces to be incorporated into the program include: the West Oakland Senior Center, West Oakland Branch of the Oakland Public Library, and the DeFremery Recreation Center and Park – all of which are owned and operated by the City of Oakland. This hub would offer regular programming to increase neighborhood resilience every day and provide vital community services during environmental crises, while serving as a Cooling Center during high heat days and as a Warming Center during cold days. Other proposed infrastructure includes but is not limited to:

- Sanitation: sufficient on-site sanitation facilities for large scale disasters
- Energy: renewable, non-polluting energy sources and back-up power to run critical operations when the power grid is down
- Communications: access to information, cell phone and computer charging, communications systems not reliant on cell or Wi-Fi infrastructure

- Shelter: emergency, temporary shelter managed through the Red Cross or a similar organization
- Clean Air: reduced neighborhood pollution and access to clean air spaces; filtered indoor spaces during forest fires and high air pollution times
- Transportation: shared community bikes, electric vehicles, and ADA-accessible vans or buses for regular use; vehicles to transport or evacuate people and resources as needed in a disaster
- Medical care: access to acute medical care and mental health care in the wake of a natural disaster, public health, or other emergency
- Ongoing resiliency efforts: education courses, tool library, expert advising, community meetings, and other vital environmental and social services

Wake County, North Carolina

In Wake County, North Carolina, a partnership between a county park and the local library led to an award from the National Association of Counties in 2019. In the Fighting Food Insecurity and the Summer Slide initiative, the library trained local teens so that they would be able to offer summer enrichment programs at this park in South Raleigh, which has been a summer meal site since 2016.

Dover, Delaware

In Dover, Delaware, the public library is working hand-in-hand with parks and recreation to offer a multitude of recreational and educational programs during the summer. The Tuesdays in the Park initiative includes three elements: a literary enrichment activity provided by the library, a physical activity organized by the parks and recreation department, and free lunches for all participants. The bookmobile comes by as well, offering books to check out. The program moves around the community throughout the summer and has as an ancillary goal to increase public use of parks throughout the city. Reflecting on the success of the program, library director Margie Cyr said, “we’re very satisfied with how it worked. It brought out families, it brought out kids and it brought them all into those parks that we wanted to highlight.”

Sterling, Colorado

In Sterling, Colorado, the park and recreation department partners with the public library to teach kids coming to the summer meal program how to create home gardens. The library used the National Park and Recreation Association’s Community and Home Gardening curriculum for this collaborative program.

Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Recommended Strategies

- Identify and grow partnerships (e.g., Nevada County Consolidated Fire District locations throughout Western Nevada County, Bright Futures for Youth, Gold Country Senior Services).
- Identify existing community buildings that are best positioned to serve as resilience hubs.
- Conduct assessment of buildings and sites.
- Define needs and identify enhancements required to fill multiple defined needs.
- Connect the dots between community needs and facilities positioned to meet the needs.
- Provide support for libraries and local community buildings to provide equipment rentals, supplies, and community meeting spaces.
- Develop a summary program of the network of facilities to collaborate and share best practices and resources.
- Provide support for private and nonprofit partnerships to develop and provide recreation and resiliency hub facilities that have ADA and equitable access.



San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center
Image Credit: San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center Facebook Page

‘Recreation Center and/or Resiliency Hub’

was within the top 3 projects to prioritize for Twin Ridges Area, South Central County Area, Nevada City Area, and Western Gateway Area

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 2 (Project Ideas)



Smoke plume over field

Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

Implementation Approach

Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network Focus Area are listed to the right and pages that follow. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Recreation and resiliency investment fund feasibility study for Nevada County and the Tahoe National Forest | Economic, financial, and organizational analysis in support of priority projects on 268 miles of the TNF and critical headwaters of the Bear, Yuba, and Truckee Rivers. |
| Recreation and resiliency hub network evaluation | Evaluation of existing and planned community facilities (both public and private) and the opportunity to incorporate or upgrade facilities to improve their capacity to provide service during all three operating conditions (everyday, disruption, and recovery). Determine service area for facilities and roles/function facilities may serve to address vulnerabilities and infrastructure needed to address needs. |
| Recreation and resiliency library hubs | System-wide use of libraries and community buildings as Rec/Resiliency Hubs. In particular, the Nevada County Library (in Nevada City) will reinforce its role as a hub for recreation and community resilience through the purchase of replacements and new additions to expand and enhance the existing Recreation Collection, additional mobile hotspots to loan, an e-bike for outreach and recreation advocacy, and bike repair stations, as well as the establishment of a Tool Library and a Seed Library. |

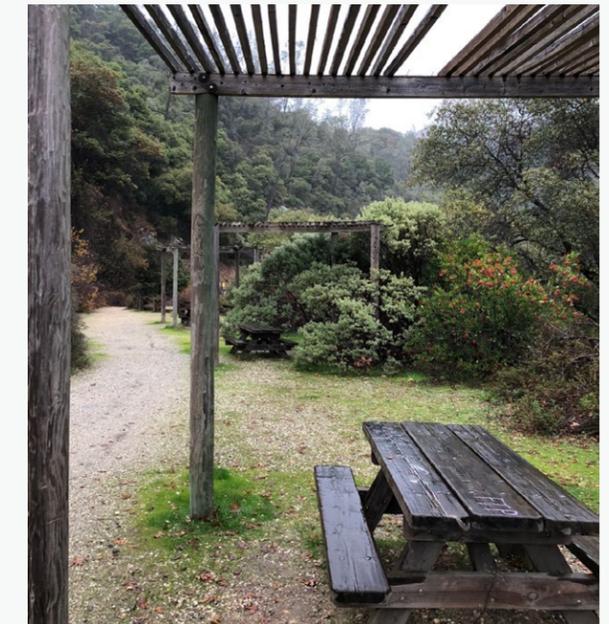
Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

| Project Recommendations | |
|--|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Connect and coordinate shared resources and efficiencies between San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center and Oak Tree Community Park | Adjacent to the Oak Tree Community Park is the North San Juan Family Resource Center (1 of 3 in Nevada County). This site could be an extension of the community park and resilience facilities. |
| Town of Washington fire station and community center design | Pre-construction costs for planning for a new Community Hall and Fire Station; with a public restroom, commercial kitchen, public information center/ broadband internet and communication hub, Water District office, and a law enforcement substation. |
| Nevada County Airport resiliency and multi-modal hub planning and design | Strengthen as a vital resource to the community, especially during wildfire events. Multi-modal Hub – ties in to “reimagining transit delivery” idea by expanding facilities to support in/out airport traffic, micro-transit, and active transportation. |
| Station 81 building and site improvements (Cascade Shores) | Covered bus stop, lighting, wayfinding, and parking with addition of pocket park and community space; building improvements to existing community room to serve Cascade Shores residents during extreme weather events. |
| Station 82 building and site improvements | Covered bus stop, improved lighting and parking, wayfinding, bike racks, and car charging station. |

The top 4 places that respondents from Western Gateway RPD go to recreate outdoors:

1. South Yuba River
2. Paved Pedestrian/Biking Paths at Western Gateway Regional Park
3. Area Trails & Paved Paths
4. Playgrounds at Western Gateway Regional Park

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 3



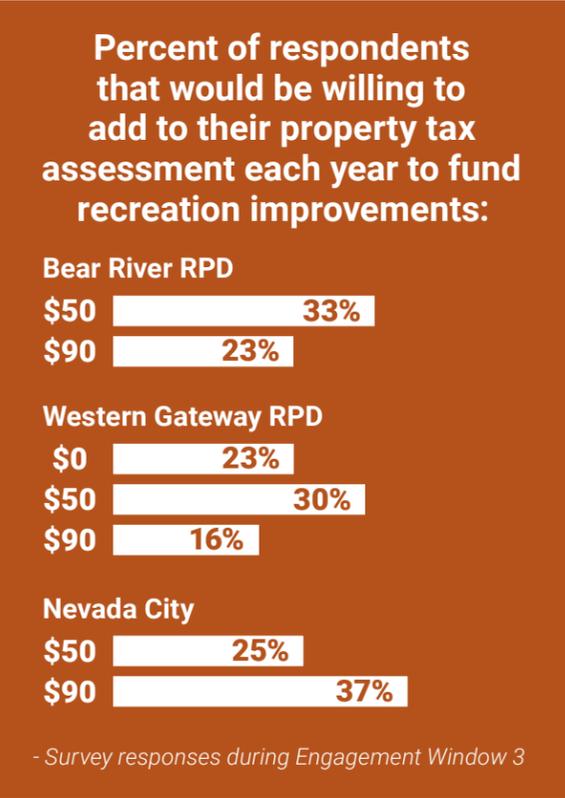
Picnic area near the South Yuba River

Recreation & Resiliency Hub Network

| Project Recommendations | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| New Truckee library facility | New library and cultural center located at Truckee River Regional Park. Resiliency functions should be considered as part of the planning and design. |
| Parkland wildland fire suppression | Install permanent wildland fire suppression systems in local and regional park spaces with high or very high fire severity designations. |



Burn area along road



San Juan Ridge school building

Focus Area: River Access Management



Focus Area Summary

Coordinate a system of off-roadway parking, restroom, trash receptacles, and signage to shift demand to appropriate locations for safe, designated public access to the South Yuba, Truckee, and Bear Rivers. Implement collaborative and near-term adaptive management strategies to address priority needs while advancing long-term projects.

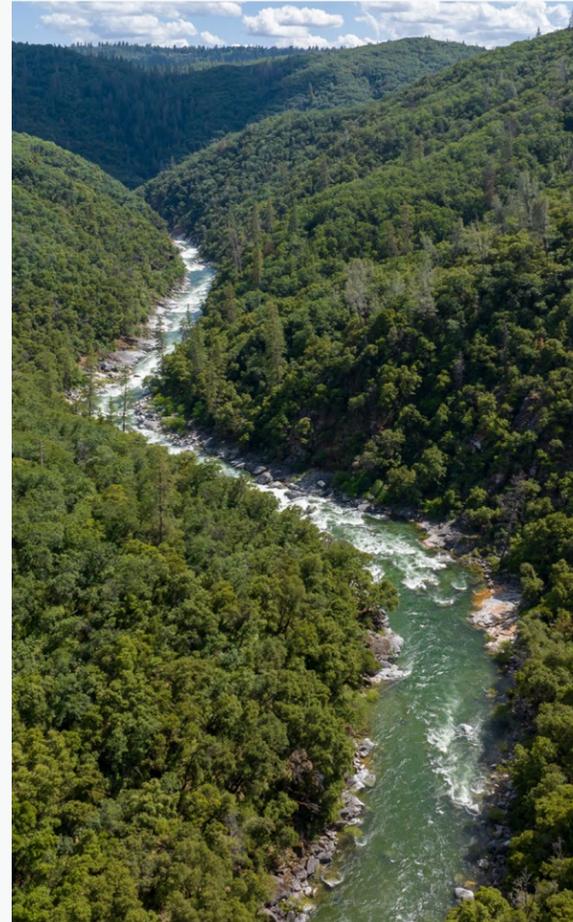
Need and Importance

Access to bodies of water is a critical feature of recreation in Nevada County. The county contains an extensive network of both year-round and seasonal creeks, streams, and rivers, as well as reservoirs and high mountain lakes.

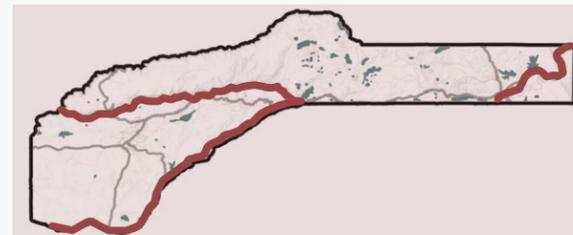
Recreation survey respondents consistently described the South Yuba River, Truckee River, and Bear River as their top recreation sites for all seasons. These recreational assets are popular for casual users taking a dip in hot summer months and for paddlecraft enthusiasts and professional and amateur anglers looking to hook a trout. It is no surprise that swimming in the county's lakes and rivers was identified as a recreation activity people would do more often if facilities were available.

Over 800,000 people recreate along the South Yuba River every year and activity along all rivers continues to increase. For example, SYRCL's River Ambassadors 2022 user counts increased 314 percent over 2021 counts. Crowding or lack of parking at the rivers was often noted by survey respondents as a barrier to recreation. This amplified use is projected to continue as the number of heat waves increases and summer temperatures rise. Residents from both within the county and from surrounding communities will seek cooler temperatures in the Sierra mountains and from Nevada County's rivers and lakes.

Access to the rivers is most often associated with bridge crossings. For example, a high use area along the South Yuba River is the crossing at Highway 49. Bridge crossings



South Yuba River



at Purdon Road and North Bloomfield Road (Edwards Crossing) are also regularly used. Facilities at these sites are limited and the roadway access is constrained.

Vehicles parked outside of designated areas can block emergency vehicle access and, if parked on dry vegetation, risk igniting a wildfire. After seasons of high snowpack, river flows also present dangerous conditions. Litter, sanitation, and erosion created from heavy recreation use degrades the environmental conditions and damages a critical piece of Nevada County's ecological system.

In addition, the rivers pass through a patchwork of public and private lands. Signage inconsistently notifies people when they have transitioned from public lands to private property. And although many recreation users are respectful and are environmentally minded, others trespass and litter without consideration of their impacts.

A coordinated system of off-roadway parking, restroom, trash receptacles, and signage is needed along Nevada County's waterways to allow users to recreate in responsible ways and increase user safety. The development of improved facilities must be approached in consideration of overall capacity for the river and surrounding landscape.

The South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan was initiated in 2003

South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan (2005)



Parking occurs in no parking areas and adjacent narrow roadways at many South Yuba River crossing locations.

and completed in 2005. As part of the planning process, the cooperating agencies implemented a Memorandum of Understanding that spelled out a collaborative management approach for the South Yuba. The plan itself included a series of management objectives for five planning units of the river and identified projects to support those objectives. Some of the projects have been implemented and others may be refined to meet current management objectives. The development of a General Management Plan for the South Yuba River

State Park was anticipated to be an outcome of the plan, but it has not occurred.

Recreation impacts have also been experienced along the Truckee River throughout the county. In particular, issues around river access near Hirschdale has become particularly acute, including litter, camping, human waste, and trespassing on private property. Access to the river had previously been through a private parcel owned by a utility provider. The parcel was sold, and the new private property does not allow for the public to access the

River Access Management

river through their property. The County of Nevada's road right-of-way for the Hirschdale Road bridge over the Truckee River does not provide safe or adequate access to the river. The right-of-way is only wide enough for the bridge and the adjacent steep banks for the bridge abutments. Uses of this area are legal but not recommended. Although the issue of river access has been amplified over the past four years, it is not a new problem. The public/private interface near the river in the Hirschdale area has been a source of ongoing work for Nevada County leadership and staff

and local, state, and national stakeholder groups such as the Truckee River Alliance, Trout Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters, and more, as well as private property owners.

Improving and managing river access is a priority for residents of Nevada County, evidenced by the 27.9% of survey respondents who selected "improving access to lakes and rivers" and the 20.7% of respondents who prioritized "addressing crowding and user impacts" as one of their top three outdoor recreation priorities.

Respect for Private Property and Balancing River Access

All "navigable" waters in California are open to recreational use, but users need to stay within the high-water marks to be in legal public property.

The term "navigable water" is subjected to multiple definitions under federal and state law. Under the California definition, a waterway is navigable if it is "capable of being navigated by oar or motor-propelled small craft."

Portions of the South Yuba River, Truckee River and Bear River are navigable, by definition, but while the land under the river itself is public, it is recognized that for many sections, the adjacent land is private property.

This Plan acknowledges the conflicts that can occur where private lands parallel the river or where river access points have been identified.

Similar to the vision described in the South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan, a goal of the Plan is that public lands be managed in a way that respects and protects private property rights and balances competing uses.

"The trail system along the South Yuba River needs help. User impacts on the trails are heavy with resulting erosion, and impacts to water quality from sunscreen in the water is significant."

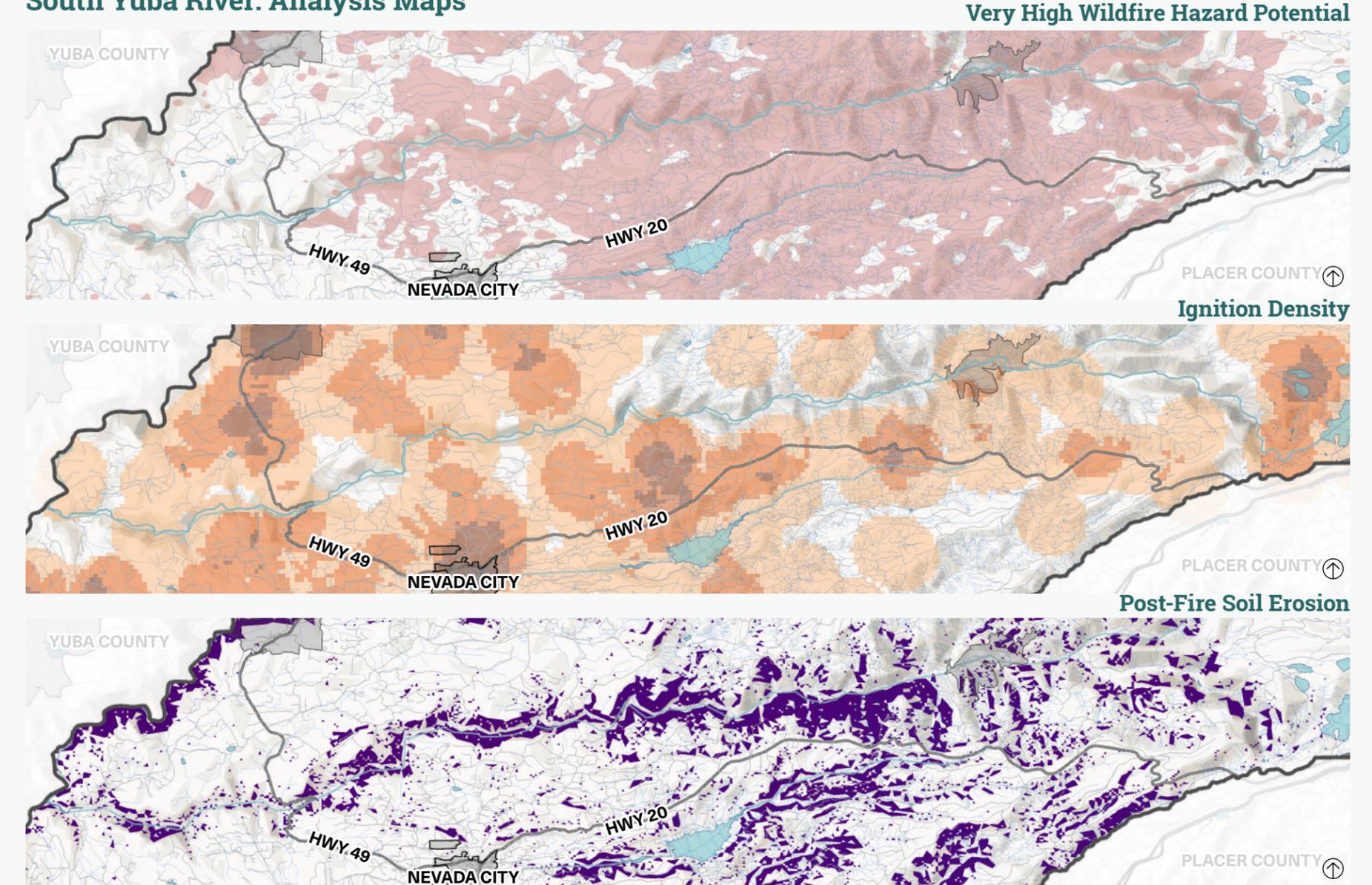
"Trails within the state park system seem to get the heaviest use and are in most need of upgrades and repairs."

"Improved access to this part of the trail system and upgrades to these trails would also be beneficial for spreading out user impacts."

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 2 (Project Ideas)

River Access Management

South Yuba River: Analysis Maps



River Access Management

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Access to open space and public land with essential facilities is key to community vitality, wellness, ecological health, resource management, and economic growth. Building upon the current efforts and successes to provide responsible access to the county's rivers will serve the thousands of individuals using the rivers and mitigate conflicts with adjacent private landowners.

Partnerships with nonprofit organizations such as the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT), and Sierra Gold Parks Foundation have led to increased communication with people to promote river and trail safety, waste pickup, and responsible recreation. The County's

facilitation of regular South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort and the Convene, Champion, and Catalyze (CCC) meetings contribute to sustainable recreation along high use areas and surrounding public lands. The groups coordinate strategies for enhancing the quality of life for locals and visitor experiences during peak period recreation. Both have been successful in improving communication between users, recreation providers, and maintenance entities as well as assisting with parking issues, signage, trash, and toilets.

Adequate facilities in combination with wayfinding, regulatory signage, and enforcement allow land managers to communicate the impact of harmful activities, suggest alternatives, and empower people to make environmentally conscious decisions.



South Yuba River

Recreation Use Management Tactics

Natural resources and the user's experience can impact highly visited areas. Impacts to a recreation experience may include noncompliant user behavior, unacceptable levels of crowding, and inadequate levels of access to facilities. Some of the most common types of user-caused resource impacts include trail deterioration, trail erosion, campsite deterioration, water pollution, trampled vegetation, change in species numbers and composition, soil compaction, and introduction of invasive species.

The following are a number of tactics to mitigate user-caused resource impacts:

- **Site Management:** barriers, facility design/redesign, restoration, close area
- **Rationing and Allocation:** fees, permits, reservations
- **Regulation:** number of people, activities, time, mode of transportation
- **Deterrence and Enforcement:** signs, sanctions, personnel
- **User Education:** explain impacts, disperse visitor use, encourage specific uses

Identifying and Monitoring Indicators of Visitor Experience and Resource Quality, page 12-14

River Access Management

South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan (2005)

Recommended Strategies: South Yuba River

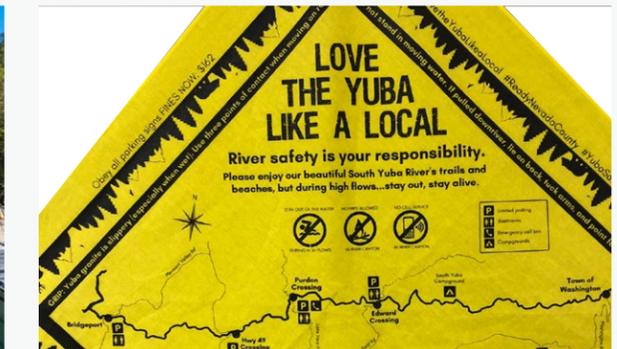
- Engage the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort to update the action strategies related to the indicators and thresholds from the comprehensive management plan for the South Yuba Wild and Scenic River.
 - » Actions should confirm consistent management and enforcement strategies for the South Yuba River throughout Nevada County.
 - » Update the adaptive management framework of indicators and management tactics to improve river and ecosystem health while providing appropriate levels of recreation access.
- Support the rebuilding of the Independence Trail.
- Continued support for the River Ambassadors, the partnership between SYRCL and State Parks that puts volunteers at each river crossing to help pick up trash and greet river visitors with friendly reminders about visitor etiquette, waste disposal, and assistance coordinating with first responders in the event of emergencies.
- Continued enforcement of no parking zones and evaluate the creation of additional no parking zones with enforceable fees that can change user behavior.
- Formalize off-roadway parking areas with improved restrooms and trash receptacles at Edwards Crossing and Langs Crossing. Coordinate improvements with bridge replacements and road improvements.
- Install permanent restrooms at the Hwy 49 crossing.
- Monitor use at Purdon Crossing. Enhance the road, develop formalized off-roadway parking, with restroom and trash receptacles.
- Increase width of fuel reduction treatments along narrow roadways.
- Continue to coordinate messaging for safe river access with community partners, businesses and Go Nevada County tourism site to discourage use during high flow seasons and redirect visitors to other destinations.
- Explore opportunities for a joint governance council, stewardship agreement, or land transfers to leverage the ability to work across jurisdictional boundaries and implement projects.
- Create opportunities for large scale fuel reduction projects to magnify benefits and maximize funding dollars.
- Evaluate shuttle service opportunities to Bridgeport and Hwy 49 river access point during peak season periods in coordination with enforcement of no parking zones outside of designated parking lot areas.



Scotts Flat Reservoir offers an alternative recreation experience when the river has high flows or is over capacity.



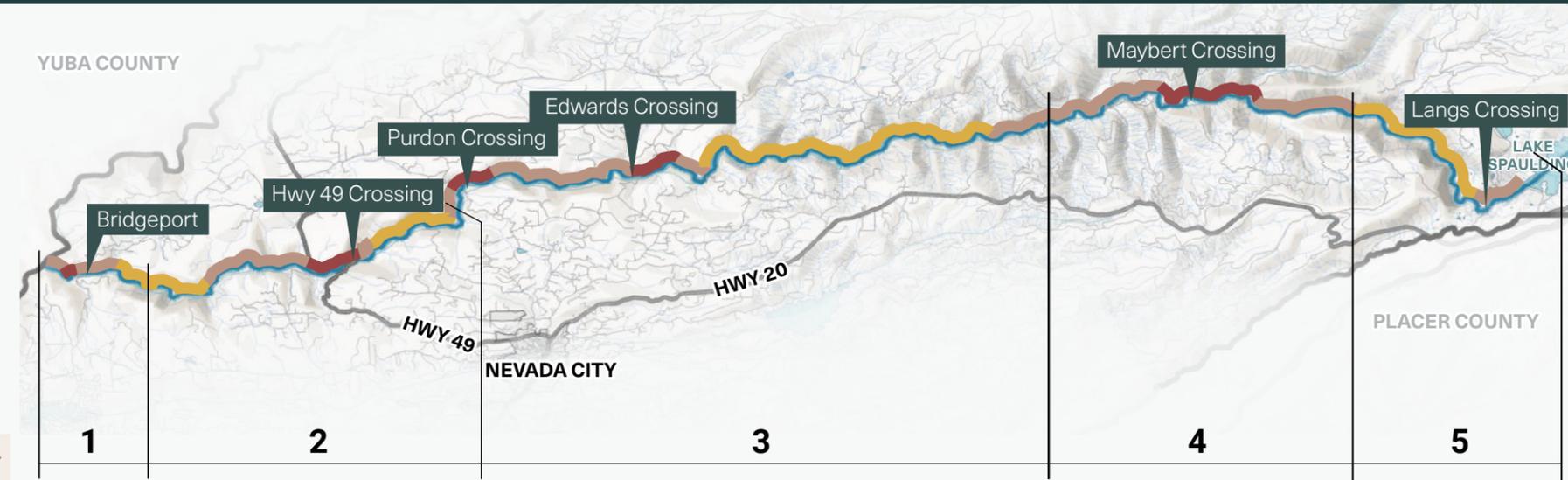
Paved and organized off-roadway parking areas



Coordinated signage and messaging for river use

River Access Management

FEATURED PROJECT NO. 1: South Yuba River - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum



South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan: Planning Units 1-5

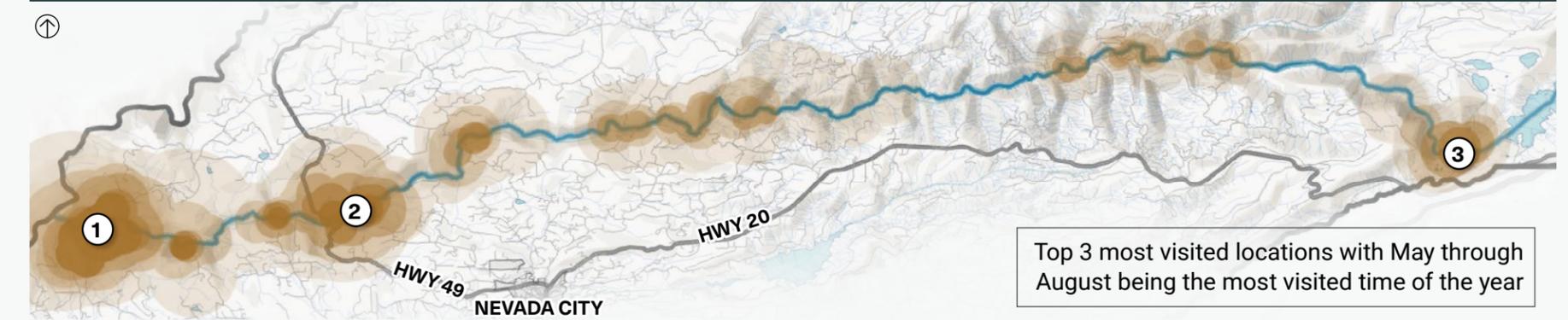
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Designations from the 2005 Comprehensive River Management Plan

■ HIGH USE/HIGH MANAGEMENT ■ TRANSITION AREAS ■ REMOTE

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <p>1 Bridgeport to USACE Boundary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max visitor capacity of 400 - 600 people at one time (paot) • Increase quantity of picnic tables and benches • Adaptive management strategies: provide web notification when capacity is exceeded, enforce parking restrictions and turn away users, potential use of fees | <p>2 USACE Bndy to CSP West Bndy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hwy 49 crossing max visitor capacity of 171 - 250 paot • Install vault toilets • Adaptive management strategies: provide web notification when capacity is exceeded, enforce parking restrictions and turn away users, consult with stewardship group | <p>3 CSP West Bndy to Poorman Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purdon: max visitor capacity of 200 - 272 paot • Edwards: max visitor capacity of 225 - 285 people at one time • Improve road to Purdon • Establish no-parking zones • Adaptive management strategies: provide web notification when capacity is exceeded, enforce parking restrictions and turn away users, consult with stewardship group | <p>4 Poorman Creek to USFS Bndy past Johnson Sink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Quartz: Max visitor capacity of 96 - 166 paot • Fire lane designation for Maybert Road • Adaptive management strategies: provide web notification when capacity is exceeded, enforce parking restrictions and turn away users, reduce parking, consult with stewardship group | <p>5 USFS Bndy past Johnson Sink to Lake Spaulding Outlet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max visitor capacity of 90 paot • Improve parking • Provide toilet • Adaptive management strategies: provide web notification when capacity is exceeded, enforce parking restrictions and turn away users, reduce parking, consult with stewardship group |
|---|---|--|---|---|

River Access Management

South Yuba River: Visitation Heatmap (Jan 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2022)



South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan (2005)

Analysis and Summary of Existing Management Strategies and Uses Along the South Yuba River

The map on the previous page summarizes the designated recreation management strategies for the South Yuba River from the 2005 Comprehensive Management Plan. Thresholds and indicators set by the plan have been exceeded in some locations. Management strategies, such as closure of Keheler Day Use area and an updated restroom at Golden Quartz, have occurred as outcomes of the plan. Since the plan was developed, the demand for river access and recreation use has changed, prompting a need to update the plan and to implement management actions such as improved parking, restroom and trash receptacles, coordinated signage, and enforcement.

2005 South Yuba River Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan

The plan anticipated using parking limitations to restrict visitation, if needed. Adaptive management strategies were developed as part of a series of indicators, standards, and actions.

If a management problem arises, the managing agencies will first propose the least restrictive action (Level 1). If no solution is found, more restrictive action is taken (Level 2 or 3). The managing agencies will progress from the least restrictive solution to a problem to more restrictive until the problem is resolved.

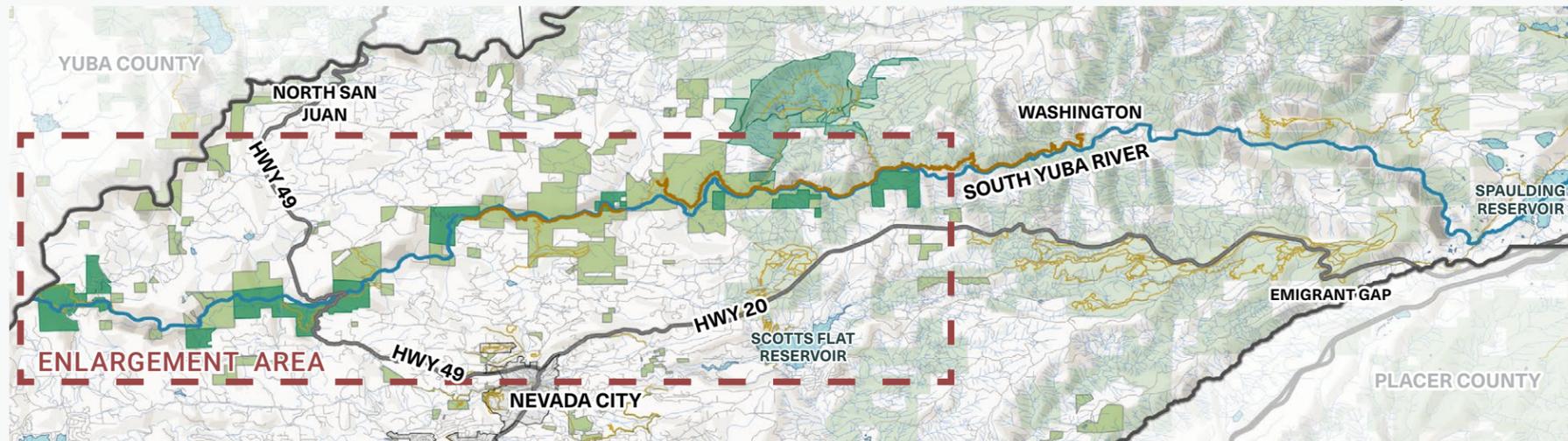
The plan anticipated that the parking limitations themselves (lack of formal parking and narrow, winding access roads) would restrict visitation to below maximum capacity. At the time, agencies did not expect to implement Level 3 actions. Recreation access levels today show that the parking limitations have not restricted visitation and the agencies need to provide the baseline facilities described in the plan and identify additional strategies to deal with the use.

River Access Management

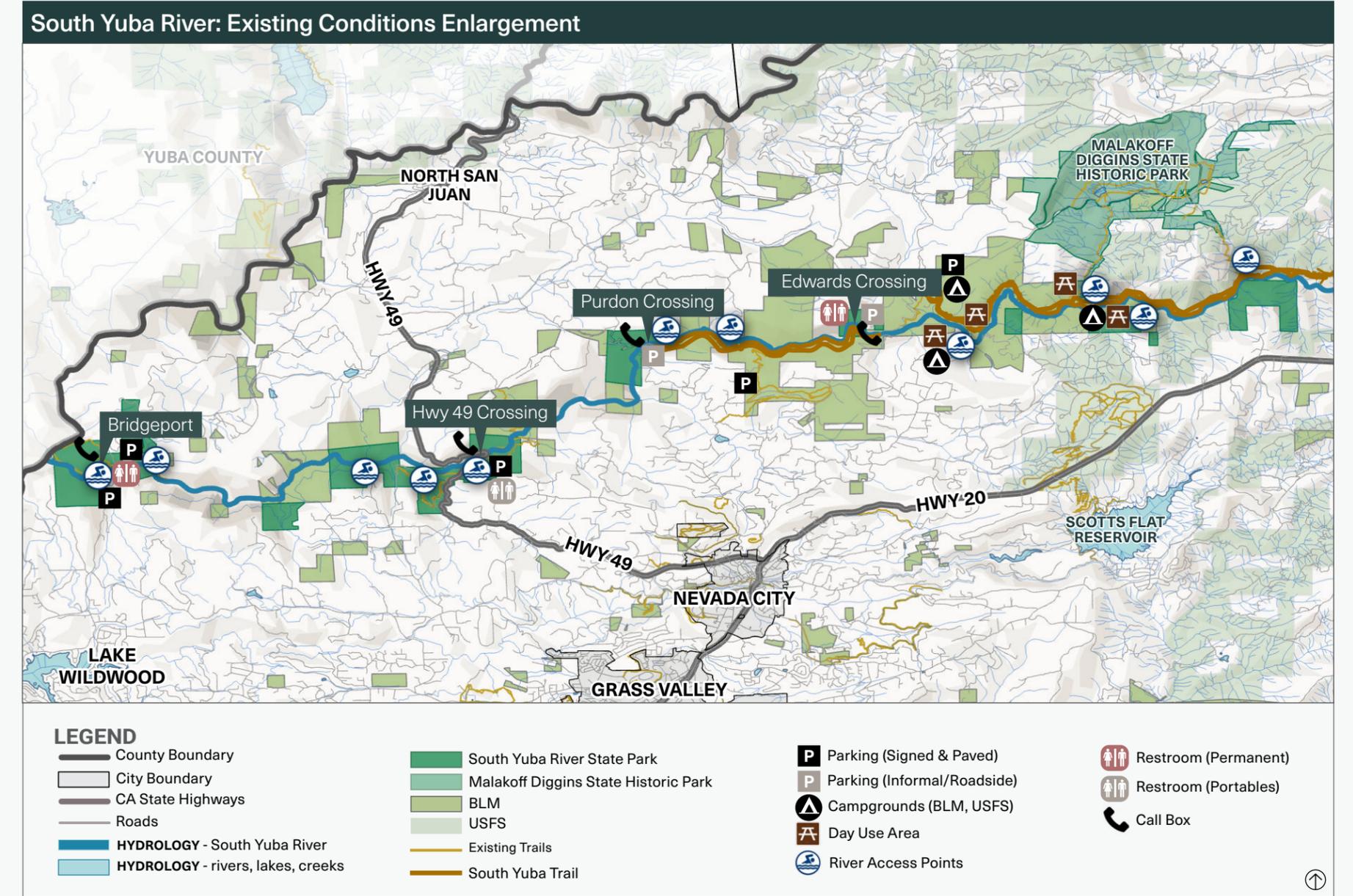


The South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort coordinates river and visitor safety messaging.

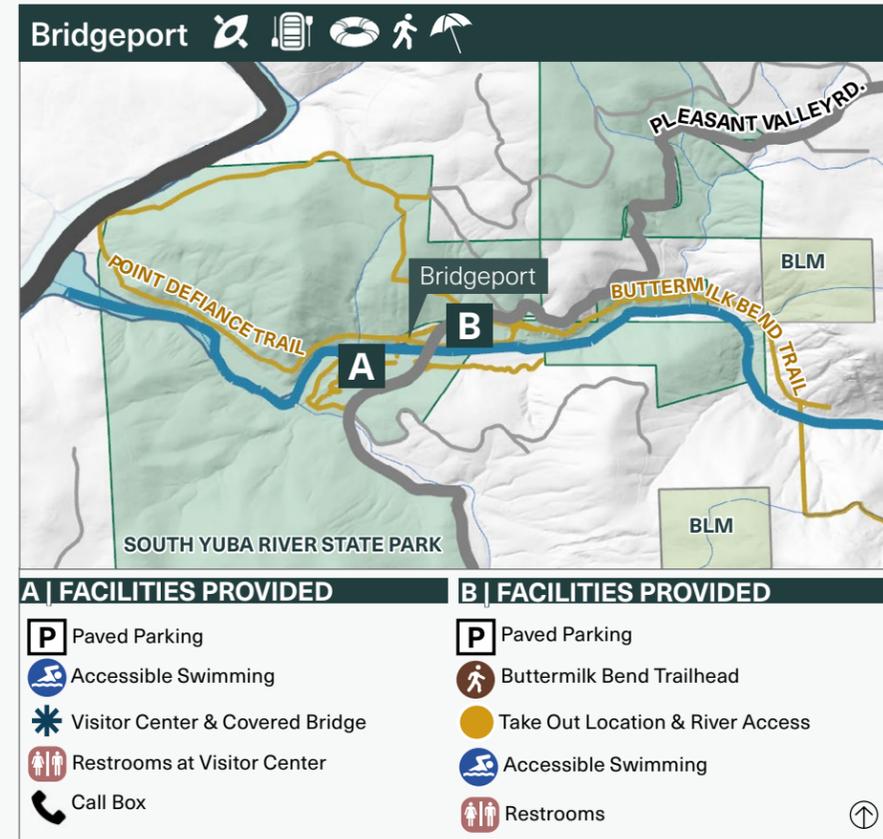
Planning for sustainable river access requires documenting and analyzing existing recreation use patterns and facilities. Managing use must consider providing facilities at appropriate locations as well as opportunities to shift and disperse use. The following pages present a summary of current river uses and access points along the South Yuba River.



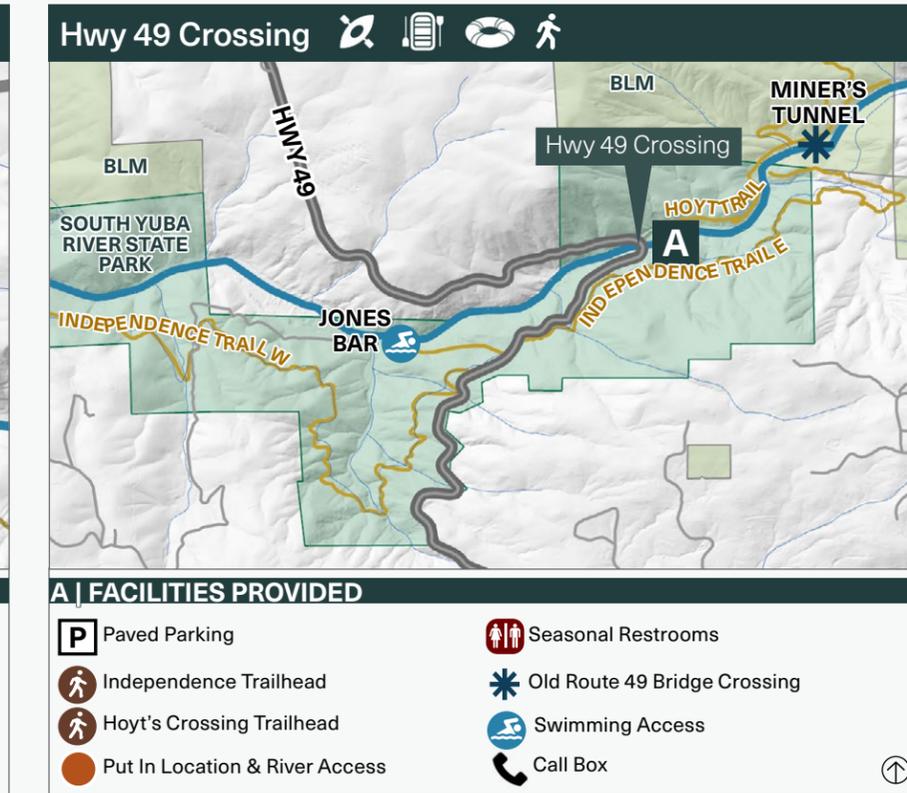
River Access Management



River Access Management



Bridgeport, in South Yuba River State Park, has the most developed facilities and is one of the most visited river access points. The gentler terrain and wider, slower summer river flows make it attractive for easy beach access. Paved parking lots are located on both sides of the river crossing, with the larger parking lot north of the river also used for trail access and watercraft take out. The visitor center area includes historic structures, a path to access the river, and a trail to the Bridgeport Covered Bridge. Visitors commonly spend the day on the beach, hiking trails nearby, swimming in the shallow water, and taking their kayak or raft from Highway 49 to the Bridgeport take out location.



The Highway 49 crossing is highly visited due to its proximity to the Independence Trail and Hoyt's Crossing Trail located just off the highway. This area receives many visitors during the summer months, but the old route 49 bridge crossing is also visited during the rainy season as visitors enjoy watching the raging high-waters move down the canyon. During peak visitation portable restroom amenities are added. Whitewater guide companies and experienced visitors use this river crossing to put in their watercrafts. From April to September the river is heavily used to swim, kayak, and float. There are a few trails off the Independence Trail that take visitors down to the water's edge. For example, visitors can take a steep trail down to Jones Bar to swim or spend the day on the boulders.

River Access Management



A truss bridge crosses the South Yuba River at Purdon Crossing, drawing many people to visit the structure and explore this remote area. Visitors come to this location specifically to camp and swim along the river as well as to hike the South Yuba Trail from Purdon to Edwards Crossing. This is a heavily traveled 4.5-mile trail that follows the river's canyon and includes viewpoints to take in the landscape and river below. While Edwards Crossing has some day use facilities, primitive camping is permitted between the river crossings and in clearly marked areas near the river.

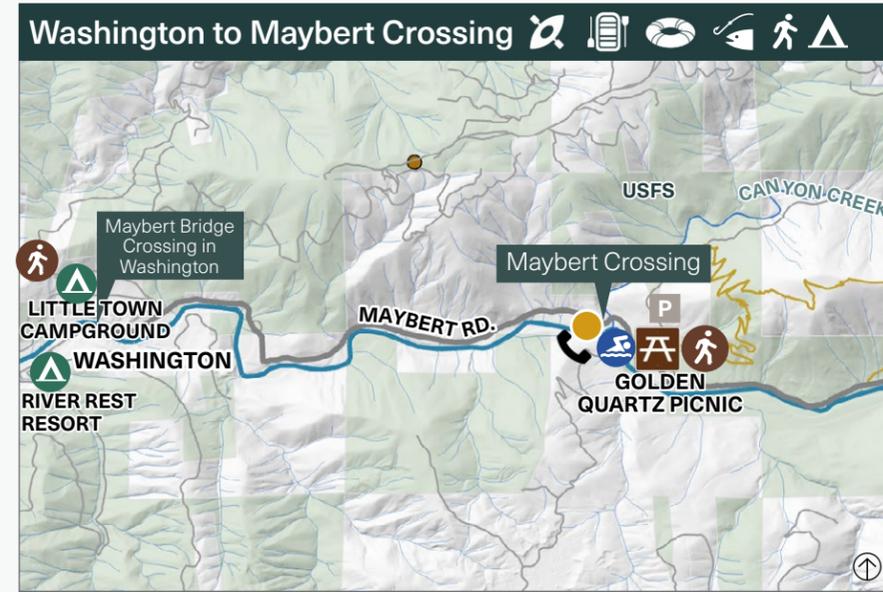
Both Purdon and Edwards Crossings are not as easily accessible by vehicle compared to the Bridgeport and Highway 49 crossings. Narrow and windy roads make this area challenging for visitors to drive to and park to access the river and trailheads. Roadside parking is very limited, leading visitors to park on adjacent hillside vegetation.

Edwards Crossing is used as a put-in location for watercrafts such as kayaks and rafts. From Edwards Crossing to Purdon Crossing, the river can range from a Class IV to a Class VI, making this section of river dangerous to the inexperienced floater. There are moderate to difficult hiking and biking trails adjacent

to the river crossing as well as swimming access points along the river. Visitors travel to this area to explore swimming holes or fish on the water's edge. Amenities are limited and not easy to access.

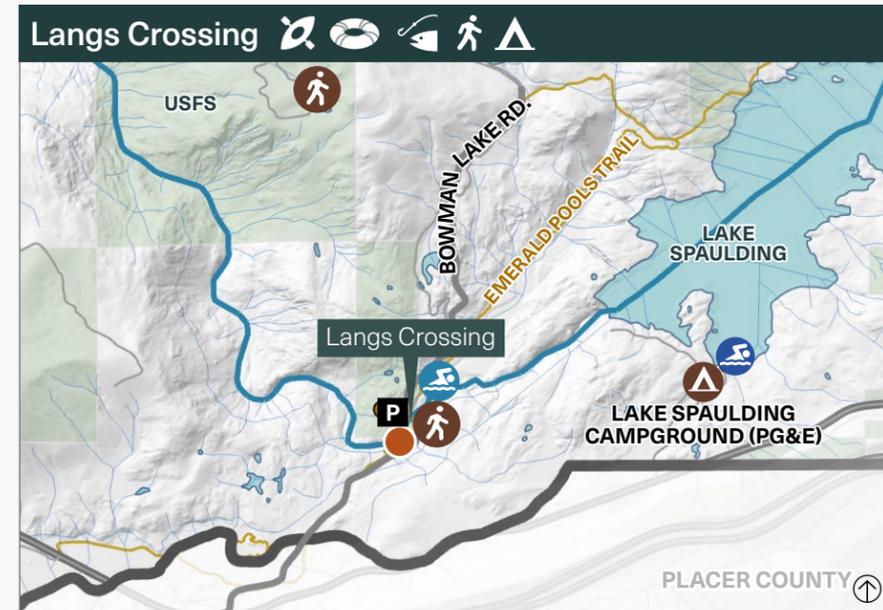
Malakoff Diggins State Park is 7 miles by vehicle from Edwards Crossing. Established trails and campgrounds between the two State Parks can allow visitors to stay in the park as they can explore the forest, canyon, and South Yuba River's edge. South Yuba Campground is a common base camp for visitors looking to spend a few days exploring the area.

River Access Management



Maybert Crossing is located at the confluence of the South Yuba River and Canyon Creek. Visitors come to this crossing to see the waters, fish along the river, and take-out their watercraft after traveling from Langs to Maybert Crossing. The area is rocky with private land surrounding most of the crossing. Golden Quartz picnic area is visited for day use activities such as swimming in the river, having a picnic overlooking the river, or relaxing after hiking a nearby trail. While there is designated parking, it is a natural surface parking lot with a limited number of spaces. During high fire risks the access road to the picnic area may be closed.

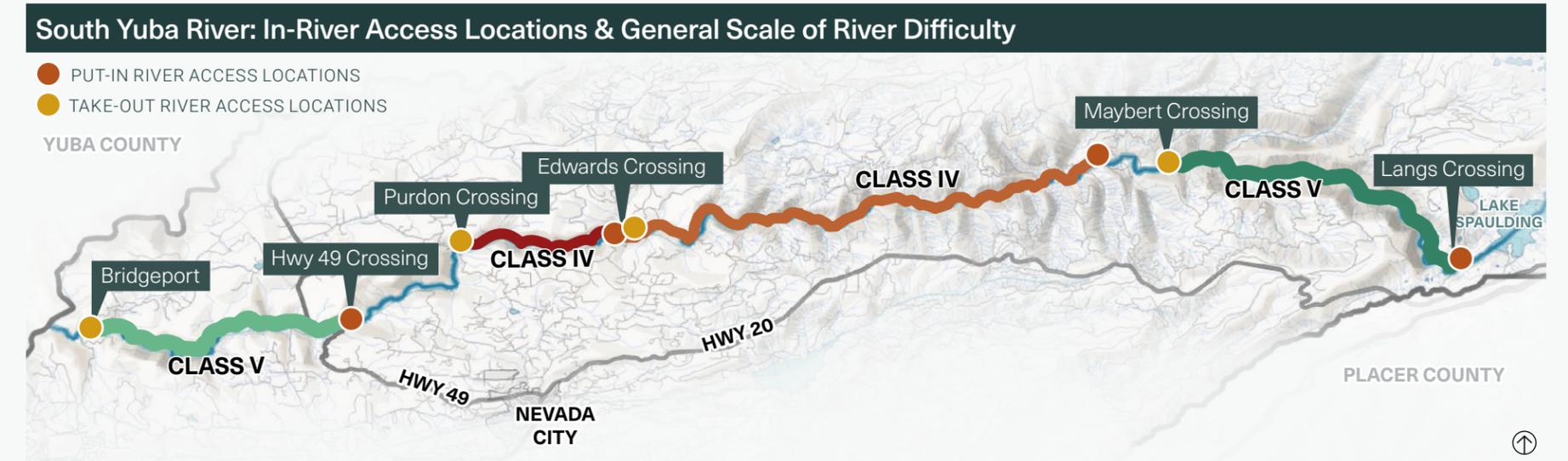
The Town of Washington has two private camping options: Little Town Campground located north of the South Yuba River and the River Rest Resort located just south of the river. Both campgrounds offer a variety of options for vehicle or tent camping. Maybert Road crosses the river in the Town of Washington. Parking at the crossing is restricted and Maybert Road is signed as a no parking zone.



Langs Crossing is located near the mouth of the South Yuba River. It is an easily accessible location due to its proximity to I-80 and Lake Spaulding's camping, swimming, fishing, and boating amenities. Lake Spaulding offers recreation and camping during summer and fall months. Day use visitors can park in the paved, off-road parking lot on either side of the Langs Crossing bridge. Emerald Pools Trail follows the South Yuba River to access Emerald Pools, or visitors can continue on the trail towards Lake Spaulding and beyond. Emerald Pools is a swimming hole surrounded by boulders and pine trees.

- Parking (Signed & Paved)
- Parking (Informal/Roadside)
- Campgrounds (Private)
- Campgrounds (Developed)
- Trailhead
- Day Use Area
- River Access Points
- Call Box

River Access Management



Four sections of the South Yuba River are promoted by American Whitewater as being floatable. While river difficulties vary depending on the flows released from Lake Spaulding, the following narrative summarizes the general flow ranges according to American Whitewater.

The 7.6-mile stretch from Lake Spaulding to the confluence of the South Yuba River and Canyon Creek is Class V difficulty with a flow range between 200 and 450 cubic feet per second (cfs). While few commercial outfits float this section of river, experienced rafters and kayakers travel this section during the high-water season. Watercrafts are put-in near Langs Crossing located on Bowman Lake Road and watercrafts are taken out where Canyon Creek meets the South Yuba

River. The most common swimmable area is Golden Quartz Picnic Area, just south of confluence.

The 13.6 miles of river from the Town of Washington to Edwards Crossing can range between a Class IV to a Class V, depending on the water level. The flow ranges between 300 and 2,500 cfs. Commercial rafting outfits guide boat and kayaking trips along this section of the South Yuba River. There are a few swimming areas east and south of Edwards Crossing, many are only accessible by moderate or difficult trails.

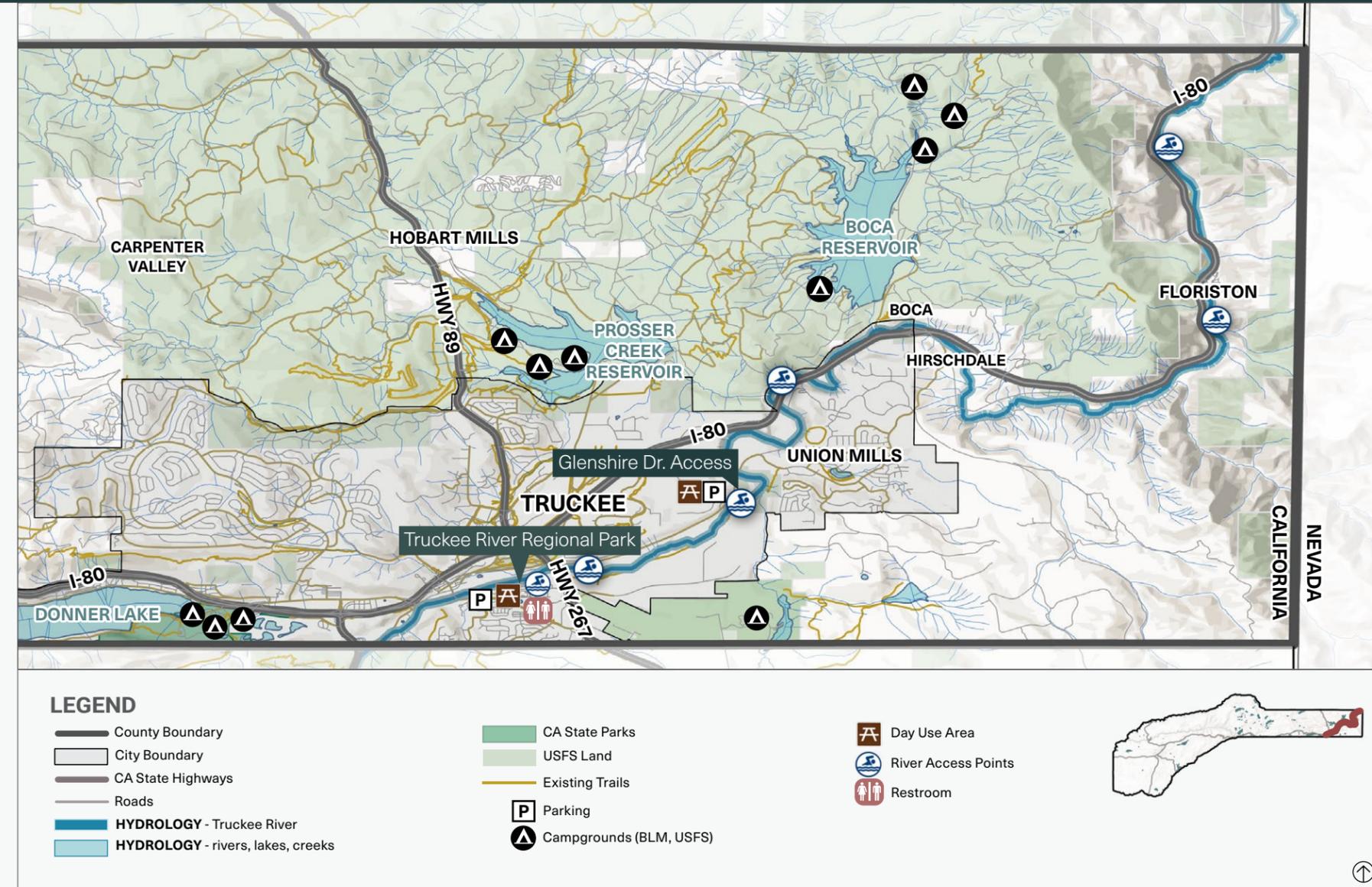
The section from Edwards Crossing to Purdon Crossing, or commonly referred to as "E to P", is 4.2 miles long with a flow ranging from 400 to 3,000 cfs. The difficulty can range between a Class IV to a Class

V and whitewater rafting companies offer guided trips. East of Purdon Crossing there are swimming opportunities. Edwards and Purdon Crossing have roadside call boxes for emergency purposes.

The fourth section is a Class V, 7.2-mile long section with a put in location at Highway 49 and an easily accessible takeout location at Bridgeport. This takeout location is close to parking with slower river flows, making the watercraft exits one of the more convenient take-out locations. Commercial outfitters frequently guide this section of the river from April to September. The flow ranges from 500 to 2,000 cfs and has shallow, slow-moving swimming areas near the Bridgeport Covered Bridge. There are roadside call boxes at each crossing.

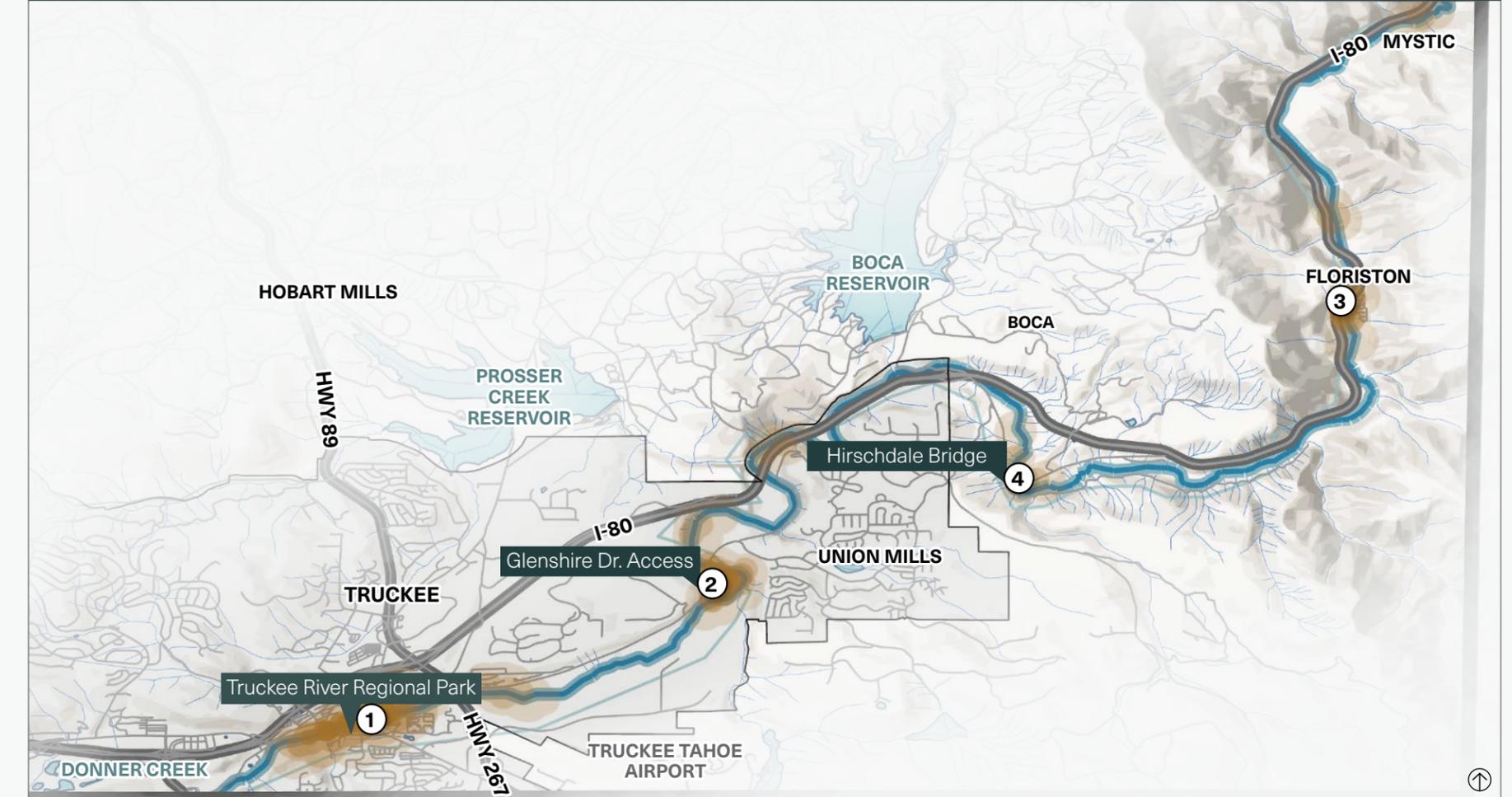
River Access Management

FEATURED PROJECT NO. 2: Truckee River Access Study – Existing Conditions



River Access Management

Truckee River Access Study: Visitation Heatmap 2021-2022



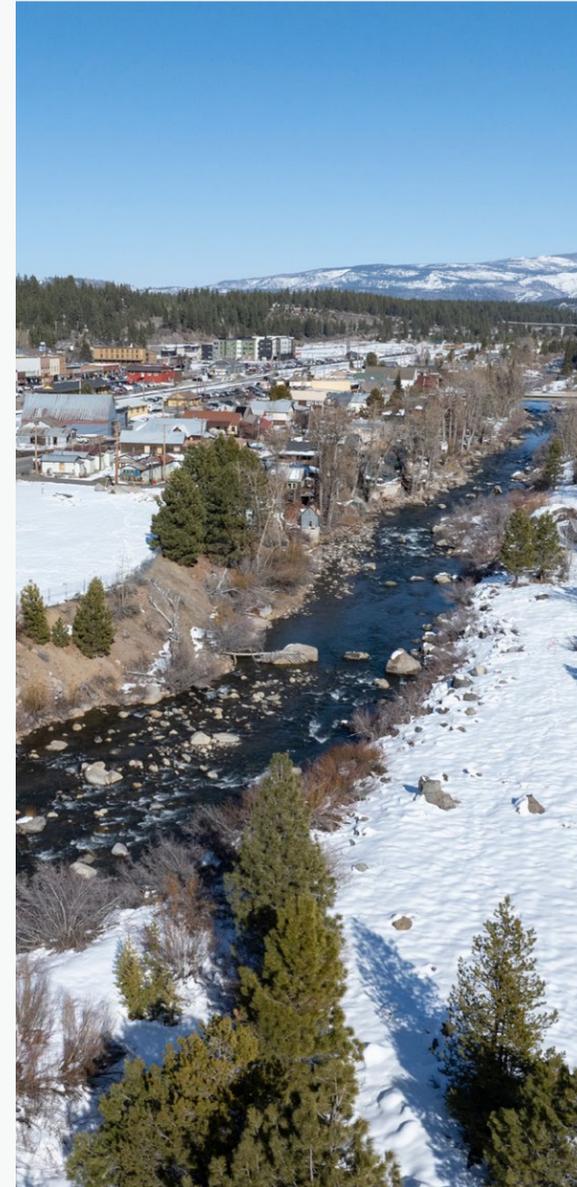
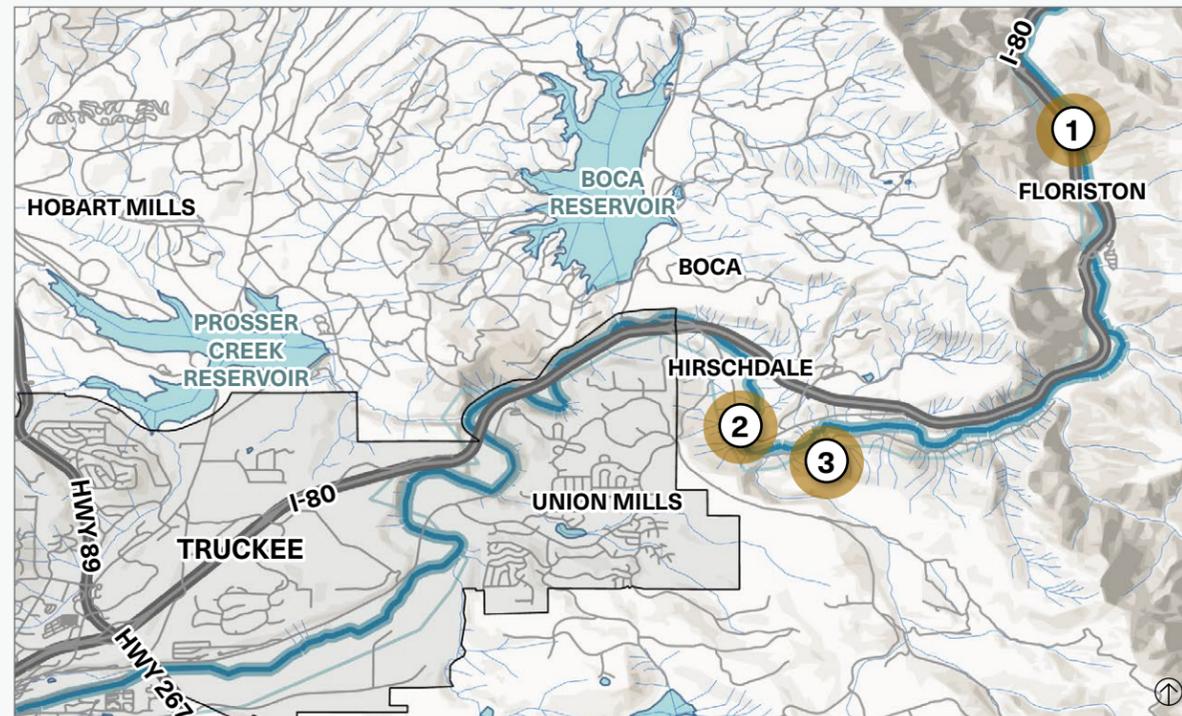
The top 4 most visited locations along the Truckee River in Nevada County are:

- 1** Truckee River Regional Park
- 2** Glenshire Drive Access
- 3** Floriston
- 4** Hirschdale Bridge

River Access Management

Recommended Strategies: Truckee River Access

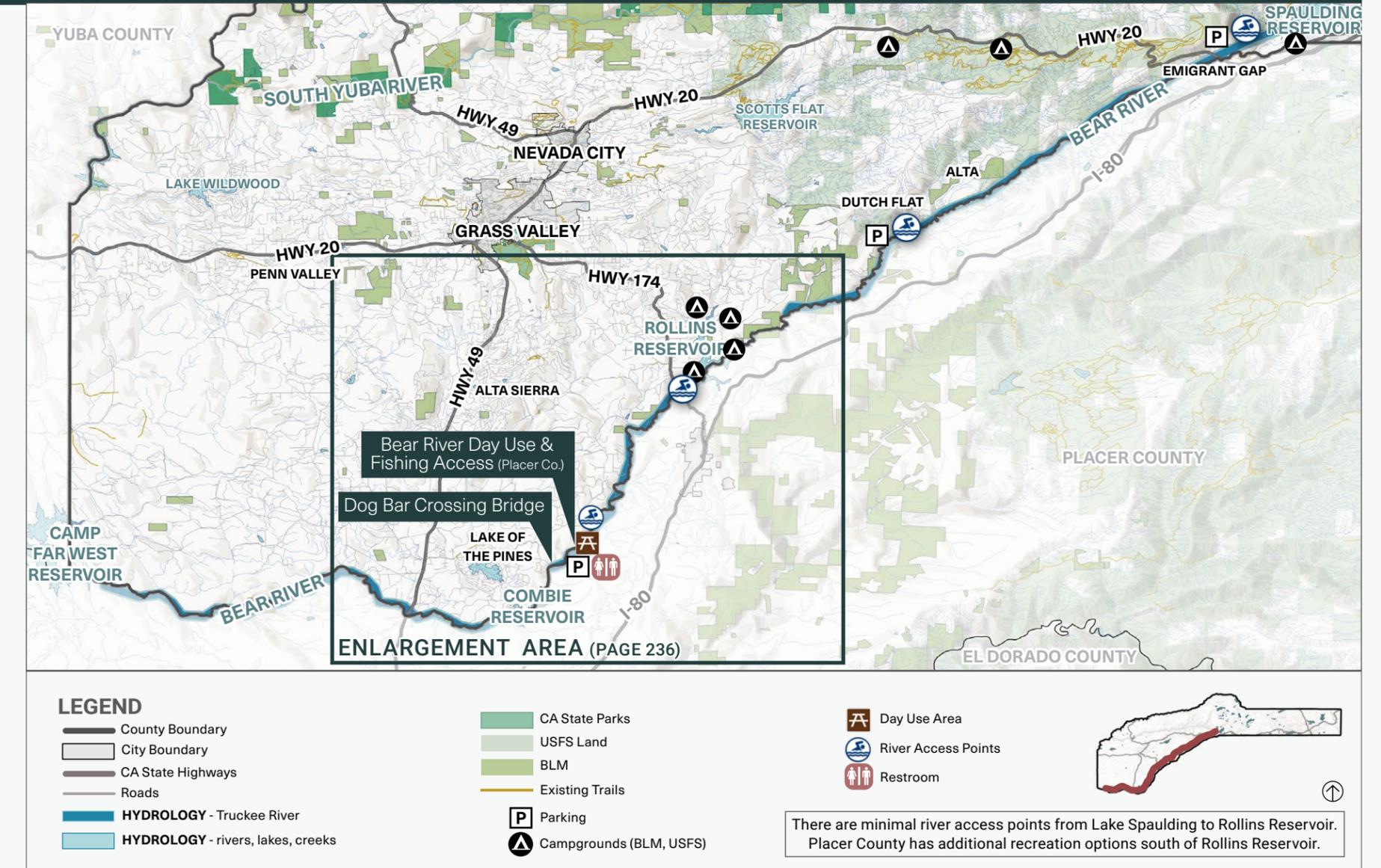
- Implement short-term signage project with roadside parking areas and river access points within the public right-of-way.
- Develop a long-term signage strategy to utilize consistent signage and communications that define public right-of-way, river, and Truckee Pyramid Trail access locations to address conflicts with private property owners.
- Evaluate locations for formalized off-roadway parking and support facilities for river and trail day use access (i.e., restrooms, trash receptacles, kiosk signage, call box).
 - » Opportunity sites for public access and parking facilities include:
 - ① Improvements off I-80 near the historic power house (Mystic Ranch private property conceptual development)
 - ② Easement and facilities at east of Hirschdale Bridge
 - ③ CDFW parcels with potential facility enhancements east of Hirschdale



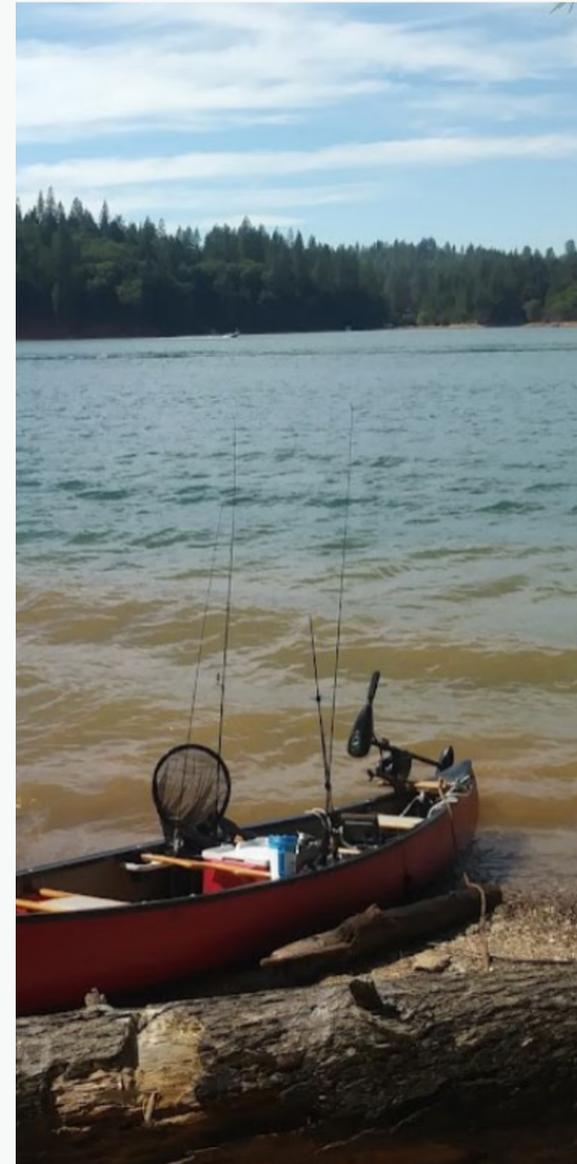
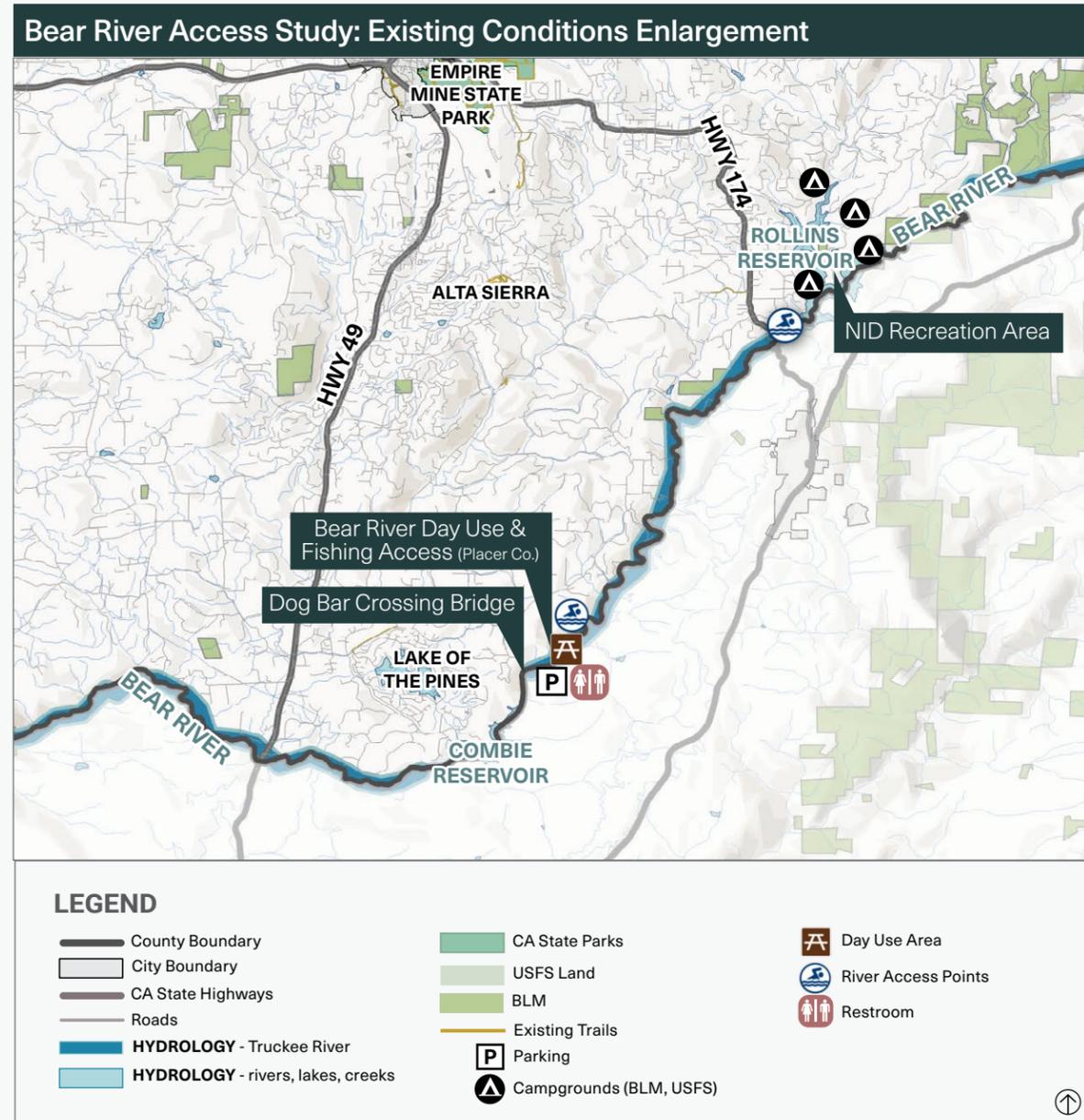
Truckee River

River Access Management

FEATURED PROJECT NO. 3: Bear River Access Study – Existing Conditions



River Access Management

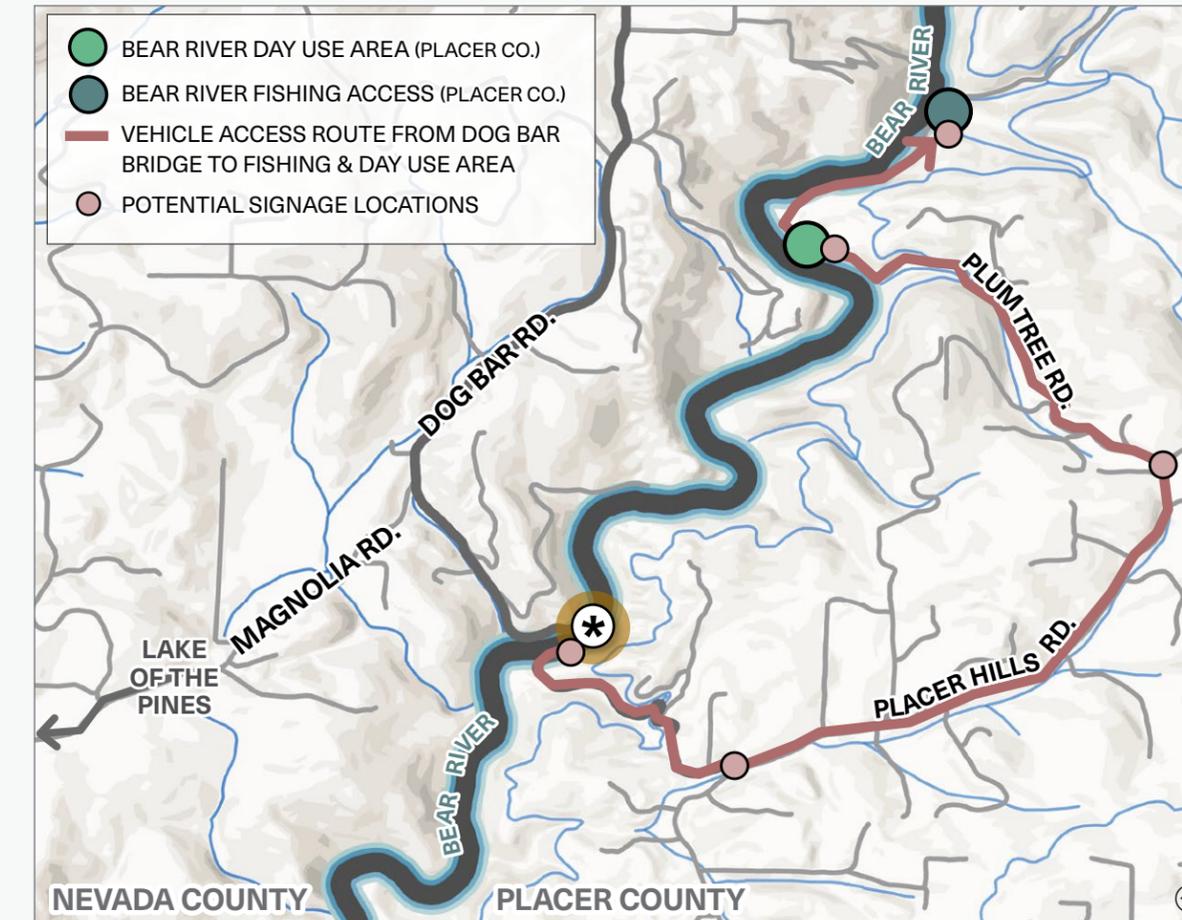


Fishing at Rollins Reservoir
Image Credit: Google Maps, Time Guillford

River Access Management

Recommended Strategies: Bear River Access

- Enhance river access as part of bridge replacement at Dog Bar crossing.
- Coordinate signage at Dog Bar crossing pull-off to direct users to river access facilities at California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Placer County's Bear River Fishing Access.
- Initiate conversations with NID regarding surplus lands and other adjacent property owners to evaluate opportunities for easements for river access facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms, trash receptacles, call box).



84% of respondents from Bear River RPD do not have access to Lake of the Pines amenities

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 3



Dog Bar Road and Bridge, Google Earth

River Access Management

Case Study

Columbia River Gorge Management Plan

The Columbia River Gorge is a nationally significant area renowned for its diverse natural resources, geological features, and rich cultural history. Recognized by Congress in 1986, it's a place of breathtaking scenery, unique plant and animal life, and a key part of the Pacific Northwest's history and economy. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area consists of 293,000 acres and covers portions of six counties in the Pacific Northwest. The goals of the National Scenic Area are to protect and enhance the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Gorge while supporting the economy of the Gorge by encouraging sustainable growth. The Columbia River Gorge Management Plan sets the core guidelines for how the Scenic Area is managed, creating a blueprint for actions and their locations. Additional plans are aligned with and built upon this management plan.

Public and private partnerships such as the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge helped by building political support in the Pacific Northwest and on Capitol Hill (1980-1996) that led to the creation of a National Scenic Area. The campaign



created new federal protection for the Gorge in 1986 and Congress called for the preparation of the Management Plan for the National Scenic Area.

The plan uses a two-tiered management approach with the U.S. Forest Service and the Columbia River Gorge Commission. A bi-state commission represents local, state, and national interests. The Forest Service develops land use regulations for federal land and land in the special management areas. The Gorge Commission develops the land use regulations for the general management areas. The Gorge Commission and Forest Service adopted the management plan in 1991 with input from tribal governments, county and city governments, state, and federal agencies, citizens, and non-governmental organizations. The management plan is a living document that

requires a plan review every ten years. The first 10-year revision was in 2004 and the second revision was completed in 2020.

An estimated two million people visit this area annually. According to the management plan, recreation growth must respond to demand within resource constraints and must be carefully planned so it does not overwhelm the Gorge and the ability of the Gorge communities to support it. One of the goals of the plan is to spread the economic benefits of tourism and relieve some of the pressure on recreation sites in the west end of the Gorge.

The Gorge Discovery Center, located on the east end of the Gorge, was developed in support of this goal, directing visitors towards less frequently visited areas. Additionally, a network of connected trails is planned and beginning to be developed, including riverfront trails and trails linked to urban areas. This also relieves pressure on frequently visited recreation sites in and around the Gorge by reducing overall parking, foot traffic, and vehicle trips.

The Gorge Commission and Forest Service developed specific programs to address protection of scenic quality for lands visible from key viewing areas. Objectives, policies, and guidelines are developed to ensure the visual quality of the viewing areas

River Access Management

and recreation sites are maintained and protected.

Impacts to natural resources such as water resources (wetlands, streams, ponds, ales, and riparian area), wildlife habitat, and rare plants provide indicators that trigger management approaches in recreation areas.

A framework for guiding public and private recreation providers in the Natural Scenic Area is outlined, including local, state, and federal planning and park agencies, as well as private and nonprofit groups. For example, recreation intensity classes (RICs) are outlined with guidelines and criteria which address new public and commercial recreation development.

RICs range from Class 4 to Class 1 as very low intensity, Class 2 as low intensity, Class 3 as moderate intensity, and Class 4 as high intensity. The RICs, similar to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrums (ROS) designated in the South Yuba River Comprehensive Management Plan, guide provisions for parking capacity, signage visibility requirements, facilities, day vs. overnight use, capacity for campgrounds, and more.

The Forest Service reviews project applications to ensure projects being implemented within the National Scenic Area comply with the Management Plan. Currently,

projects include habitat, forest, and stream restoration, flood control, trail systems, vegetation management, and facilities renovations and additions.

Specific examples include:

- Cascade Trail System
- Catherine Creek Vegetation Management
- Courtney Road Easement
- Coyote Wall
- Burdoin Mountain
- Catherine Creek Area Recreation Plan
- Eagle Creek Restroom Renovation
- Hamilton Creek Restoration
- Shady Creek Trail Bridge Replacement
- Wahkeena Falls Enhancement

Public and private partnerships multiply the effect of federal funding for recreation facilities. Friends of Columbia River Gorge hold land trust preserves (Lyle Cherry Orchard, Mosier Plateau, Turtle Haven) and coordinate with other land trusts and partners to seek grant funding. Northwest Trail Alliance is working with the Port and USFS to expand the EasyClimb system along Wyeth Bench (intermediate and advanced trails).

Willamette River Initiative

Winding 187 miles from Portland to Eugene, Oregon, the Willamette River corridor is an important natural, recreational, and economic resource passing through many towns and access points in the region. Concerned by encroaching urbanization and centuries of industrial runoff and pollution, many river restoration organizations had attempted to solve river health and water quality issues, however, the work needed was too expansive for any one organization to tackle alone.

Recognizing the importance of the Willamette River to the environment and communities, the Meyer Memorial Trust in partnership with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board came together to develop and fund the Willamette River Initiative (WRI). The Initiative built upon scientific research, formed partnerships to leverage resources and expanded the capacity of nonprofits and landowners to promote and fund ecological restoration throughout the river corridor. In collaboration with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), the Initiative identified a multitude of adjacent landowners and management tactics to help nonprofit organizations plan for the long-term and extend their work capacity,

River Access Management

and to assist interested property owners in transitioning from landowners to land stewards.

Research and lessons from BEF's Model Watershed Program were used to develop 10-year action plans for seven separate local, volunteer-led watershed councils along the Willamette River. These action plans identified high-priority areas within each watershed, created targets for watershed health, and incorporated other conservation and recreation goals established by each council. BEF met with the watershed councils regularly to improve habitat restoration practices and create a shared system for tracking and monitoring progress, but strategies varied depending on the ecological context of each project area.

Being committed to long-term improvement and understanding the specific tasks needed to achieve a restored river system allowed funding to be flexible and support large-scale projects that would have the most significant impacts over time. Meyer Memorial Trust (a private foundation) was a flexible funding source that provided funding for planning and early project development to prepare groups to access funds from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (state funds) and Bonneville Power Administration (federal funds).



This funding structure allowed monies to be distributed across many types of restoration projects without the policy constraints that often come with state and federal funding. Knowing that funding was stable and consistent for a 10-year period caused a shift in thinking within leaders and organizations, allowing them to plan for the long-term and engage in more impactful projects.

Examples of projects completed through the Willamette River Initiative include:

- Trail connections, such as the construction of Middle Fork Path, a four-mile multi-use path which provided a connection between Doris Ranch and Clearwater Park.
- Creation of three river access points at Riverbend Park, which include stone steps and boat ramps, to replace unsafe user-created access points. The project also

rehabilitated stream banks damaged by river users and created an additional quarter acre of wetland habitat.

- Numerous conservation, water quality, and habitat restoration projects throughout the Willamette River corridor.

Over 11 years, the Initiative secured \$20 million in grants and partner organizations raised more than \$80 million for projects including planting, channel, floodplain, and wetland restoration and removal of barriers within fish habitats, with work being completed in 2019. The Willamette River Initiative exemplifies an innovative, flexible funding strategy for significant ecological improvements made possible through the power of strong local partnerships and community support.

River Access Management

Implementation Approach

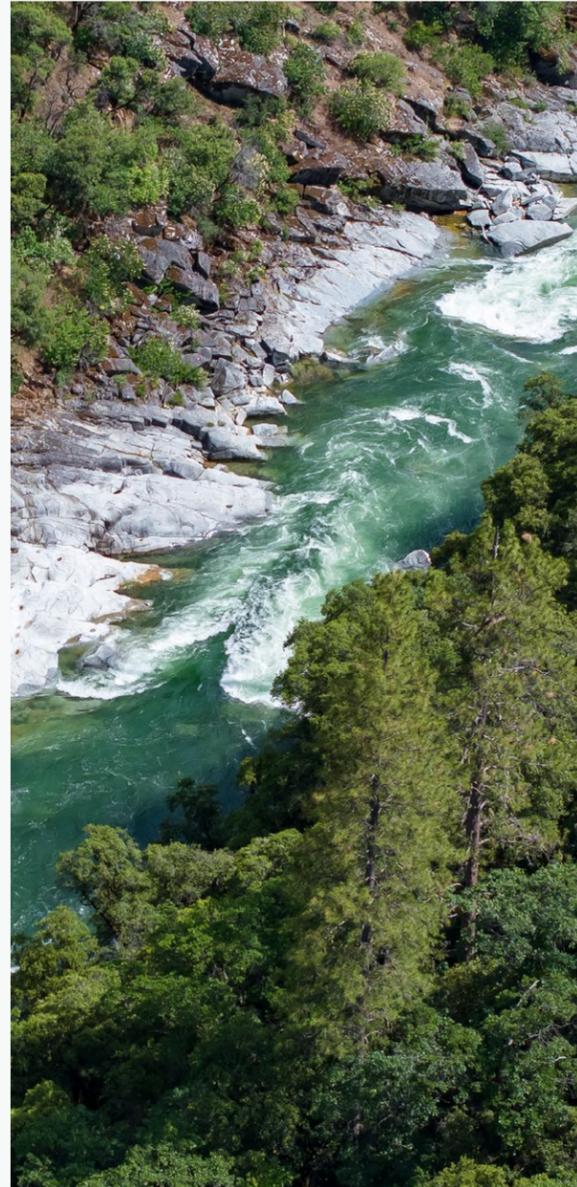
This is a long-term strategic project that will help disperse crowds from heavily impacted access sites, mitigate environmental impacts and support the county's sustainable tourism goals. Funding for this project will require a planning element and an infrastructure element.

Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the River Access Management Focus Area are listed to the right and pages that follow. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|--|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| All Rivers: maintain and expand emergency call box network | Maintain and expand the emergency call box network along the South Yuba River, Bear River, and Truckee River corridors. |
| South Yuba River: continuation of South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort | Support continued collaboration of agency and community stakeholders of river access and emergency response providers to coordinate solutions and messaging for public safety, responsible recreation and management of the river. |
| South Yuba River: continue and expand River Ambassador program | Continue and expand River Ambassador program along the South Yuba River to share use information, encourage sustainable recreation, and conduct use counts. |
| South Yuba River: provide permanent Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) signage | Provide permanent Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) signage for notification of river conditions and parking availability. |
| South Yuba River: Bridgeport Crossing parking barriers and enforcement | Provide boulders or fencing and signage to restrict parking in unauthorized areas. Coordinate with adjacent property owners. |
| South Yuba River and Truckee River: Nevada County Sheriff's Office and Search and Rescue (SAR) Mountain Rescue Team Certification | Nevada County SAR has started the certification process from Mountain Rescue Association as a three-year commitment to bring a higher level of skill and safety to Nevada County and the Sierra. This project will fund training curriculum and the equipment purchases needed to support low- and high-angle rescue operations from throughout the county, from Donner Summit to the Yuba River canyon. |

River Access Management

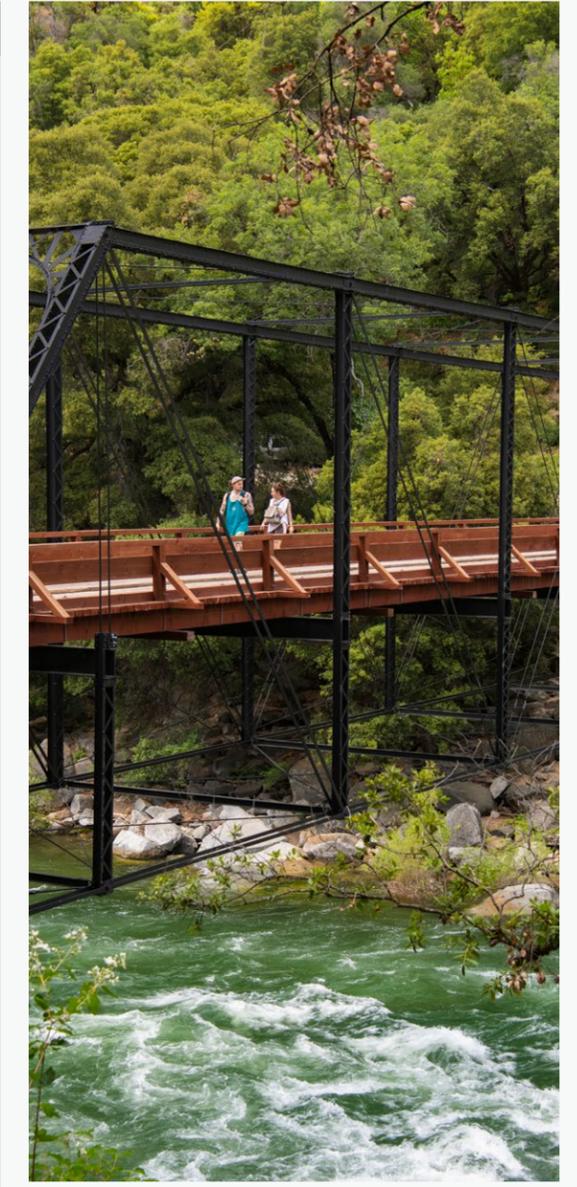


South Yuba River

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| South Yuba River: update coordinated adaptive visitor use management strategies (CA State Parks, BLM, and USFS) | Work with the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort to develop updated, coordinated management strategies for responsible recreation access to the South Yuba River. Develop coordinated messaging strategies to shift and disperse use, implement permit system or reservations. Consider and evaluate implementation of fees as part of the permit system. Utilize real-time messaging and Intelligent Transportation Systems at all recreation locations and at key decision-making points prior to the recreation site. |
| South Yuba River: Bridgeport - barn interpretation center | Develop a plan to use the South Yuba River State Park barn for interpretation and implement when possible. |
| South Yuba River: concessionaire | Investigate the suitability of a food service concession that complements the park's aesthetics near the Visitor Center at Bridgeport. |
| South Yuba River: Indian Springs Campground upgrades | Provide upgrades to the Indian Springs Campground. |
| South Yuba River: Highway 49 access improvements | Provide a vault toilet and signage at Highway 49 crossing of Independence Trail (CA State Parks). |
| South Yuba River: Purdon Crossing bridge and road improvements | Replace existing bridge with new bridge and improved road access. Existing bridge will be left in place for pedestrian and historical access. |

River Access Management

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|--|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| South Yuba River: Purdon Crossing parking, restroom, and waste abatement | Enhance Purdon Crossing with restrooms, trash receptacles, and signage. Evaluate opportunities to provide designated parking or shift use appropriately. Provide updated signage and incorporate no parking/fire lane zones and advance signage notifications. |
| South Yuba River: Edwards Crossing bridge and road improvements | Replace existing bridge with new bridge and improved road access. Existing bridge will be left in place for pedestrian and historical access (Project in planning stages). |
| South Yuba River: Edwards Crossing parking, trail, and waste abatement improvements | Construct/improve parking with trail to bridge and river access. Provide updated signage and incorporate no parking/fire lane zones and advance signage notifications. |
| South Yuba River: evaluate joint governance/operations framework | Evaluate and develop recommendations for how a joint governance council or other structure would work, benefits, challenges, and how it could be established for South Yuba River Corridor. |
| South Yuba River: improve parking and restrooms at Langs Crossing/ South Yuba River | Provide toilet at Langs Crossing (may involve land exchange). Improve parking with more spaces and delineation of spaces. Provide trash receptacles. Expand river ambassadors program to include this area. |



Purdon Crossing, South Yuba River

River Access Management

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Bear River: Dog Bar Bridge improvement with bike/ped lane | Bridge is planned to be reconstructed in next 3 years, including a bike/ped lane. |
| Bear River: trailhead and signage | Improve access to the river and provide off-roadway parking/trailhead and signage. |
| Truckee River: Hirschdale Bridge improvement | Bridge is planned to be reconstructed over the Truckee River, in the next two years. |
| Truckee River: Hirschdale signage improvements | Improve existing signage to include information about emergency satellite phones, evacuation routes, community entries, and responsible recreation. |
| Truckee River: Planning and design for long term river access improvements near Hirschdale | Study location, plan, design, and construct a formal parking lot, river access, bathrooms, trash receptacles, etc. |
| Truckee River: upgrade amenities at high-user river access points and Boca, Prosser and Stampede reservoirs | Increased trash management. Upgrade boat launches and campgrounds at reservoirs. |
| Donner Lake West End beach parking expansion/resurfacing | Expand parking and resurface West End Beach parking area. |



Truckee River

Focus Area: Destination Donner Summit



Focus Area Summary

Improve summit infrastructure and develop a visitor center, trailheads, restroom facilities, and educational information; Support restoration and fuel reduction projects in critical headwaters region of Yuba and Bear Rivers that provide summer/winter recreation access and environmental benefits.

Donner Summit Public Use, Trails, and Recreation Facilities Plan (2023)

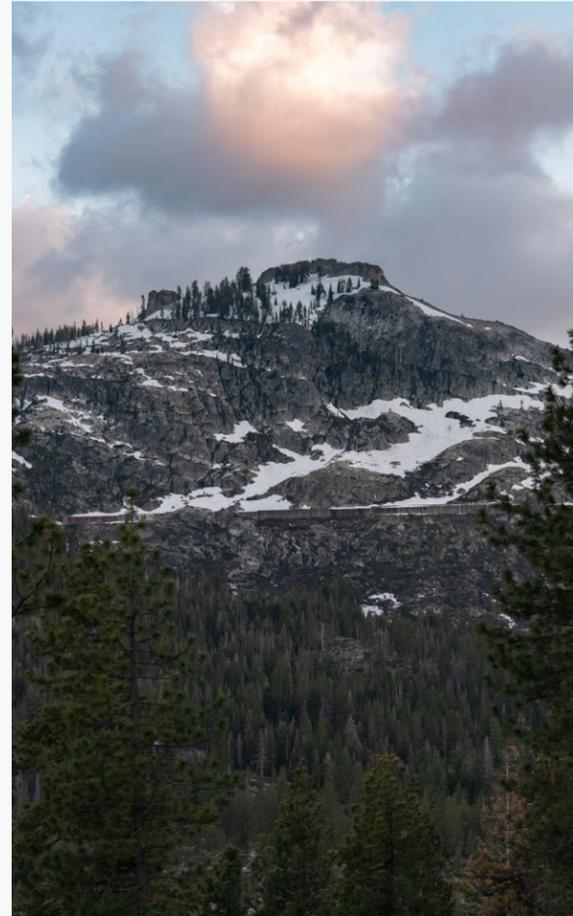
Need and Importance

The Donner Summit Association (DSA) conducted a comprehensive recreation study to guide recreation improvements on Donner Summit (Donner Summit Public Use, Trails, and Recreation Facilities Plan). The plan describes the need for new and enhanced facilities and recommended projects which are summarized in this section.

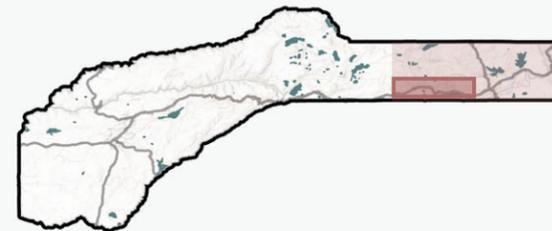
Van Norden Meadow is a stunning landscape at the heart of Donner Summit. Developers wanting to create a lake resort community diverted portions of the South Yuba River from its historic route and dammed the meadow. The meadow was saved in 2012 by the Truckee Donner Land Trust, who has lowered and decommissioned the dam and continues their efforts to repair the erosion

and incision resulting from roadways and other human influences.

Despite receiving heavy visitation year-round, Donner Summit has only one permanent public restroom at Loch Leven Trailhead, which is maintained by the USFS. During the summers of 2020 and 2021, portable (privately funded) restrooms at the Pacific Crest Trail at Donner Summit, China Wall parking area, the Summit Station Trailhead, and the Soda Springs General Store experienced sanitary issues, including overflows on a bi-weekly basis. Not only are these impacts harmful to the environment, but they also present sanitation hazards for both visitors and staff.



Donner Summit



Donner Summit Public Lands, Trails and Recreation Facilities Plan (2023)

Community members have expressed support for the development of a day use area, with 65 percent of *Donner Summit Public Use, Trails, and Recreation Facilities Plan* survey respondents believing that it is very or somewhat important.

The sno-park on the eastbound side of Interstate 80 is a popular wintertime destination, but the venue's facilities cannot support the current demand. Not only have human waste and trash become common due to a lack of public restrooms and trash receptacles, people recreating along Donner Pass Road and Soda Springs Road either

encroach on private property or sled along the roadway or under overpasses. In addition, snowbanks restrict roadside parking and people park in the roadway, impeding traffic flow and creating safety hazards.

Donner Summit's four designated campgrounds are located away from the central trailheads. While many people disperse camp in appropriate areas, camps are sometimes set up in locations where camping is not permitted. The lack of adequate or convenient facilities, such as restrooms and trash receptacles, result in some campers improperly disposing of their

waste which has serious consequences for the already sensitive environment and wildlife.

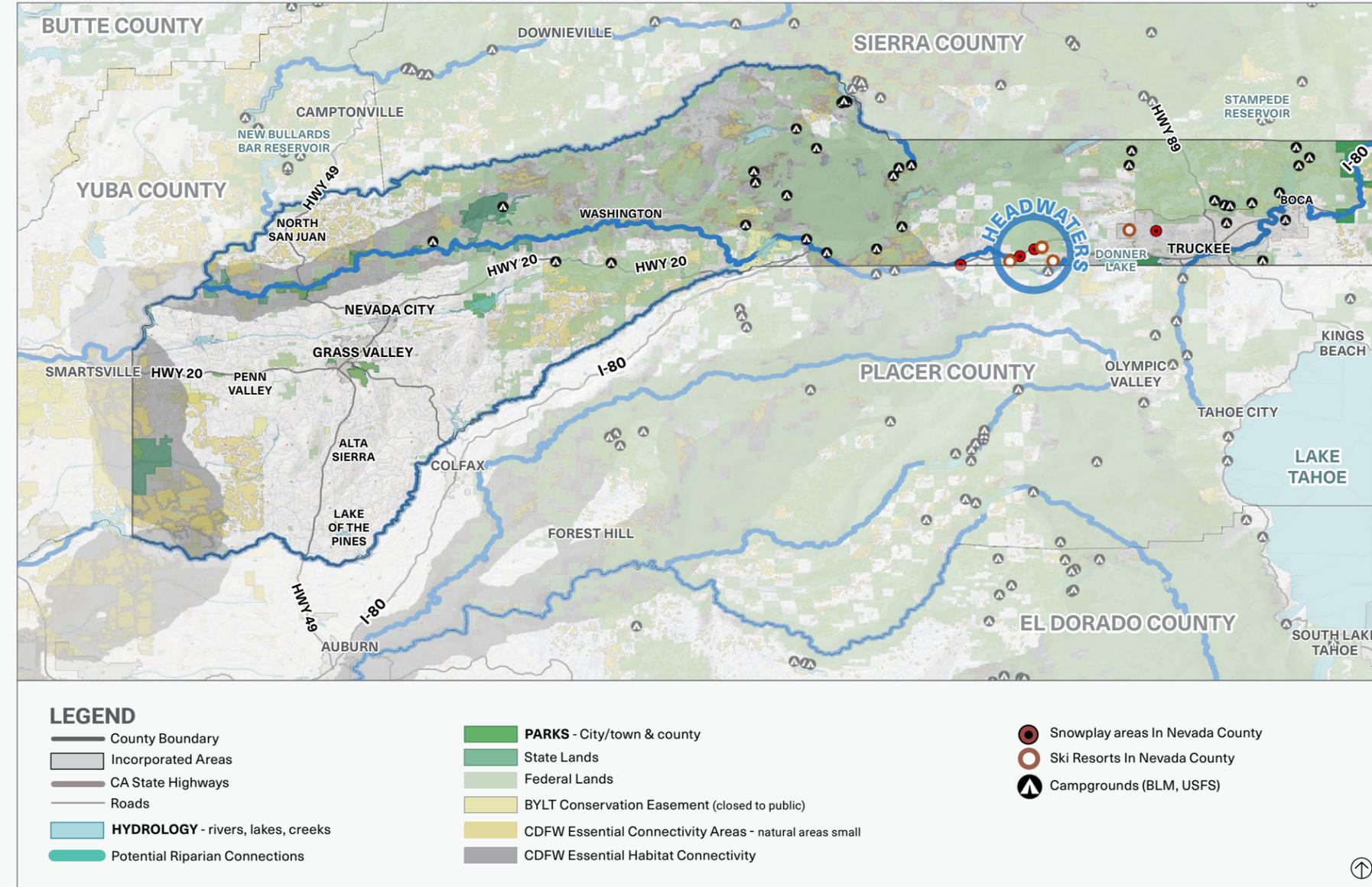
Donner Summit is home to an extensive trail system. The Truckee Donner Land Trust and other organizations are active partners in developing and maintaining many of the trails. Despite this, many user-created trails have been created over the years and have led to visitors encroaching on private property. This problem has been exacerbated by online trail mapping systems which publicize unauthorized user trails.



Donner Summit Canyon, looking onto Donner Lake

Destination Donner Summit

Critical Headwaters Protection with Recreation Opportunities



Destination Donner Summit

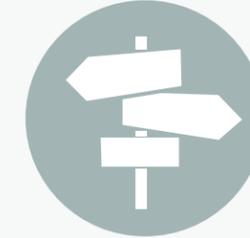
Objectives and Desired Outcomes

The suite of projects identified for the Donner Summit area work in concert with one another to provide needed recreation infrastructure to support access while protecting and restoring the biodiverse ecological headwaters of the South Yuba River. The projects envisioned include:

- Development of a visitor center/day use area, restroom facilities, playground, and educational information;
- Addition of trailheads and restroom facilities for both summer and winter recreation access;
- Planning for proposed regional connector trails;
- Implementation of planned trail projects;
- Development of an additional designated campground; and
- Support of restoration and fuel reduction projects.

Implementing the visitor center/day use area project would offer a central location for community gatherings and events staging. The facility should provide regional information that can help disperse recreationists from overused facilities and include information on trail etiquette, respect for private property, and ways to protect environmental and cultural resources. With additional support from the Donner

Donner Summit Public Use Plan Project Recommendations



WAYFINDING SIGNS

Wayfinding is used to safely plan for, get to, and return from a recreation experience on the Summit. Wayfinding will keep people on trails and reduce user-generated trails or unauthorized access. Wayfinding should be done in conjunction with the Town of Truckee and USFS plans for consistency.



TRAILHEAD UPGRADES

Trailheads increase accessibility because they define parking, provide users wayfinding information to make informed decisions regarding hiking locations, facilitate picnic and day use with rest areas.



RESTROOM ADDITIONS

Over 80 percent of stakeholders surveyed indicated a need for additional permanent restrooms. This is the second highest stakeholder priority for facilities development.



TRAIL ADDITIONS & CONNECTIONS

Adding well-thought out, planned trails and connections will help keep people on existing alignments and thus reduce the user-generation of trails through sensitive resources.



ADDITIONAL SNOWPLAY AREAS

Adding a designated snowplay area (either locally or state managed) would better accommodate existing recreationists, and thus bring a more enjoyable experience, repeat business, and more patronage for local businesses.



ADDITIONAL DESIGNATED CAMPGROUNDS

Increasing camping opportunities on the Summit will help keep up with demand and provide for increased overnight user opportunities.

Destination Donner Summit

Summit community, this location could also incorporate a public park and playground.

Nancy O. Gallery and Glass, a local art gallery, has served as an interim visitor center. The visitation and success of this interim visitor center will inform the need for a formal visitor center feasibility study if it experiences significant use.

Establishing an additional snowplay area would disperse demands for the existing sno-park and provide a safe place for people to sled or play in the snow. This facility could be managed either by the state or locally. It requires convenient access from I-80, ample parking, restrooms, and trash receptacles to promote proper disposal of waste and prevent the detrimental impacts of overuse. Improved signage, enforcement of illegal snow play, and finding a safe location away from major roadways is critical to the safety of future users. Note that state-managed areas have costs associated with them.



2022-2023 winter storm, Donner Summit area

Van Norden Meadow is home to a biodiverse ecosystem at the headwaters of the South Yuba River and is a crucial natural resource in the Donner Summit area. The meadow's historical and pre-historic context is also relevant. Restoration efforts are primarily focused on returning the meadow to its natural state, but also recognize opportunities to celebrate diversity and the ecological benefits of high alpine meadow restorations.

The restoration project, led by the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) in partnership with the USFS, Truckee Donner Land Trust, and others, proposes the restoration of 485 acres of meadow habitat at Van Norden. This effort aims to restore channels throughout the meadow which have been deepened and widened due to historic flows. Restoration work at the meadow presents an opportunity to coincide with the creation of new parking and trailhead facilities as well as interpretive signage describing the restoration.

DIPS: Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship

Stewardship Plan Goals

- 1 COLLABORATIVE, MULTI-AGENCY STRUCTURE
- 2 WATER QUALITY
- 3 ECOLOGICAL HEALTH
- 4 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES
- 5 RECREATIONAL USE AND CAPACITY
- 6 TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY AND PARKING
- 7 ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

Stewardship Plan Goals in the DIPS: Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship Plan.

Destination Donner Summit

Recommended Strategies

- Identify the likely outcomes of various projects - economic, social, environmental - and who is most likely to see those benefits.
- Work with project partners to identify opportunities to stack projects to leverage funding and to tap into innovative funding strategies.
- Review use data at the interim visitor center to quantify needs and feasibility of a visitor center.
- Advance design and implementation of projects and identify opportunities to coordinate construction timing and staging for each project in order to maximize construction dollars.
- Maintain dialogues with small ski areas to understand barriers and identify opportunities for support in order to ensure the area's vitality and sustainability.

Recreation Activities in the Donner Summit area

Snow Sports



Equestrian



Water Sports (fishing, kayaking, boating)



Hiking & Trail Running



Biking (road, mountain, gravel, e-bike)



Snow Play



Image Credit: Jon Baiocchi

Image Credit: Adobe Stock Photo

Case Study

Wooster Mountain State Park Acquisition, Ridgefield, CT

In a landmark development for Connecticut's state parks, the acquisition of the 460-acre Bennett's Pond property in Ridgefield has been realized through a significant Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant totaling \$2,197,863. This acquisition was administered by the Department of Environmental Protection and serves as a substantial expansion of Wooster Mountain State Park. The inclusion of Bennett's Pond enriches the recreational offerings of the park, opening up a spectrum of activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing.

Deputy Commissioner David K. Leff expressed his satisfaction, emphasizing that the LWCF played a pivotal role in making this 460-acre addition possible. This expansion aligns with the state's ongoing commitment to preserving natural landscapes and enhancing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With this acquisition, Connecticut continues to safeguard its natural heritage and provide enduring enjoyment of these areas for generations to come.

Destination Donner Summit

FEATURED PROJECT

Van Norden Meadow



Van Norden meadow in the winter



Van Norden meadow spillway
Image Credit: Marshall Alexander



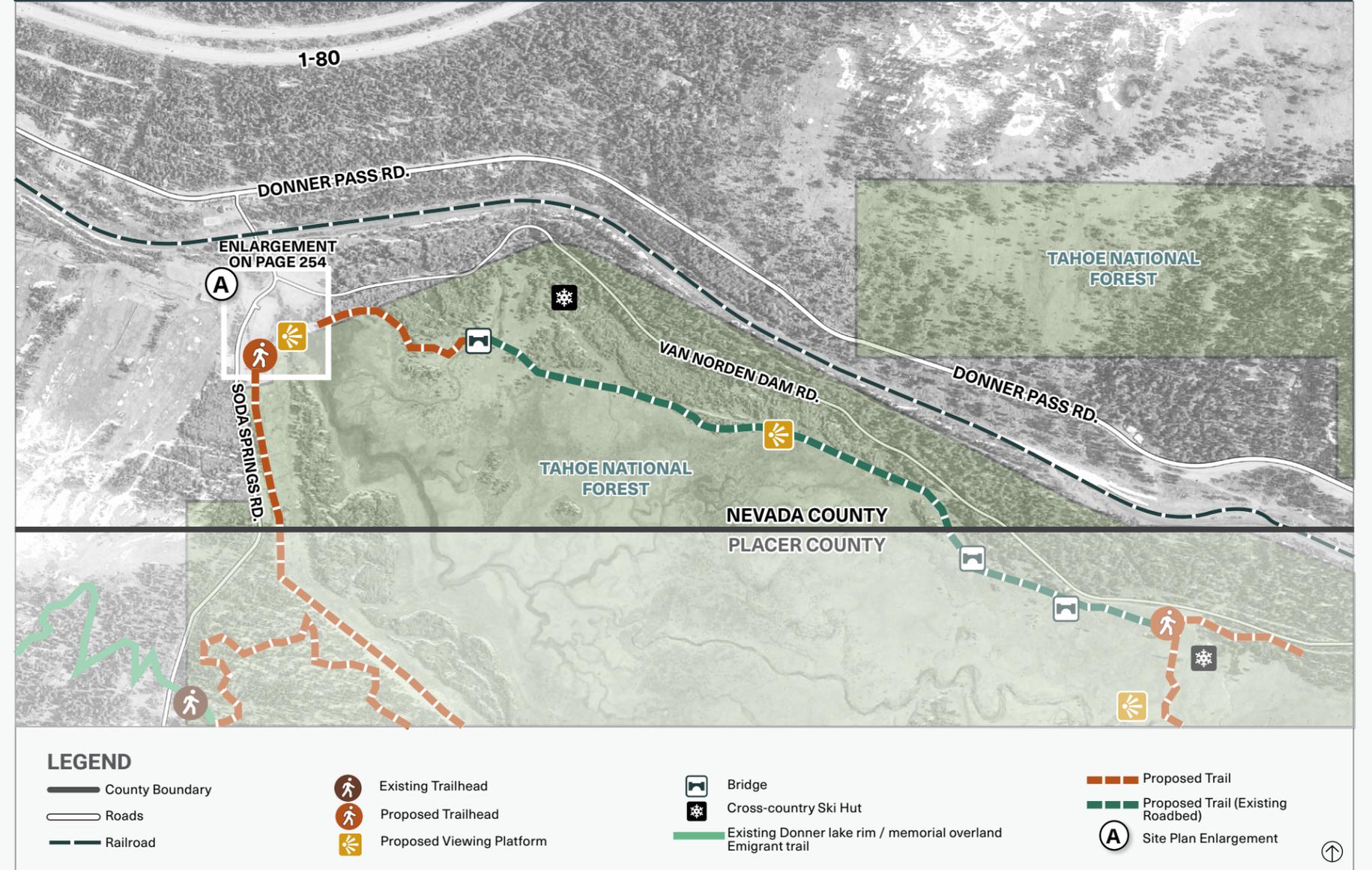
Van Norden meadow
Image Credit: Marshall Alexander



Van Norden meadow trail
Image Credit: Marshall Alexander

Destination Donner Summit

Context Map: Van Norden Meadow Enhancement

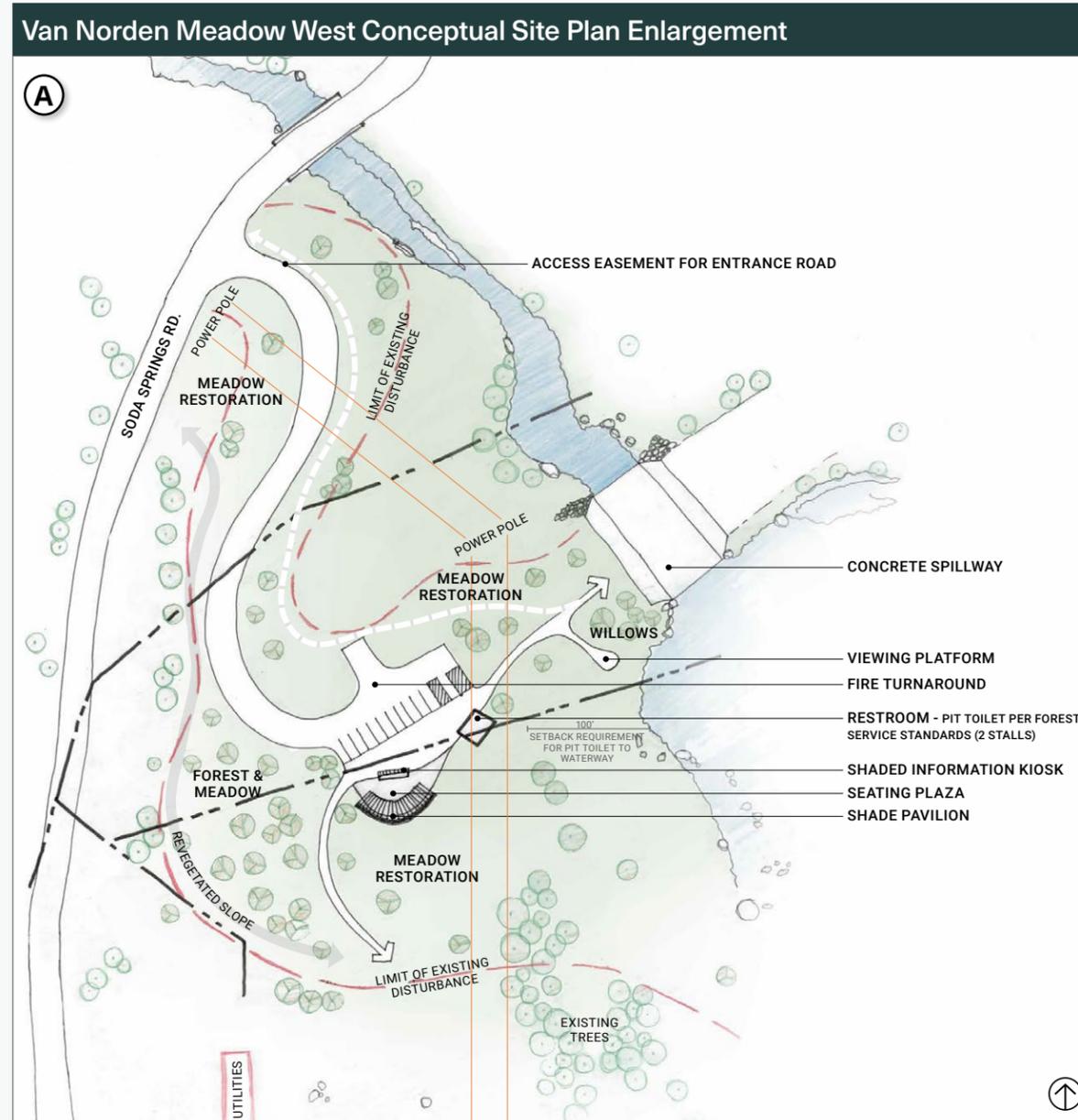


Destination Donner Summit

The Van Norden meadow restoration project was planned by the Tahoe National Forest and South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) and received funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board's Forest Conservation grant program to complete the phase 1 meadow restoration. Additionally, recreation improvements such as proposed trails, viewing platforms, berm development, and trailheads were also recommended.

The conceptual site plan to the right captures the Van Norden Meadow West proposed improvements. This site will serve as a trailhead and day use area for visitors to access adjacent trails around Van Norden meadow. The connection to a proposed trail follows the southern edge of the meadow and connects to the existing roadbed trail, which is outlined in the Van Norden restoration and recreation project plan.

The trailhead can be accessed by personal vehicle through the main entrance road off of Soda Springs Road, as well as by bicycle and on foot, using the access trail. The main recreation area includes a seating plaza with shade pavilion, a shaded information kiosk, and a pit toilet restroom with two stalls. To the east of the main visitor area, there is an accessible viewing platform to view the meadow and surrounding mountains. The parking lot includes 12 spaces (2 ADA) and a paved fire turnaround.



Destination Donner Summit

Implementation Approach

The unique opportunity with the Destination Donner Summit Focus Area is that it benefits multiple landowners and jurisdictions including US Forest Service, Nevada County, Placer County, and adjacent small businesses.

Project Recommendations:

The projects within Nevada County that are included as part of the Destination Donner Summit Focus Area are listed to the right and the following page. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

Project Recommendations

| Project Name | Project Description |
|--|--|
| Lamson-Cashion Donner Summit hub trailhead | Parking improvements along Donner Summit Road. Build trailhead with restrooms at the Pacific Crest Trail intersection of Donner Pass Road. Improvements will include kiosks, paved road, delineation of parking, signage, and information for visitors to end confusion of the many user generated trails in the area. |
| Castle Peak trailhead and parking improvements | The USFS is planning upgrades including a permanent, year-round restroom, an expansion of the parking area and additional informational kiosks. Improvements to include snow play access. |
| Sugar Bowl Road, village trailhead | This area lacks a trailhead and access is located along Sugar Bowl Road without safety provisions. Also, parking at the Pacific Crest Trail trailhead near Lake Mary is often overcrowded. Additional parking is necessary for trail access safety, particularly as the extension of the Donner Lake Rim Trail passes through Sugar Bowl and connects to the Memorial Overland Emigrant Trail. |
| Long Lake trailhead and restroom and Palisades Creek Trail | Trailhead improvements and portable or permanent restroom at the Long Lake trailhead. The trail from the Long Lake trailhead to Long Lake is braided (has various routes) which can cause confusion. Adding wayfinding, eliminating user generated trails, and restoring the trail centerline would help to keep users on designated trails and conserve the surrounding natural and cultural resources. |

Destination Donner Summit

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Donner Summit Visitor Center feasibility, design, and construction | Conduct feasibility of a permanent visitor center if temporary facilities show significant use. |
| Van Norden meadow restoration and road improvements | Restoration of 485 acres of meadow habitat in Van Norden Meadow. |
| Operations and Maintenance Agreement for public use facilities shared by multiple jurisdictions | Evaluate the ability to create an Operations and Maintenance Agreement within Donner Summit. This would include public use facilities shared by multiple jurisdictions. |
| Van Norden trailhead, boardwalks, and restroom | The trail is the Meadow Bisect Road that will follow part of the existing road through the meadow or will likely be moved west slightly for the section that crosses the South Yuba. The trailhead will be improved with signage and a restroom. Additional trails, separate from the restoration project are being contemplated by the USFS, in coordination with local Native American representatives. |



Rainbow Bridge, Donner Summit

Focus Area: Sustainable Recreation & Communications



Focus Area Summary

Develop a coordinated outreach, communication and signage strategy for messaging, wayfinding, and promotion of sustainable recreation countywide across all public lands. Intercept users before and during arrival via print, digital, advertising, signage, and ambassadors.

Need and Importance

Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in outdoor recreation has grown at a faster pace than typical, with 55 percent of the U.S. population engaging in outdoor recreation activities in 2023.³ With this increase in recreation tourism, there is a need for greater stewardship in our cherished outdoor landscapes to ensure they will be preserved for the benefit of our environment and future generations. Destination stewardship or sustainable recreation differs from conservation in that recreation is not only encouraged but needed to sustain the economic vitality of destination communities.

Like many other recreation areas, Nevada County has experienced a dramatic increase in people accessing rivers, lakes, trails, and open space for recreation purposes. Without

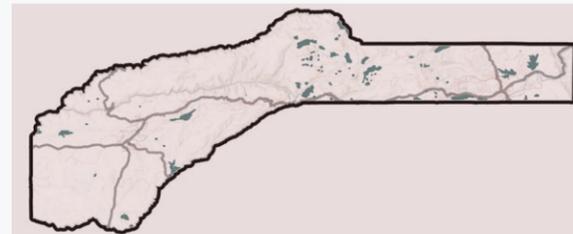
³ Outdoor Industry Association. (2023). 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. Boulder.

consistent and coordinated signage and messaging, this increased use causes a strain on local resources, creates environmental and safety issues, and misses the opportunity to realize economic benefits. While recreation offerings are abundant in Nevada County, the landscape includes a patchwork of different land managers that are intermixed with private land holdings. Users do not recognize when they cross between jurisdictional boundaries and they want to have easy-to-find and easy-to-understand resources for where to go and what experiences to have.

As described in the 2020 CALREC Vision White Paper, conflicting rules and messaging on neighboring public lands creates frustration for users and land managers. It can also set up friction between missions to promote recreation and protection of natural and cultural resources.



The South Yuba River Milemarker Project, led by SYRCL, provides 39-miles of wayfinding and safety messaging on public and private lands; install begins in 2024 with funding provided by the Nevada County Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund.



Wayfinding, or informational signage, educates and informs visitors of the amenities and function of the space they are using. Up-to-date and consistent signage conveys authority and professionalism, showing users that governing agencies in the area prioritize their natural resources. Cohesive communication encourages tourists and visitors to respect the land and natural resources by sharing the right message at the right time.

Recent successes are evidenced through the County's facilitation of the South Yuba River Public Safety (SYRPS) Cohort and Visit Truckee-Tahoe's leadership to guide the Convene, Champion, and Catalyze (CCC) working group and development of their 2023-2025 Strategic Plan which includes Stewardship. Additionally, the County established the Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund that funded 19 projects and programs including river and trail ambassador programs. These efforts demonstrate the positive outcomes from regular multi-jurisdictional communication and from having a presence and engagement with users at high-volume recreation sites.

The SYRPS Cohort coordinates strategies for enhancing the experiences during peak period visitation. They have improved communication between users, recreation providers, and maintenance entities. During 2022, the River Ambassador Program Ambassadors tracked increasing numbers

of recreation use and greeted people with bilingual messaging and outreach.

The need for destination stewardship or sustainable tourism planning has been growing for many years as both people and government entities have begun prioritizing conservation and sustainability principles. Sustainable tourism recognizes the outdoors as a multi-functional natural, social, cultural, and economic resource for both residents and visitors.

The work of Visit Truckee-Tahoe and the organization's Sustainable Truckee initiative, plus the Two Year Strategic Plan including Stewardship and Go Nevada County's incorporation of travel alerts as part of recreation messaging, are critical components of the Plan to move forward. Continuation of these collaborative efforts and planning for sustainable recreation builds upon their successes and provides consistent messaging and expectations for recreation experiences.



▼ Bridgeport covered bridge and river access

Sustainable Recreation

The term refers to the implementation of sustainable practices related to recreation that minimize the negative impacts of recreation (damaging the natural environment, overcrowding, etc.) while maximizing the positive ones (job creation, cultural heritage preservation, landscape restoration, etc.). The USFS describes the strategic intent as "expanding the ability to provide important benefits that improve quality of life, while increasing the sustainability of national forests and grasslands".

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Sustainable recreation requires proactive and coordinated messaging to residents and visitors. It considers the user's experience planning for and arriving at a recreation site, completing the activity, leaving the activity, and reflecting on their experience. Sustainable and coordinated messaging tells the story of Nevada County, how partners want it to be told – through advocacy as well as through public safety and responsible recreation content that intercepts people



Wildflower Ridge Preserve and Trail
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)

before they even arrive. It includes continued collaboration of partners through the SYRPS Cohort and CCC and offers attractive and welcoming messaging to direct people where they want to go, guide them through their experience, and stress the importance of stewardship and Leave No Trace principles. Traditional directional signage, digital media and mapping, websites, phone apps, advertising, and ambassadors all play an important role. Successful examples of messaging include the Truckee Tahoe Travel Alert and Go Nevada County websites which provide daily updates on conditions and how to appropriately access trails, rivers, and other recreation sites.

Developing an overall countywide signage plan for recreation access will align strategies and messaging between different organizations, recognize the valuable partner roles, improve consistency, and enhance the recreation experience to build a culture of stewardship and respect for land and people.

Successful wayfinding programs can provide a greater feeling of security for recreation users, reduce time assisting or redirecting lost people, identify synergies between recreation destinations, increase the percentage of return visitors, create more positive experiences, and build an expectation of stewardship.

Benefits of implementing sustainable tourism practices include:

- Attracting travelers with a stewardship mindset/ethic
- Creating added value in hospitality industries
- Educating travelers on how to recreate responsibly
- Improved infrastructure

A study conducted in 2022 by the World Travel & Tourism Council, Trip.com, and Deloitte shows that travelers are interested in sustainable recreation as well, with 69 percent of travelers actively seeking sustainable travel options.

Recreation destinations across the United States have begun planning and implementing sustainable tourism practices to begin seeing the positive impacts that visitation can bring.

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

Wayfinding builds a greater understanding of the place, increasing people's ability to explore and engage in responsible ways.

More understanding = Increased sustainability



SYRCL River Ambassadors share messaging

Recommended Strategies

- Develop and implement an overall wayfinding signage program that strengthens the overall brand of Nevada County and its partners and promotes sustainable recreation.
- Continue to enhance support for Trail and River Ambassador Programs.
- Continue to convene the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort and CCC on a regular basis to leverage resources and enhance coordination between agencies and organizations.
- Evaluate current recreation messaging and, as needed, refine communications to provide consistent messaging and information, working with law enforcement, fire agencies, and community-based organizations (e.g., destination marketing organizations, Visit Truckee-Tahoe, chambers of commerce).
- Work with private sector and tourism-based industries (e.g., lodging, restaurants, and guides) to support and reinforce messaging.
- Support development of current/future ambassadors for trails, rivers, and outdoor spaces equipped to intercept visitors at key locations.
- Build capacity for tribal communities and sharing of indigenous knowledge/practices.
- Provide paved trails and outdoor classrooms that promote Outdoor Access for All, from urban-based youth programs to sensory-sensitive and disabled persons.



Future Trail Stewards

Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)



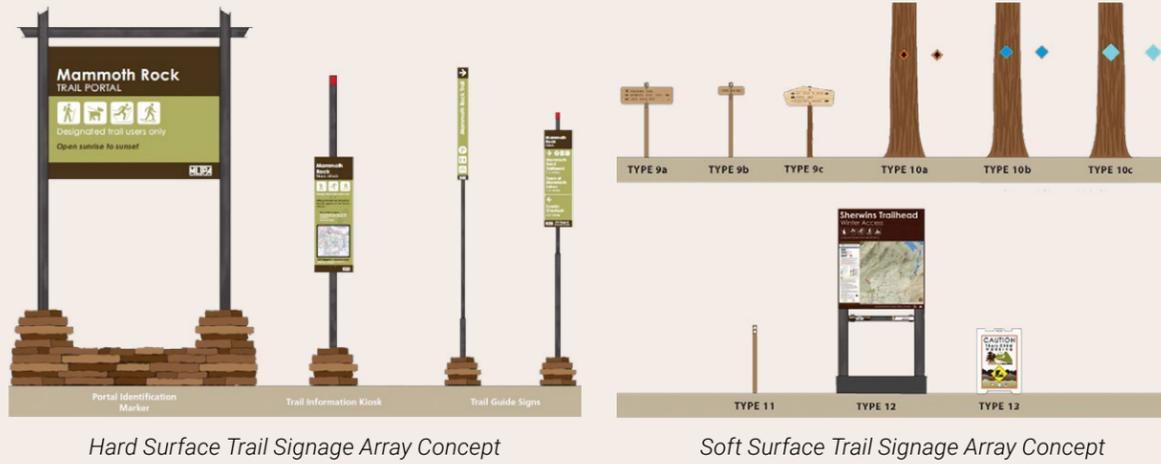
Sustainable Recreation & Communications

Case Study

Mammoth Lakes Signage & Wayfinding Program, California

The Mammoth Lakes Trail System sign program was developed with partners, public input, and thoughtful design. The sign program includes pathway and trail regulatory and wayfinding signage. Hard surface signage is designed with USFS symbols and messaging standards and is found on paved multi-use pathways and trail access nodes. There are multiple sign types used throughout the Mammoth Lakes Trail System. These include informational and interpretive kiosks as well as various trail guides equipped with wayfinding information and maps. This allows for smooth navigation while using pathways such as the Town Loop and Lakes Basin Path. Simple milepost markers are also a part of this sign array.

Town of Mammoth Lakes Trail System Master Plan



Celebration of Trails Day: Sierra Discovery Trail
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)

“Increase signage sharing the value of caring for and staying on trails to reduce run-off and damage to trails.”

- Survey respondent during Engagement Window 3 (Project Ideas)

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

Benefits of a Successful Wayfinding Program

1 Provide a greater feeling of security for recreation users

2 Reduce time redirecting lost people

3 Identify synergies between recreation destinations

4 Increase the percentage of return visitors

5 Create more positive experiences

6 Build an expectation of stewardship

Case Study

United States Forest Service Approach to Sustainable Recreation

USFS utilizes the “3-E” approach when planning for sustainable recreation. This method acknowledges the integrated relationship between engineering, education, and enforcement for a safe and successful recreation system. The strategy lends itself well to the management of public lands, where engineering (infrastructure) must be in place for people to access an area and education, or signage and marketing, must be available to communicate expectations of the experience and safety or regulatory considerations. By educating responsible travelers of the laws and appropriate uses of public land, law enforcement officials can focus their efforts during high-use/problem periods, utilizing high-profile patrols and surveillance, employing various patrol methods (foot, horseback, all-terrain vehicle, etc.), and enlisting the aid of volunteers. This comprehensive program is capable of monitoring use patterns, attitudes, and violation trends, especially property and resource damage, to inform overall management of public lands.

Sustainable Recreation & Communications



Tahoe National Forest

Case Studies

Destinations around the world are developing sustainable tourism plans and best practices. Visit California and others have published destination stewardship toolkits to guide leaders as they seek to implement sustainable tourism practices.

While recommendations should be specific to each destination, common best practices include building a team and identifying leaders, identifying key stakeholders and asking locals for input, providing education and training, and monitoring and measuring progress.

The following case studies describe a national standard for destination tourism with examples from Jackson Hole, Sedona, and Truckee.



Mountain IDEAL: Walking Mountains Science Center

The Walking Mountains Science Center developed the

Mountain IDEAL Standard, a framework for sustainability in mountainous areas which has been recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. These

standards are being used as a guide for Truckee because they address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by mountain communities, including issues such as water and energy use related to snow making and snow melting systems, affordable housing for residents and seasonal employees, collaborating with public land managers and the business community, and embracing mountain cultural heritage.



Jackson Hole: Visitor Sustainability Practices

Visit Jackson Hole's Visitor

Sustainability Practices program is a strong communication effort teaching visitors how to recreate responsibly and sustainably in Teton County. The program provides tips and tricks related to recreating responsibly with dogs, backcountry travel, what to do when encountering wildlife, preventing wildfires when camping, utilizing public transportation, staying on trails to reduce ecosystem destruction, leaving the land as it is, and tagging social media posts responsibly. Visitors receive or are directed to this information at visitor centers, online, or in web or print versions of the Jackson Hole Explorer magazine.

Sustainable Recreation & Communications



Sedona's Sustainable Tourism Plan

Sedona's Sustainable Tourism Plan includes efforts

focused on improving communication. The programs recommended in the Sustainable Tourism Plan include Sedona's Secret Seven, a website that disperses visitation by "letting visitors in on a secret." They advertise the special places around Sedona that can handle additional use in order to reduce overuse in other areas; partnering with Sedona Recycles and local businesses to reduce their contribution to landfills; and increasing awareness of the Straw-Free Sedona program to encourage businesses and visitors to use refillable water bottles and tote bags, paper straws, etc.



Truckee's Stewardship Plan

Visit Truckee Tahoe's (VTT) Stewardship Plan is integrated into their Two-Year

Strategic Plan (FY 23/24 and FY 24/25) and represents the gold standard for destination management. With an ecosystem mindset and a strategic plan that relies upon

collaboration and long-term thinking, the goal is to retain Truckee's mountain town character and appeal to both residents and visitors today, and for generations to come. With a focus on prioritizing progress and collaborative action, a Truckee Stewardship Council was formed. The Council and those who self-identified as "Truckee locals" provided quantitative and qualitative feedback on issues most negatively impacting quality of life. Top themes included traffic, crowded experiences, parking, trash, and behavior. The Council works together to address these issues as partners. In addition to facilitating the Council, VTT contributes to mobility and flow through destination management and support of programming and services.

Messaging is one of the primary ways VTT encourages visitors to have a positive impact. The messaging goes beyond Leave No Trace to encourage visitors to join the Sustainable Truckee mantra. The program includes an \$80,000 annual Sustainable Truckee gift card program and monthly E-newsletters that promote pre and post peak period visitation. They are working toward unified, regional messaging. Daily travel alert updates are one example. VTT has also developed Eco/Green Lodging Standards for short-term rentals and their booking engine allows travelers to filter lodging choices accordingly.



Mekdela Maskal, Prayer Flags, Celebration of Trails 2023 Art in Nature Installations
Image Credit: Kate Gazzo, Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

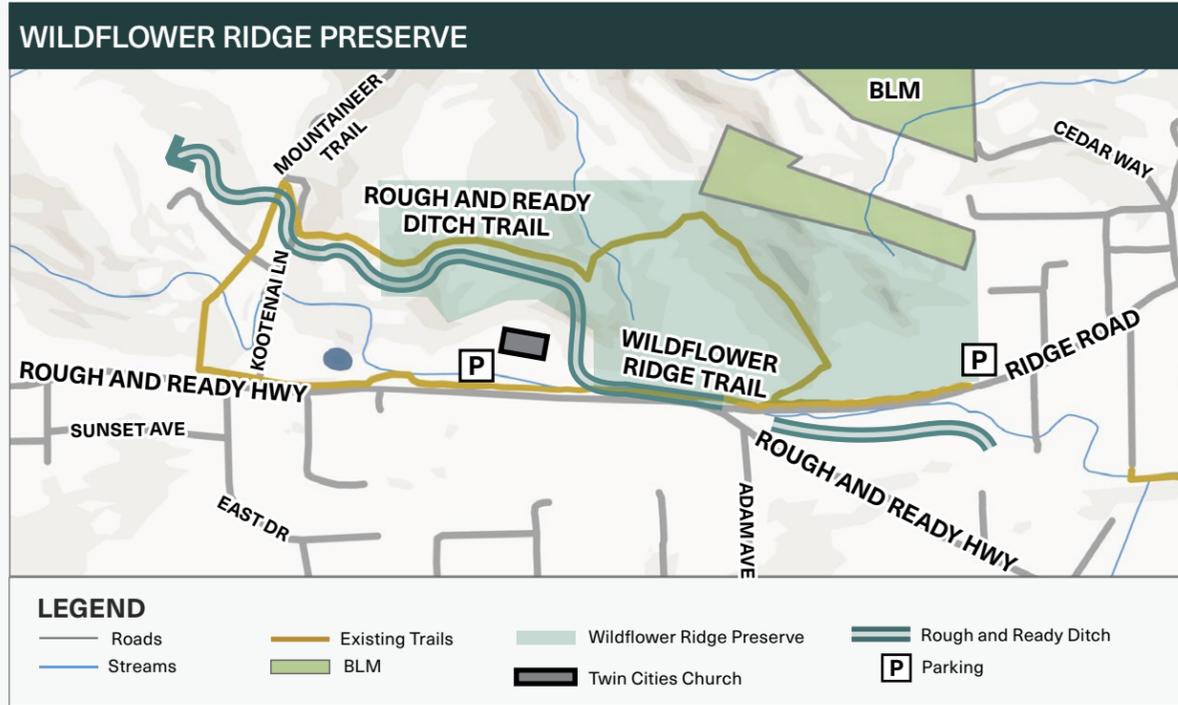
FEATURED PROJECT

Wildflower Ridge Preserve

The Wildflower Ridge Preserve is located just outside of Grass Valley, where the Rough and Ready Highway meets Ridge Road. This 128-acre Preserve was acquired in August 2023 by the Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) in order to protect the unique biodiversity on the site and to create a public space for people to spend time enjoying nature or walking the public trails.

There are two existing public trails on site and BYLT intends to enhance the trail systems and provide all-peoples access to the Preserve with wheelchair accessible trails throughout. The current trails include the Wildflower Ridge Trail which is one mile long and provides opportunities for observing the vast wildflower blooms which can be observed from April - June. It connects to the Rough and Ready Ditch Trail via an access road. The Rough and Ready Ditch Trail follows an historic canal. The full loop currently provides 2.6 miles of non- motorized pedestrian trails. The Preserve is strategically located with easy access for local schools and is connected via BYLT trails to Downtown Grass Valley.

The Preserve is home to wildflower meadows on lava cap soils, black oak woodlands, and diverse wildlife. BYLT will donate a Cultural Conservation Easement and stewardship fund to the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe. This will provide land access and rights for the Tribe in perpetuity. Outdoor education will continue to be enhanced at the Preserve and will include cultural arts and learning areas.



Still Here by Andres Amador, Celebration of Trails 2023 Art in Nature Installations
Image Credit: Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT)

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

Implementation Approach

This focus area will likely require dedicated staffing resources and joint funding and participation between Nevada County, land managers and active partners. Digital applications including GIS, social media and web-based trip planning software would need to be utilized and coordinated. Planning for implementation must also consider maintenance of signs, replacement, and additions as necessary.

Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the Sustainable Recreation & Communications Focus Area are listed to the right and the following page. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

Project Recommendations

| Project Name | Project Description |
|--|--|
| Continued coordination by multi-jurisdiction workgroups such as eastern Nevada County sustainability leaders (Convene, Champion, & Catalyze and South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort) | Support continued collaboration and coordination of destination, land use, and community leaders to provide coordinated solutions and messaging for responsible recreation and destination/sustainable tourism. |
| Responsible recreation messaging | Coordinate with the Convene, Champion, & Catalyze and South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort to develop consistent verbiage regarding responsible recreation and develop a strategy to connect messaging to short term rental owners/managers and lodging areas. |
| Tahoe-Truckee trail etiquette campaign | Take Care Tahoe Campaign targeting bicycle safety and behavior. This would be a refresh of the "Blaze a Trail of Kindness" messages that were previously put out by the Take Care Team. |
| Prepare a uniform signage program for Nevada County recreational trails and river access (directional, informational, interpretive, educational, etc.) | Signage and wayfinding program across Nevada County, including information about emergency satellite phones, evacuation routes, and responsible recreation. A coordinated, unified suite of signage and wayfinding that is implemented throughout the county to help visitors navigate spaces effectively and to tie various efforts together under a common umbrella was expressed by each focus group. Along with signage, a shared narrative that includes stories of historical/cultural significance and natural resources to educate users and link the entire system. In eastern Nevada County, the signage should be coordinated/consistent with North Lake Tahoe, in Placer County. |

Sustainable Recreation & Communications

| Project Recommendations | |
|--|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Implement uniform signage program for Nevada County recreational trails and river access (directional, informational, interpretive, educational, etc.) | Construct signage and wayfinding program across Nevada County, including information about emergency satellite phones, evacuation routes, community entries and responsible recreation. In eastern Nevada County, the signage should be coordinated/consistent with North Lake Tahoe, in Placer County. |
| Wildflower Ridge Preserve | In 2023 BYLT was able to purchase the 128-acres, now known as Wildflower Ridge Preserve, and has plans to enhance the recreational, cultural, and educational features on the property. BYLT will donate a Cultural Conservation Easement on the property to the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe, enhance the all-peoples public recreation through sustainable trails, including ADA trails as possible, and enhance the educational opportunities through creating outdoor classrooms that feature cultural, biological, and historic elements of the Preserve. |



Highway 20 in Nevada County

**Focus Area:
One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming**



One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming

Focus Area Summary

Enhance the capacity of Recreation and Park Districts in western Nevada County through a shared, experienced professional park and recreation staff person. Provide one shared platform for users that serves as a Recreation Resource Hub for participants, volunteers, and providers. Platform should coordinate recreation program offerings between Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the western county recreation and park districts. Convene an annual recreation fair to promote resources, build volunteer base, and increase access to programs/services.

Need and Importance

Local park facilities and programming services in Nevada County are provided by a variety of public entities, including four independent special districts – Western Gateway Recreation and Park District, Bear River Recreation and Park District, Oak Tree Park and Recreation District, and Truckee-Donner Recreation and Park District – along with the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City. The three districts that serve the western portion of Nevada County - Western Gateway, Bear River, and Oak Tree - operate on minimal budgets and are heavily reliant on volunteer efforts.

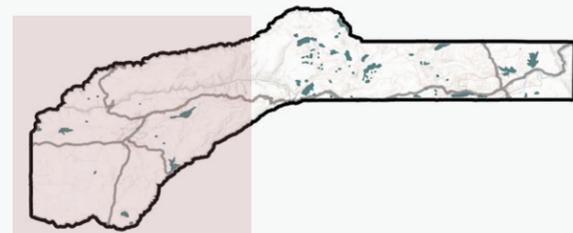
Because of the number of entities providing recreation and the dispersed development pattern of western Nevada County, residents

have expressed that they do not know where to find opportunities for recreation programming or where facilities and parks are located. There are needs for coordinated communications and capacity building.

A weakness of the existing park and recreation districts in western Nevada County is that they do not have professional recreation staff for the various functions needed to run a recreation district. The districts' needs and staffing for maintenance, programming, and administrative duties vary. Often the administrative work falls on each district's Board of Directors. The boards are elected but are also volunteers without the expertise or time for these management functions. Additionally, hiring a qualified,



Northern Sierra Swimming Team

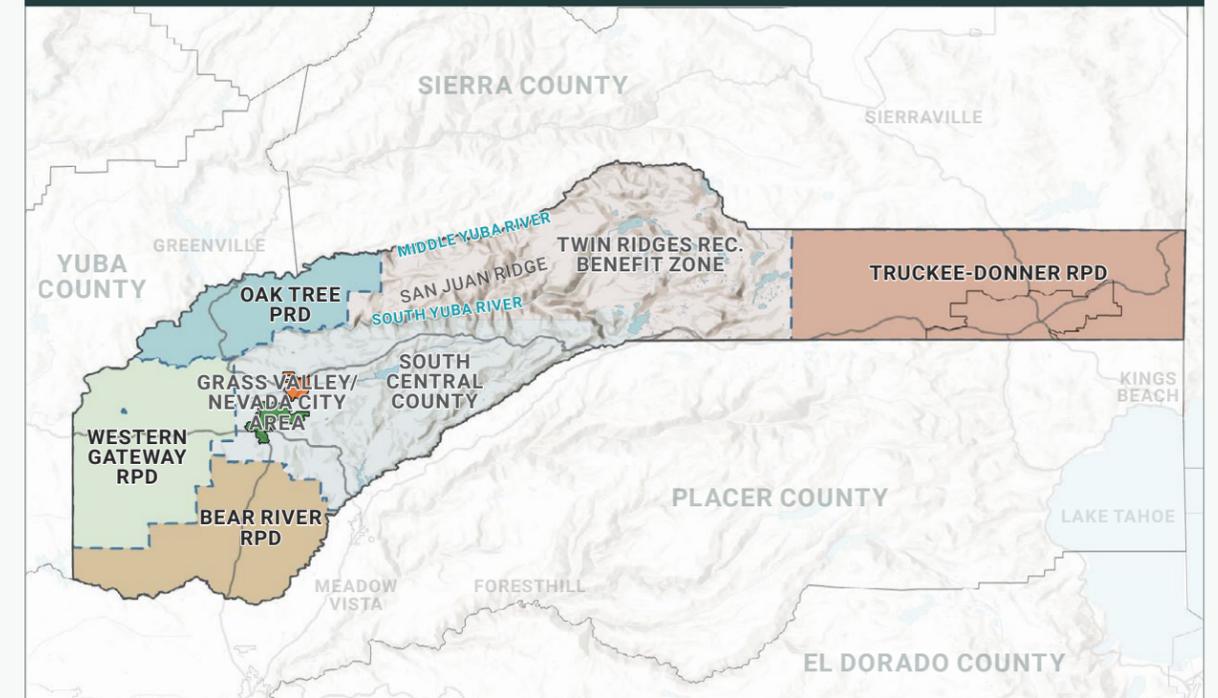


experienced person on a part-time basis creates challenges. They may work for a while, but they are likely to leave after a short period of time. This degrades longevity, consistency, and institutional knowledge which are critical for stability of the districts.

Another weakness of the western Nevada County recreation districts is that the people in these areas do not know where to get recreation services and programming inside and outside of their communities. Each of the communities is relatively small. There is a need to have a centralized place where residents can both find out what is going on in both their communities and surrounding towns and learn how they can access and sign-up for the programs and facilities.

While the Truckee-Donner RPD has a track record of consistent funding, staffing, and high-quality programming and facilities, the districts in the unincorporated areas of western Nevada County have struggled with consistent staffing and funding to serve residents. The County provides grant assistance and has served as a convener to help providers leverage resources, but more is needed to provide stability and support for the districts. The following pages contain a summary of the structure and status of the recreation and park districts and municipal recreation departments in western Nevada County.

RECREATION & PARK DISTRICTS AND BENEFIT ZONES IN NEVADA COUNTY



There are four recreation and park districts in Nevada County. These districts are the Bear River Recreation & Park District, Oak Tree Park & Recreation District, Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District, and Western Gateway Recreation & Park District.

LEGEND

- Recreation District Boundary
- Oak Tree Park & Recreation District
- Western Gateway Recreation & Park District
- Bear River Recreation & Park District
- Truckee-Donner Recreation & Park District
- Grass Valley City Limits
- Nevada City Limits
- South Central County Area
- Twin Ridges Recreation Benefit Zone

32% of survey 2 respondents said it is **somewhat or very difficult** to find information about outdoor recreation in Nevada County

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Oak Tree Park & Recreation District

Oak Tree Park & Recreation District (PRD) has a strong volunteer board, but no paid staff. The district has a lease agreement with the local community nonprofit library who rents space year-round at no charge and covers utility expenses. Oak Tree PRD does a lot of resource sharing and is a community hub.

Western Gateway Recreation & Park District

Western Gateway Recreation & Park District (RPD) elects five members to the Board of Directors for a four-year term. At the end of 2023, the district had four part-time paid employee positions; three maintenance and one office position, with a contracted bookkeeper. These positions, along with a host of volunteers, are the team that operates and maintains Western Gateway Regional Park for people to use and enjoy.

The Western Gateway Parks Foundation supports the district through fundraising. Most projects have been community led efforts with fundraising, construction, and ongoing maintenance by volunteers. Some examples of community-led projects include the Bike Park, Disc Golf Course and Dog Park.

72% of respondents from Western Gateway RPD rated the overall condition and maintenance of fields and facilities at Western Gateway Regional Park 'good' or 'fair'

- Survey responses during Engagement Window 3



Rental facilities, such as the Stage Pavilion at Western Gateway Park, generate revenue for Western Gateway Recreation and Park District.

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Grass Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2001)

Bear River Recreation & Park District

Bear River Recreation & Park District is mostly volunteer led with a full-time general manager and program coordinator. Due to low staff, the general manager typically has low capacity and there has been turnover throughout the years. Bear River RPD has agreements with the Pleasant Ridge Union School District to utilize the Magnolia Sports Complex fields, owns a small pocket park at Cascade Crossing, and holds a trail easement. The District serves the largest number of residents in the unincorporated areas of Nevada County including the Alta Sierra community and the gated Lake of the Pines community which provides amenities exclusive to its residents. Lake of the Pines facilities are funded through homeowner association fees and include a 230-acre lake and adjacent ponds, a 19-hole golf course and driving range, a Jr. Olympic-sized pool overlooking the lake, six developed parks,

lakeside beaches, playgrounds, and courts for sports, including bocce, tennis and pickleball.

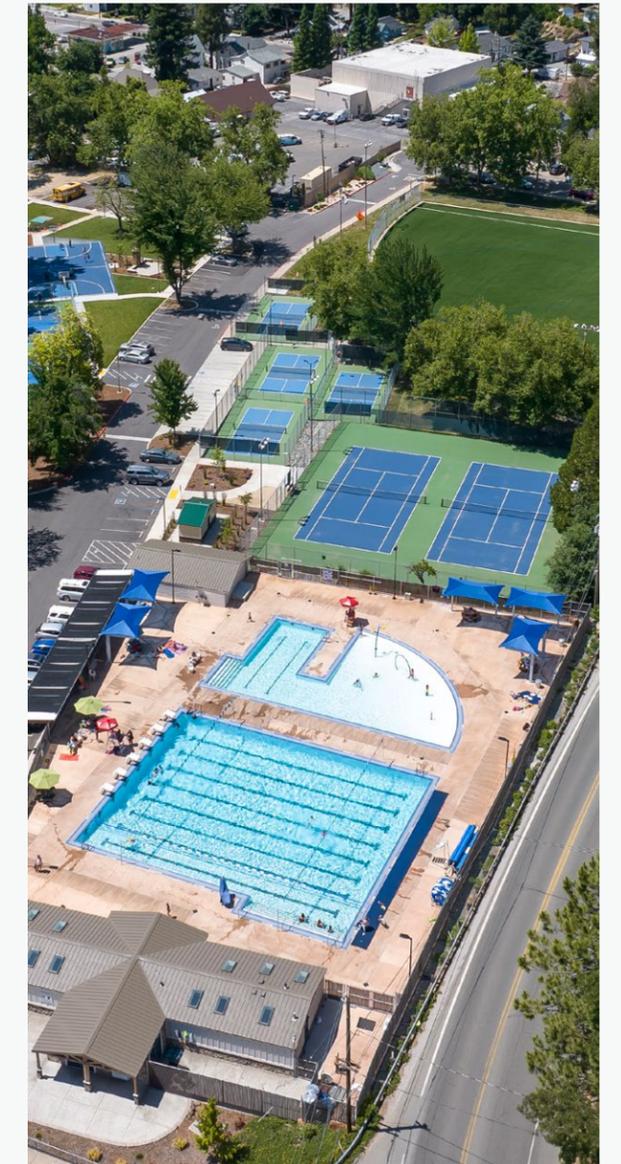
For a tee time fee, both Alta Sierra Country Club and the Darkhorse Golf Club offer public access to 18-hole courses located in Alta Sierra and the southwest side of Lake of the Pines. The Bear River RPD provides popular programs which draw interest from the Auburn Area.

Grass Valley

Grass Valley does not have a parks and recreation department; expenses for recreation purposes are embedded in Public Works. Facilities and program offerings in the city have seen recent enhancements. The City has a Recreation Master Plan from 2001 and in 2018 residents approved Measure E, with funds that can be applied towards recreation improvements. Measure E funds have been leveraged to maximize



Bear River Recreation & Park District's Gary D. Clarke Turf Field *photo credit Bear River RPD*



New swimming pool and pickleball courts at Memorial Park in Grass Valley were built using Measure E funds.

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co-benefits resulting in facilities that attract residents county-wide like the Memorial Park pool and pickleball courts. Recently, the City was awarded \$3 million through the Prop 64 Public Health and Safety Grant program with the intention of spending the funds on preventable measures for at-risk youth (i.e., a revamped skate park and a parks officer).

Nevada City

Nevada City does have a Parks and Recreation Department, which makes up 4 percent of the General Fund expenses, slightly over half a million dollars. Nevada City has formed a Parks and Recreation Committee based on their strategic plan. The City has American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that have been set aside for recreation planning and infrastructure that will need to be obligated by December 31, 2024. Nevada City was also awarded a \$3 million grant through the Prop 64 Public Health and Safety Grant program with the intention of using \$1 million of the funding for youth park facilities. In October of 2023, Nevada City's Park Initiative Committee recommended the funding be used to develop a skate park.

77% of Survey 3 respondents from Nevada City recreate outdoors in Nevada City weekly



Nevada City's Prop 64 grant funds may be used to construct a new skate park. The image above shows Condon Park in Grass Valley.

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Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Cross-sector and cross-disciplinary partnerships are key to realizing the desired outcome of this focus area. Institutions are increasingly leveraging their unique resources, strengths, and assets to collaborate and work towards the shared goals of advancing equity, promoting health and wellness, closing the opportunity gap, and building environmental and community resiliency.

Shared Staffing Resources

Economies of scale can be gained by sharing professional staff for recreation planning and administration efforts in the western part of the county. The goal is to provide support for the districts that creates capacity for them to effectively and efficiently function while maintaining local autonomy and decision-making by district boards.

Independently, the Districts in western Nevada County lack resources to attract and retain personnel to perform administrative and professional tasks. Working together, and possibly with the County's support, shared professional staff will help these districts complete critical administrative tasks such as risks and compliance requirements, building budgets, complete fiscal audits, and pursuing and overseeing grants.

Additionally, dedicated staff can continue enhancing the consistency and coordination between district recreation and wellness offerings. They may also provide oversight for recreation programming. Offering full-time work and benefits opens the door to hiring qualified professionals that also give the districts some staff longevity.

Central Recreation Programming Website

The objective is to have one dedicated website for people to access and learn about all of western Nevada County's recreation offerings, including participant registration, seasonal activities and events, volunteer opportunities and more. Residents would have one place to go to learn about what programs are offered. The number of participants and volunteers in leagues and programs may increase due to cross-pollination between the districts and the cities which could allow for more varied programming for all ages.

The central website would link out to partner organizations' sign-ups and reservation systems. This centralized resource may be nested within the County library or another entity's established system. As described in the sidebar, in western Nevada County, libraries have physical, local presence at branches and allow for some level of autonomy and individualism for each of the districts and the cities.

Shared Benefits of Recreation and Libraries

In western Nevada County, libraries have served a recreation purpose by providing access to enrichment activities, resources and recreational equipment, gear, passes, and more. With many of the libraries centrally located in smaller communities, opportunities to partner with libraries as part of a recreation program delivery strategy for reservation sign-ups or local staffing could be considered. A survey of the parks and recreation field conducted by NRPA found that 58 percent of agencies partner with local libraries in support of health and wellness programs and services. Parks, recreation, and libraries collectively provide a variety of benefits and have much in common that can be harnessed collectively to:

- Bring holistic programming and services into trusted community spaces
- Provide low to no barrier opportunities for education, play, and connection
- Support virtual health, wellness and enrichment programming for youth and older adults
- Provide safe and creative opportunities to engage in physical activity and exercise programs

One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming

Case Study

Shared Staff Agreement in Kern County, California

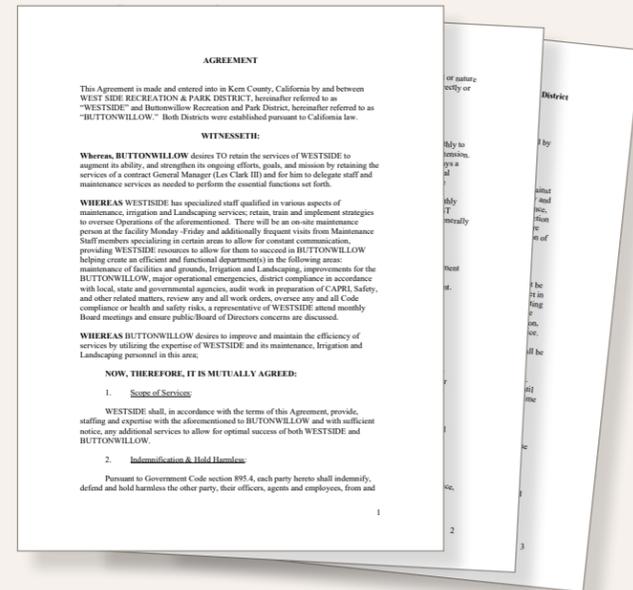
In Kern County, California, the County Services and Special District Committee oversees the management, ethics, performance and execution of county service departments. In 2016, the Committee reviewed the operations of service districts throughout the county. The Committee's review of the Buttonwillow Recreation and Parks District ("Buttonwillow") revealed that the District was operating at a deficit due to decreasing tax revenue, which had historically funded a majority of the Buttonwillow RPD's operations. The County Services and Special District Committee recommended that Buttonwillow RPD develop a formal contingency plan for expected budget shortfalls in upcoming years.

Meanwhile, the Westside Recreation and Parks District ("Westside") in the same county is an award-winning parks department for their programs and facilities. The parks district is seen as a pillar of its community and provides up to 60 part-time jobs to local residents. However, due to reduced tax revenue, one of the County Services and Special District Committee's 2016 recommendations for Westside RPD involved cutting costs by reducing their workforce. Adamant that the staffing level was needed to effectively operate and to maintain the level of service for their programs and park facilities, the District needed to find a long-term solution.

Recognizing the opportunity to collaborate, the Districts created a shared staff agreement which reduces staffing expenses for Buttonwillow and increases revenue for Westside and creates shared staffing for the two districts to both provide desired level of services and programming. In the agreement, Westside provides maintenance, irrigation, and landscaping services for Buttonwillow's facilities in exchange for \$8,167 per month. A Westside maintenance worker is expected to be on-the-ground in Buttonwillow parks for

seven hours per day, five days per week. Westside staff also provide professional expertise in human resources, payroll duties, budget preparation, and more to Buttonwillow's Board of Directors, all of whom manage the parks district on a volunteer basis. Buttonwillow pays Westside \$6,000 per quarter for their expertise and a minimum of eight on-site hours per week.

The agreements made in Kern County show the success of leveraging shared resources. By evaluating and discussing each district's strengths and weaknesses, they were able to share resources for mutual benefit which reduced costs and improved services overall for both districts.



Maintenance agreement between Buttonwillow Recreation and Parks District and Westside Recreation and Parks District.

One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming

Recommended Strategies: Countywide

- Share full-time, professional park and recreation staff that provide programming and administrative assistance for interested districts in western Nevada County. Potential roles and responsibilities for shared staffing are described in the sidebar. The organization and funding of the shared staff will be developed through further coordination with the districts and the County.
- Build capacity, program interest, and volunteering for the RPD's and cities' recreation offerings by launching and hosting an annual recreation fair. The fair can promote program registrations, offer volunteer sign-ups, and generate excitement and knowledge of the recreation and park facilities and regional partnerships and facilities such as Bright Futures for Youth. It is recommended that the fair include other organizations and partners to build attendance and interest.
- Enhance an existing platform to serve as a western Nevada County joint recreation website so that the public knows what is being offered in all local communities and cities and how to access those programs, parks, and facilities. The libraries, Grass Valley, Nevada City, or the districts could self-populate content through a license (similar to the Trumba calendar) and have joint oversight of the website, with coordination through a shared administrative staff person. The website is intended to focus on the offerings of western Nevada County but may also link to east county resources.
- Continue the Recreation Coalition.

Recommended Strategies: Oak Tree PRD

- Continue partnering with San Juan Ridge Community Library and consider expanding to allow the library to offer programming in the park.
- Consider contracting with the school district or the Family Resource Center for services and maintenance, so there are future options for Oak Tree to increase their recreation offerings. The County would likely be the lead to develop the contract agreement, or could contract with Family Resource Center.

57% of survey respondents said **internet search tools** are one of the ways they find information about outdoor recreation in Nevada County. This was the most popular method of finding information among survey respondents.

Desired Qualifications and Potential Roles and Responsibilities of Shared Professional Park Staffing

- Desired qualifications: Bachelor of Arts in Parks and Recreation or related field and at least two years of increasingly responsible experience in parks and recreation
- Provides work for each district on a percentage basis
- Administrative task examples: budgeting, fiscal audits, risk assessment and compliance, program development and management, project management, existing staff supervision, maintenance contractors/volunteer agreements, resident interaction, agreements with other agencies for facility usage
- Final responsibilities will vary based on each districts' needs and input from Districts' Board of Directors (for example, Oak Tree PRD has expressed a desire for in-person time at their park)

One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming



Partnerships with local community members, nonprofits, and businesses help reduce the cost of maintenance and gives community members ownership by maintaining or building their recreation facilities. This arrangement is mutually beneficial, as facilities receive the maintenance they need and sponsors can simultaneously promote their organization or business.

Image Credit: Sponsorship signage at the Western Gateway Dog Park

- Consider a special assessment to generate a consistent source of funding.
- Consider including Twin Ridges Benefit Zone in the PRD.
- Continue partnering with community service organizations to complete fundraising and projects (e.g., Rotary, Lions).
- Continue to connect with private businesses for both fundraising and in-kind assistance. For example, many businesses are willing to donate construction time or assist with project implementation.

Recommended Strategies: Western Gateway RPD

- Continue partnering with community service organizations to complete fundraising and projects (e.g., Rotary, Lions).
- Continue to connect with private businesses for both fundraising and in-kind assistance. For example, many businesses are willing to donate construction time or assist with project implementation.
- Develop a business plan for the proposed RV development as a best practice to identify revenue sources, participation, and use targets for the facility to serve as a source of revenue for dedicated staffing.
- Western Gateway's special assessment has been the same for many years. Evaluate the feasibility of putting a new assessment in place or at the very least, incorporate a cost-of-living adjustment onto the existing assessment so that it increases every year. For example, California property taxes increase 2% every year.

Recommended Strategies: Bear River RPD

- Consider a special assessment to generate a consistent source of funding.
- Evaluate opportunities to partner with a property with available space (e.g., empty warehouse) that could be easily retrofitted to provide indoor gym programming space. Ideally the facility is close to other indoor recreation amenities to reduce overall maintenance and operation expenses.

One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming

Implementation Approach

Recreation programming and support staff are generally not eligible for grant funding. Funding customarily comes from a combination of county taxes and program fees. In the case of the centralized hub concept, the first steps will be to outline the scope of work required, identify any excess capacity at the district, county and city staff levels to contribute to a sharing of resources and then determine the additional staff requirements and other administrative costs needed.

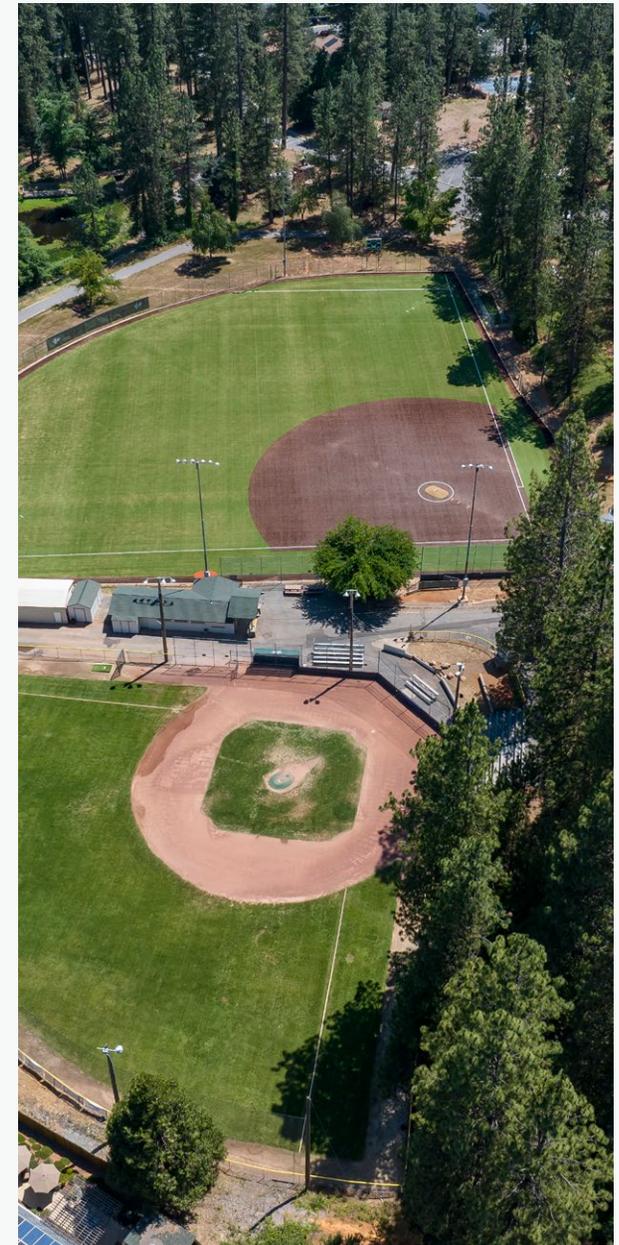
Project Recommendations:

The projects that are included as part of the One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming Focus Area are listed to the right and the following page. Potential funding strategies and next steps for the projects can be found in the next chapter.

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Shared professional park staff | Explore how a structure for shared, full-time professional park and recreation staff to support administrative and professional needs of the Recreation Districts in Western Nevada County can be realized. |
| Volunteer recruitment & training | Develop a formalized volunteer recruitment and training effort to build in succession planning and longevity of the Recreation Districts in Western Nevada County. |
| Recreation fair | Develop an annual recreation fair among recreation partners in Western Nevada County to bring greater recognition and support for area recreation offerings, promote programming, and volunteerism. |
| One-stop shop programming platform | Enhance an existing website to serve as one shared platform that hosts links to all programming and recreation facility options available in Western Nevada County. |
| Evaluate recreation assessments funding feasibility | Evaluate the feasibility of updated or new assessments for each Recreation District that also allows for cost of living adjustments (COLA). Western Gateway has a special assessment that has been the same for many years. Work at doing a new assessment or put a COLA onto the existing assessment so that it goes up every year. California property taxes go up 2% every year. |

One Centralized Hub for Recreation Resources & Programming

| Project Recommendations | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Project Description |
| Evaluate forming a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with existing park and recreation districts and local service providers (cities) for the western portions of the county | Evaluate forming a Joint Powers Authority with existing park and recreation districts and local service providers (cities) for the western portions of the county. |
| Feasibility evaluation of joint recreation center and fieldhouse (shared facility for western Nevada County) | Evaluate the ability to pass an assessment to fund and build a joint multi-generational recreation center/gym with free or low cost activities with classrooms where locals can host and attend classes for free. Provide a large indoor facility for soccer, baseball, basketball. Consider including an e-sports arena as part of the design. Provide a safe space for kids and teens and opportunities for seniors to recreate. Build on but do not duplicate new Neo Youth Center, Gold Country Senior Center, and Memorial Park Pool (YMCA) in Grass Valley. |



Truckee River Regional Park