

THE FOREST OF NISENE MARKS STATE PARK • GENERAL PLAN

Newsletter #4

October 2001

General Plan Alternatives

Draft alternatives for the General Plan have been developed. They provide alternatives for overall management of the park and its resources, based on the mission and policies of California State Parks and the park's Declaration of Purpose. The alternatives are based on the level of protection of the park's resources with Alternative A the most protective. They are generally divided based on watersheds.

The alternatives include three State Park unit designations that are defined in the California Public Resources Code. The designations relevant for these alternatives are:

State Park land contains outstanding natural, scenic, or cultural values of statewide significance. Improvements can be undertaken for the purpose of making areas available for public enjoyment in a manner consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, cultural, and ecological values for present and future generations.

Natural Preserves consist of distinct areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance within the boundaries of other state park system units. The purpose of natural preserves shall be to preserve such features as rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystems. Habitat manipulation shall be permitted only in those areas found by scientific analysis to require manipulation to preserve the species or associations that constitute the basis for the establishment of the natural preserve.

State Wilderness is land of at least 5,000 acres that has been shaped primarily by the forces of nature. Wilderness may be used in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment. There are no permanent road in wilderness areas and motor vehicles or other mechanical transport is not permitted, except as necessary in emergencies involving health and safety.

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The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park General Plan

The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The General Plan is the primary management document for units of the State Park System, establishing its purpose and a management direction for the future. By providing long-term strategies, guidelines, and goals, the General Plan defines the framework for the park's development, management, and public use. When complete, the General Plan will guide day-to-day decision making and the development of focused management plans and other projects that implement the General Plan's goals.

Where we are in the planning process:

- Inventory of existing conditions
- Identify issues (public workshops)
- Prepare alternatives (public workshop)
- Develop Draft General Plan (public workshop)
- Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Report (CEQA and public review)
- State Park and Recreation Commission Approval (public hearing)
- Prepare Final General Plan and EIR

Next Public Workshop:

Saturday, October 20, 2001

**Soquel High School auditorium
401 Old San Jose Road
Soquel, California 95073**

9:30 AM TO Noon

General Plan alternatives will be presented followed by a public comment period.

The facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals requiring special assistance can call 831-429-2851.

Alternative A

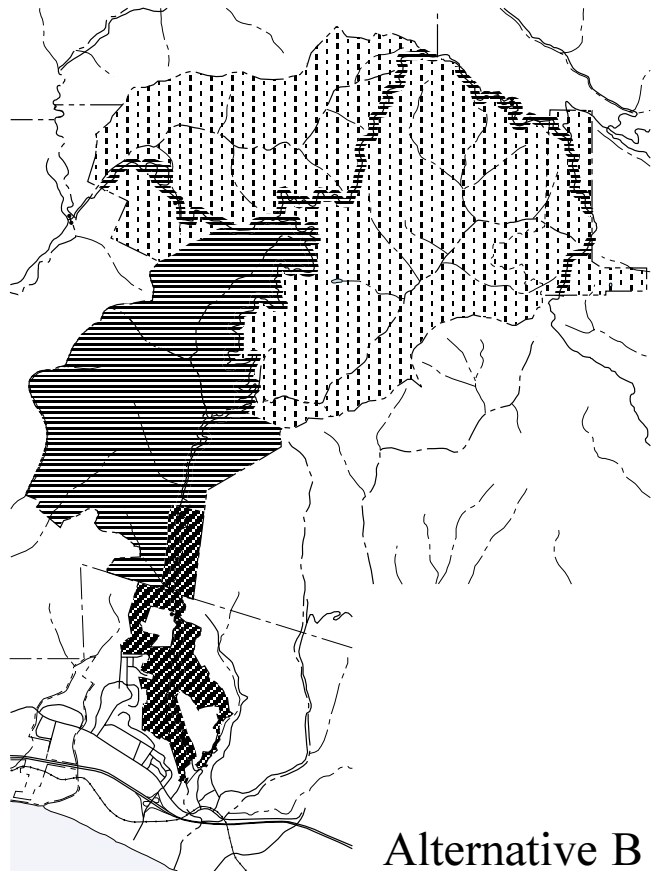
This alternative proposes a wilderness designation for the upper Aptos Creek and Hinckley Creek watersheds. Wilderness areas have no mechanized travel and are roadless. The portion of Aptos Creek Road that passes through the wilderness area is proposed for decommissioning. The Bridge Creek drainage and the middle portion of the Aptos Creek watershed are designated as State Park land, to be managed for resource protection and recreation. The lower part of the park (below the Porter Family Picnic Area) is proposed for management for resource protection and more intensive recreation.

Alternative B

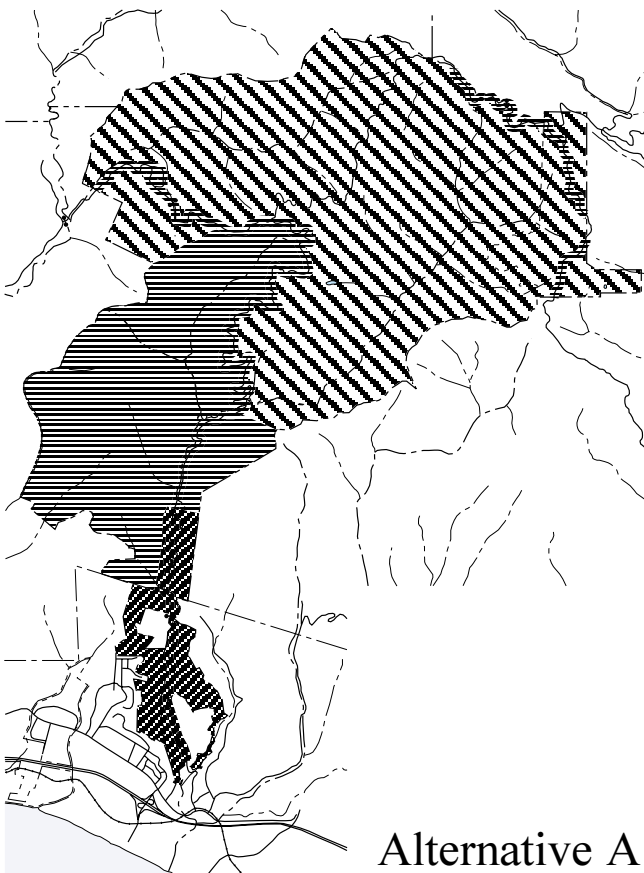
Alternative B proposes that the upper Aptos Creek and Hinckley Creek watersheds be managed as a Natural Preserve. Other park areas are proposed for management, generally, as in Alternative A.

Alternative C

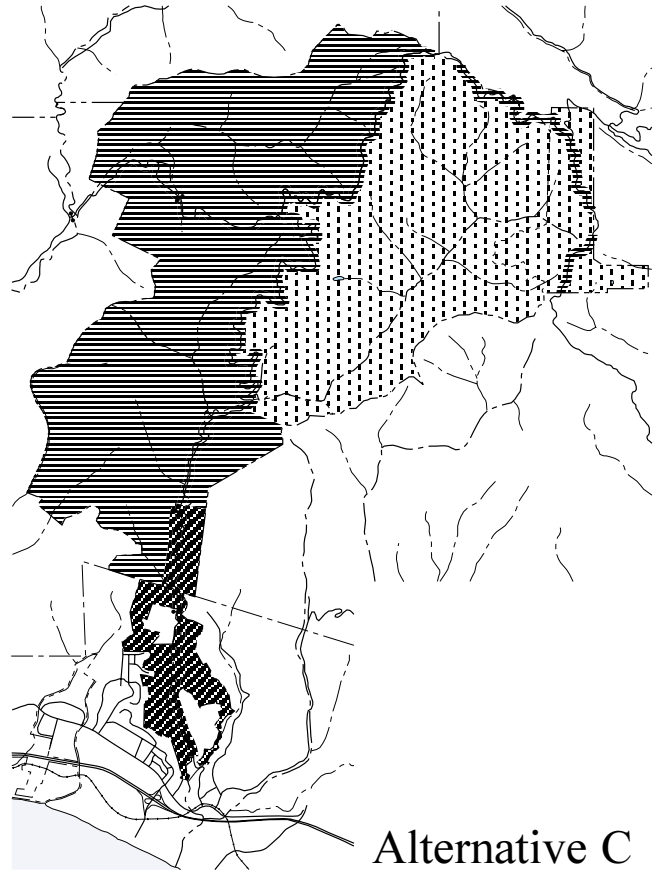
This alternative proposes that the upper Aptos Creek watershed be managed as a Natural Preserve. The Hinckley Creek watershed, Bridge Creek drainage, and middle Aptos Creek watershed are designated as State Park land, to be managed for resource protection and recreation. The lower part of the park (below the Porter Family Picnic Area) is proposed for management for resource protection and more intensive recreation (generally the same as Alternatives A and B).



Alternative B







Alternative A



Alternative C

Legend

-  Wilderness: managed for resource protection (no mechanized travel)
-  Natural Preserve: managed primarily for resource protection
-  Land managed for resource protection and recreation (may include multiple use trails)
-  Land managed for resource protection and more intensive recreation

The General Plan Process

Public workshops on the General Plan for The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park were held on March 11 and April 7, 2001 at Soquel High School. Over 200 people attended the two meetings. Public comment was taken and questionnaires about the park and the General Plan were distributed. The purpose of these meetings was to identify the range of issues to be addressed in the General Plan.

Another public workshop was held on June 28, 2001 at the Mar Vista Elementary School in Aptos. A range of alternatives addressing the General Plan issues was presented and more comments were given.

Almost 250 comments have been received to date from individuals, organizations, and agencies. The comments include speakers at the workshops, letters, questionnaire responses, and emails.

From the comments received to date, it is clear that the level of community interest in The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park is extensive. The park is highly valued by its users, many of whom visit on a weekly or more frequent basis. Some of the major issues facing the park include:

- Trail use - what types of uses are appropriate in which areas of the park and how are trails maintained?
- Which uses are compatible with resource protection?
- The lack of park staffing - and the impact on enforcement of regulations, safety, and maintenance.
- Parking and access for the main entry as well as other entry points.
- How best to protect sensitive resources.
- Improvements to visitor facilities.
- What are the best ways to capitalize on the interpretive and educational opportunities at The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park?

The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park Declaration of Purpose

The Declaration of Purpose is the "mission statement" for each unit of the State Park system. It is the general guiding statement that provides direction for the development of the General Plan. The existing Declaration of Purpose for The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park is shown below, along with a proposed revision for the Declaration of Purpose.

Existing Declaration of Purpose

(Source: 10/2000 General Plan Policy Committee)

The purpose of The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, in Santa Cruz County, is to preserve and protect virtually the entire watershed of Aptos Creek, with its notable waterfalls and steelhead habitat. The unit consists of a steep, rugged undeveloped area of mixed evergreen forest, oak woodlands and chaparral. Some of the remaining old-growth coast redwoods exhibit an unusual twisted pattern. The deep, thick forest provides a sense of isolation, while the unit's higher area provide sweeping view of Monterey Bay. The unit contains remnants of the late nineteenth century logging town of Loma Prieta, and was the epicenter of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

California State Parks will preserve, protect, restore, interpret and manage the unit's natural, cultural, aesthetic and scenic resources, features and values, making them available to the public for their educational, inspirational and recreational benefits.

Proposed Declaration of Purpose

The purpose of The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park is to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources, wildland values, and supporting ecosystems of the upper watershed of Aptos Creek and immediately adjacent properties, while providing opportunities for the visiting public to enjoy and be inspired by the unique and diverse topography, geology, biotic communities, and scenic views.

California State Parks will preserve, protect, restore, interpret and manage the Park's natural, cultural, aesthetic and scenic resources, features and values, making them available to the public and future generations for their educational, inspirational and recreational benefits.

The Forest of Nisene Marks General Plan
Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey
225 Miller Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941



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To be added to the General Plan Mailing List to receive updates and meeting notices:

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Return this form with your name and address to the address below:

Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey
225 Miller Avenue
Mill Valley, California 94941
Attn: The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park General Plan

Send your name and address via email to: nisenemarks@rhaa.com