

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Hidden Falls Regional Park Project (proposed project or project) involves access and recreation improvements at a regional park proposed by the Placer County (County) Department of Facility Services. The “project area” discussed below refers to the Spears Ranch property and the parking area on the Didion Ranch property, which make up a portion of the regional park, along with a portion of Garden Bar Road. This chapter provides information on the proposed project’s location, objectives, facilities, construction techniques, maintenance, and permitting requirements. Alternatives to the proposed project are presented in Chapter 15.0, “Other CEQA Sections.”

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located between north Auburn and the City of Lincoln in Placer County, in the Sierra Nevada foothills approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento. The approximately 1,200-acre Hidden Falls Regional Park (Park) consists of the properties formerly known as Spears Ranch (979 acres) and Didion Ranch (221 acres) (Exhibits 3-1 and 3-2). The project area includes portions of Coon and Deadman Creeks and is located south of the Bear River. The Hidden Falls property is bordered on all sides by private property. In the project area, Garden Bar Road is located to the west; Mt. Vernon and Mt. Pleasant Roads are to the south; Bell Road and Hubbard Road are to the east; and Big Hill Road is to the north.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT AREA

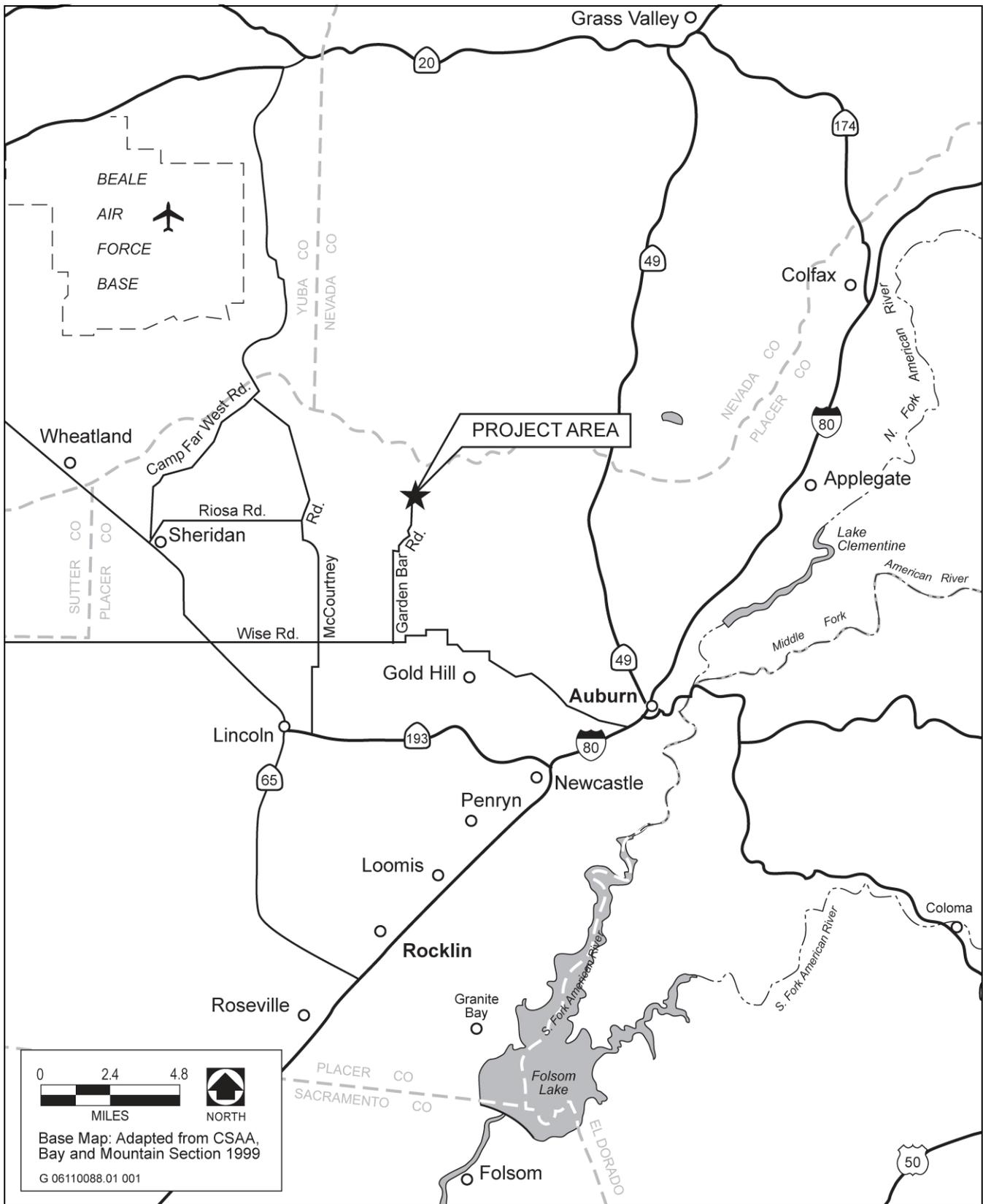
The Park is located in an unincorporated area of Placer County. The project area has been used for cattle grazing in the recent past, and portions of the property continue to be used for grazing. The Park and the surrounding area are characterized by blue oak woodland and oak-foothill pine woodland. Coon Creek flows from the northeastern portion of the property to the westernmost property boundary. Deadman Creek flows from the southeastern boundary and is confluent with Coon Creek within the Park. Several intermittent tributaries flow into Coon Creek from both the north and south. On-site creeks flow to the Feather River. Adjacent land uses include rural residential home sites and agriculture, mostly in the form of cattle grazing.

The Big Hill area of Placer County including the project area and area to the north has been identified as a strategic opportunity area for land conservation because of the relatively undeveloped stretches of the Coon Creek and Bear River watersheds, blue oak woodland and other habitats, value as a connected migration corridor with protected areas to the north such as the Spenceville Wildlife Area in Yuba County, and the large intact parcel sizes in the area. Exhibit 3-3 shows the properties in the vicinity of the Park and the Big Hill Area that are currently held in perpetuity for conservation purposes. Trail connectivity is being planned to link the Park to the Placer Land Trust parcels to the northeast, contingent upon successful acquisition of trail access rights through linking parcels.

3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Project objectives represent the overarching goals and purpose of a proposed project. They are used to guide the definition of project as a screening tool in evaluating project alternatives. The County has developed the following objectives for the proposed project.

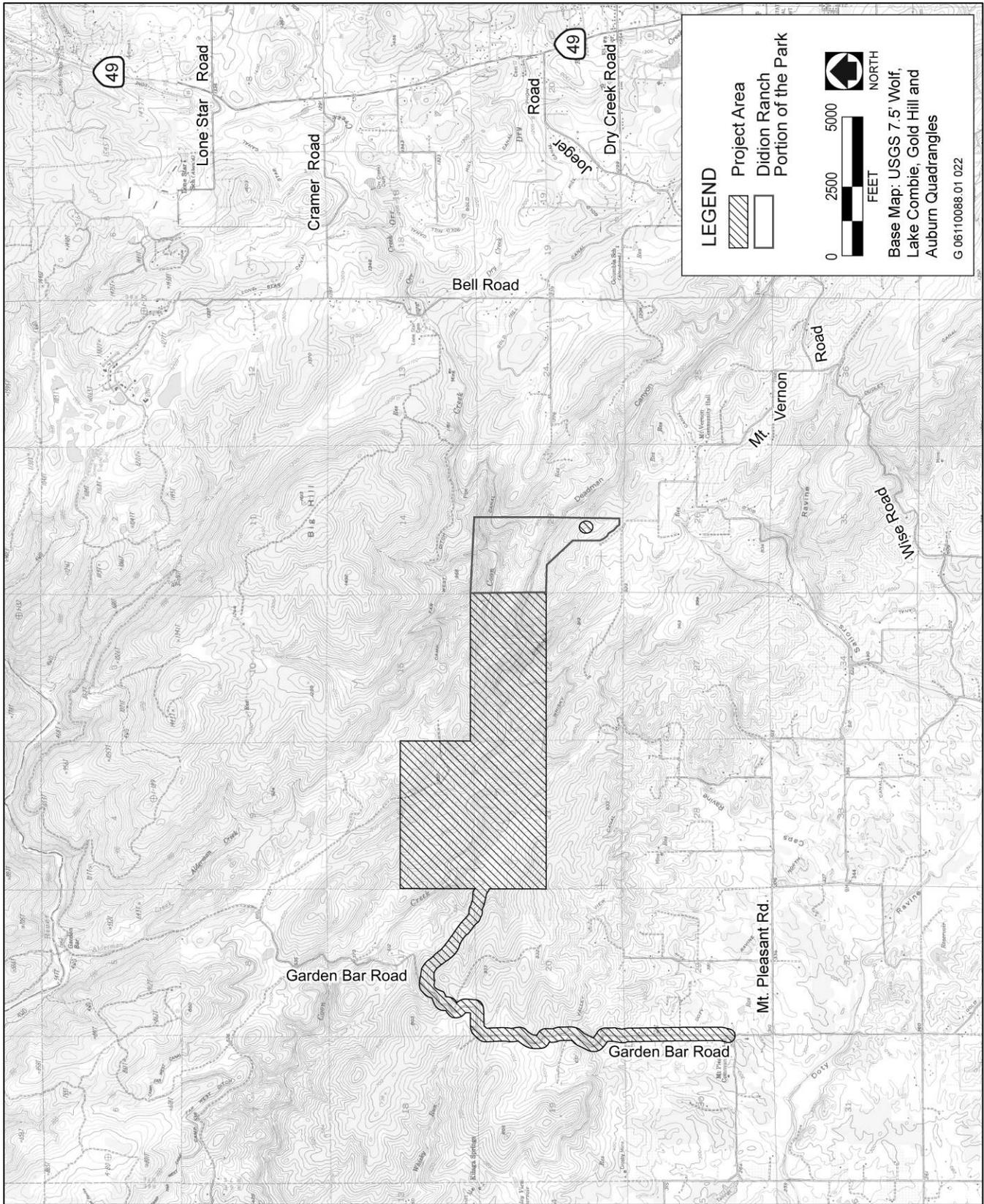
- ▶ Create an open space park consistent with the goals of the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Preservation Program (Placer Legacy Program).
- ▶ Provide adequate opportunities to a wide variety of park users to access a breadth of features within Hidden Falls Regional Park intended for public passive recreational and educational access without overburdening the natural resources and functional capacity of the site and appurtenant roadway system.
- ▶ Protect open space and blue oak woodland habitat for special-status species within Placer County.



Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2006

Vicinity Map

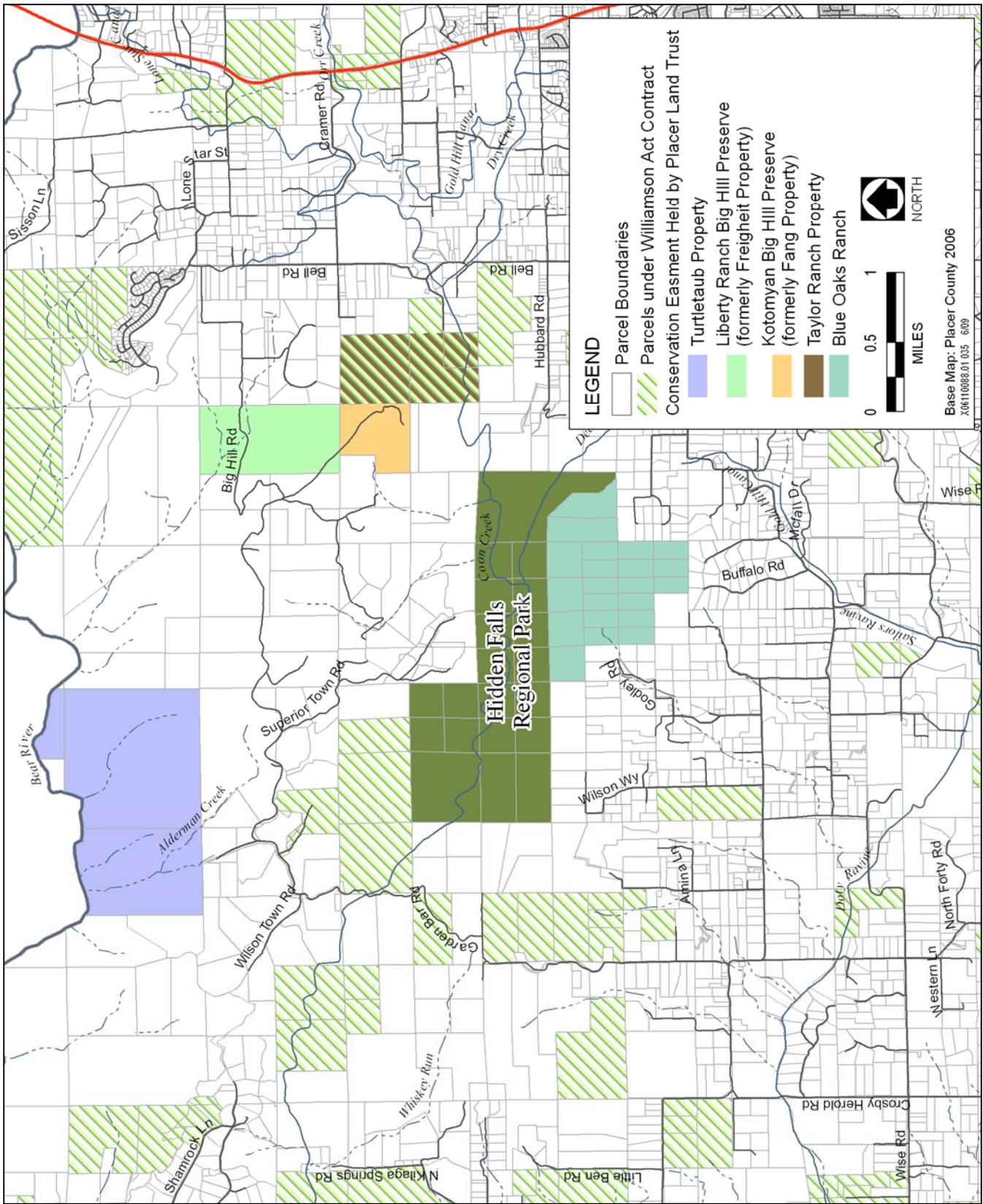
Exhibit 3-1



Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2007

Project Location Map

Exhibit 3-2



Source: Data provided by Placer County in 2002

Big Hill Area Conservation Areas

Exhibit 3-3

- ▶ Design a multiple-use, natural-surface trail system that will provide recreational opportunities for the residents of Placer County, while maintaining safety for park users, visitors, and nearby residents.
- ▶ Develop a project that minimizes the need for maintenance, thereby reducing long-term costs and environmental impacts.
- ▶ Develop a project that supports the future ability to create natural, cultural, and historic education and interpretive opportunities for youth and adults, fostering stewardship and environmental awareness.

3.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

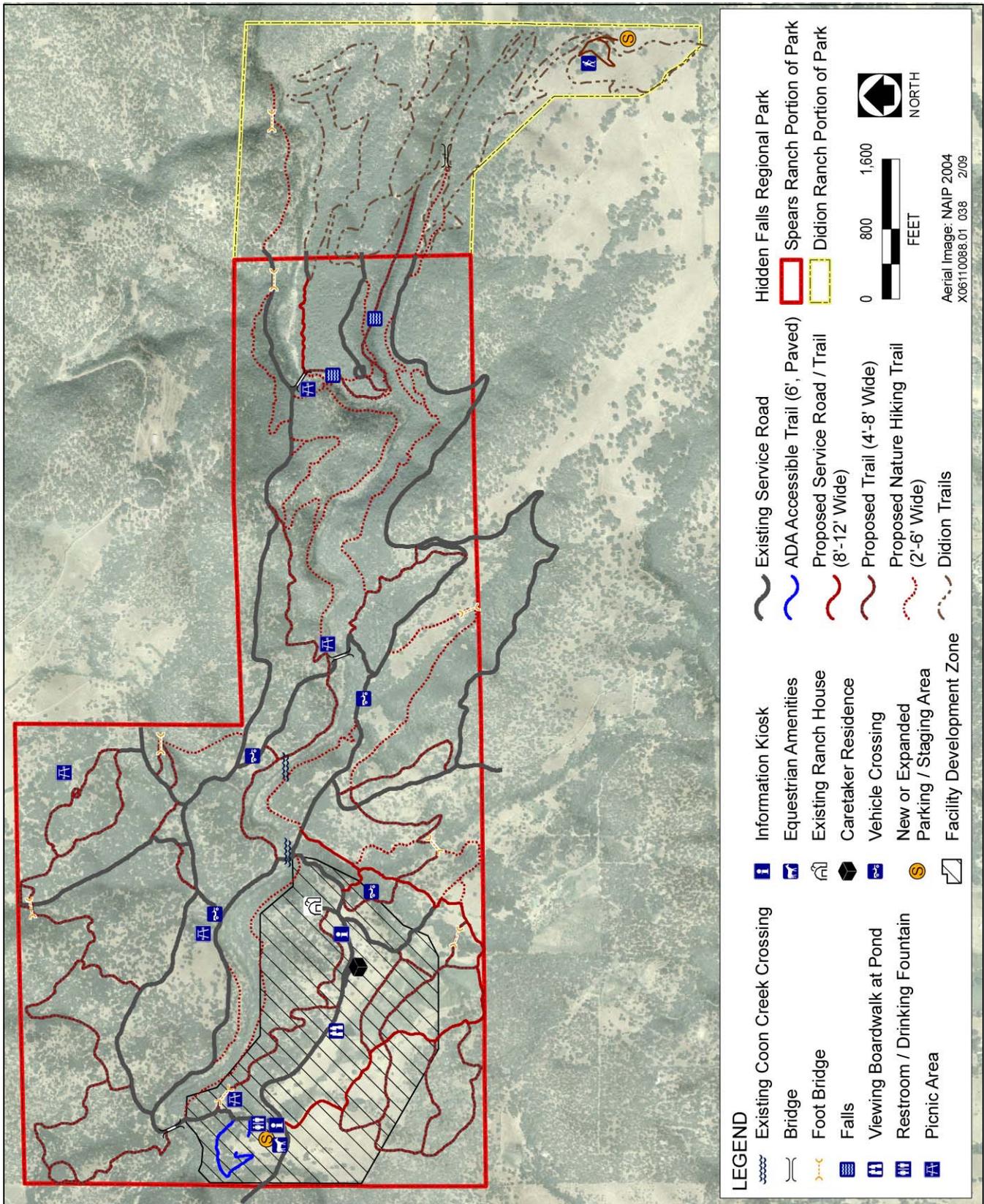
The proposed project would develop phased recreation and access facilities on the 979-acre former Spears Ranch property and would expand the existing parking area on the Didion Ranch portion of the Park to provide opportunities for passive recreation (i.e., hiking, biking, horseback riding) on the entire 1,200-acre Hidden Falls Regional Park. In addition, the project would improve access to the western portion of the property, including an on-site staging/parking area with access from Garden Bar Road. Various recreational/educational uses for the existing ranch house and site buildings are being considered including use as a nature/cultural education center and/or conference facility. The potential for overnight use of the ranch house area is being considered including the provision of bunkhouses near the ranch house.

A previously disturbed area within the Park has been identified as a facility development zone shown in Exhibit 3-4. The facility development zone is generally located in the southwestern portion of the Park, including the area surrounding the existing ranch house and the proposed parking/staging areas. Most future building and staging development within the Park would occur within the facility development zone. The exact location of individual facilities could vary within this zone as detailed design is prepared in the future. Other facilities (e.g., trails, picnic areas, bridges, vault/temporary toilets) would be located both inside and outside of the facility development zone.

3.4.1 TRAIL SYSTEM AND PARK AMENITIES

Specific features and uses that are part of the proposed project for the Park are as follows:

1. Approximately 14 miles of new multiple-use, natural-surface trails in addition to more than 10 miles of existing ranch roads for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians within the Spears Ranch portion of the Park. Exhibit 3-4 depicts the planned trail system designed by County staff and consultants with input from the Hidden Falls Trails Forum. This trail map would guide initial construction; however, the County would make adjustments to the trail network to promote desirable user patterns and other operational needs subject to avoidance of sensitive areas and adherence to applicable permit requirements;
2. Trail and bridge connections to other public trails near the Park property (in addition to the trail network constructed on-site);
3. American's with Disabilities (ADA) accessible trails including access for ADA vehicles;
4. Bridge crossings over Coon Creek and other streams to support the trail network, provide emergency access, connect to the existing trail system within the Didion Ranch portion of the Park, and provide access to the portion of the Park north of Coon Creek;
5. Culvert and rock-lined stream crossings over intermittent drainages to support the trails network;



Source: Placer County 2006

Proposed Hidden Falls Park Features

Exhibit 3-4

6. Groundwater wells for drinking water and restrooms as required to accommodate Park needs; irrigation water from the canal system may continue to be used for major irrigation activities and fire suppression facilities.
7. Fire suppression facilities (i.e., helistops for emergency use and an emergency water system);
8. Equestrian facilities (e.g., horse watering facilities, hitching posts);
9. Picnic areas throughout Park to accommodate use, including covered pavilions;
10. Benches and rest areas throughout the Park;
11. Enclosed bear-proof trash receptacles throughout Park to accommodate use;
12. Suitable landscaping around parking areas and restrooms;
13. Improvements to facilitate public access to viewing areas (e.g., overlook at Coon Creek Falls);
14. A disc golf course may be developed that would generally coincide with areas of shaded fuel breaks and other upland areas where the foot traffic pattern would not impact sensitive areas and/or would be beneficial to ongoing vegetation management/fire risk reduction objectives;
15. Drinking fountains;
16. Access to fishing locations along Coon Creek and/or ponds developed in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG);
17. New fishing ponds may be developed in conjunction with the fuel load reduction and/or grazing plans and in coordination with DFG;
18. Film and theater production, subject to County Film Permit requirements;
19. Managed hunting of legal game and nuisance species during times of Park closure. Hunting would be allowed for up to two 2-day seasons per year with 10 hunting permits being issued per season or through depredation permits (e.g., for feral pigs);
20. Interpretive programs, including signage, displays, and/or guided tours; and
21. A group camping area with one or more formalized fire pits, a group tent area, and/or bunkhouses for scheduled, supervised overnight use within the facility development zone.

3.4.2 VEHICLE ACCESS, PARKING, AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Public access to the Park would be provided via Garden Bar Road and Mears Drive. Park visitors would use the existing access road/easement from Garden Bar Road to the proposed western parking area. Vehicle access to the Park would be expanded in phases as funding becomes available as described in Table 3-1.

The proposed project is anticipated to generate as many as 128 weekday and 230 weekend vehicles round trip per day. Phased parking amenities include a 50-stall surfaced parking area to accommodate anticipated uses and a gravel equestrian parking area, a gravel overflow parking area, a parking area to accommodate the nature center, and a handicapped accessible parking area near the emergency access bridge. In addition, the existing parking area on the Didion Ranch portion of the Park would be expanded from 55 parking spaces (i.e., 50 for cars, five for trucks and trailers) to 82 (i.e., up to 25 additional paved stalls and 12 additional truck and trailer spaces) including relocation of the adjacent helistop immediately south of the existing location.

**Table 3-1
Summary of Park Access Phasing**

Permitted Access	Corresponding Improvements
PHASE 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trail and emergency access system would be completed throughout the Park and opened for daily public use via existing Mears entrance ▶ Daily public vehicle access would be restricted to existing Mears entrance ▶ Didion Ranch parking area would be expanded from 55 parking spaces to up to 82 parking spaces (i.e., up to 25 additional paved stalls and 12 additional truck and trailer spaces) including relocating the adjacent helistop. ▶ Garden Bar entrance would continue to be used by County employees, tenants, contractors, consultants, utility providers, maintenance trucks, and fire and law enforcement personnel without additional improvements ▶ Development of existing ranch house may proceed during Phase 1 ▶ Occasional classroom sized groups would be permitted to access site through Garden Bar entrance on appointment basis (gates would be opened and closed behind groups) ▶ A handicap-placard-only parking area may be constructed near the emergency access bridge. Park use would be regulated through the Placer County Parks Division reservation system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prior to allowance of classroom sized groups, a new public access gate and approximately 200 feet of connecting road to existing access road would be constructed at the intersection of Garden Bar Road near the existing access road. ▶ Prior to allowance of classroom sized groups, a 48 inch high 12.5-gauge woven wire field fence would be constructed along both sides of access road between Garden Bar Road and Park entrance. (as applicable per the terms of the Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Spears family) ▶ Prior to allowance of classroom sized groups, two cattle guards would be installed at each end of the access road between Garden Bar Road and the Park entrance. (as applicable per the terms of the Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Spears family) ▶ Up to 25 additional paved parking stalls and up to 12 additional equestrian parking stalls may be developed at the existing Mears entrance (Placer County 2003).
PHASE 2	
<p>In addition to Phase 1 Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Daily public automobile access would be allowed to the new parking area at western end of property via Garden Bar Road. ▶ Equestrian trailers would be excluded from the western parking area and from entering the Park via Garden Bar Road. Equestrians would continue to enter the Park via Mears entrance. ▶ Reservation-based events consistent with passive recreation and education with 200 attendees or less at one time would be allowed by County Parks Division reservation. ▶ Use of ranch house for educational and/or meeting purposes would remain regulated by County Parks Division reservation system and/or use agreements. 	<p>In addition to Phase 1 Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New parking area would be constructed at western end of property to include 50 stall paved parking lot and gravel overflow area. ▶ Widen Garden Bar Road from Mt. Pleasant Road to access road to 18 feet of hard surface with 2-foot shoulders where feasible subject to County review and approval.¹ ▶ Vertical curves along Garden Bar Road would be improved in accordance with traffic safety report recommendations subject to County review and approval. ▶ Signing and striping improvements along Garden Bar Road would be made in accordance with traffic safety report recommendations subject to County review and approval. ▶ Improve the access road from Garden Bar Road to the western parking area to 24 feet wide all weather surface with 2-foot shoulders where feasible subject to County review and approval¹. ▶ Install a gate between the western parking area and the ranch house to prevent unrestricted vehicle access beyond parking area into remainder of property.
PHASE 3	
<p>In addition to Phase 1 and 2 Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Daily public access for equestrian trailers would be allowed to the western parking area via Garden Bar Road. 	<p>In addition to Phase 1 and 2 improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A gravel equestrian staging area would be constructed adjacent to the new paved parking area to allow parking for up to 20 horse trailers. ▶ Widen Garden Bar Road from Mt. Pleasant Road to the access road to 20 feet of hard surfacing with 2-foot shoulders where feasible subject to County review and approval.¹ ▶ Horizontal curves along Garden Bar Road would be improved in accordance with traffic safety report recommendations subject to County review of improvement plans.
<p>¹ In areas along Garden Bar Road and the access road from Garden Bar Road to the Park entrance where the County determines that status trees, significant rock outcroppings, and other valuable natural features within the proposed widening corridor should be preserved or where adequate road right-of-way does not currently exist and is not obtainable through market value based willing seller negotiations, alternatives such as turnouts, striping, and/or signage may be considered and approved in lieu of full width widening for those discreet areas.</p>	

3.4.3 EDUCATIONAL USES AND USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Educational uses within the Park may include:

- ▶ rehabilitation of the existing ranch house to function as a nature/cultural education/conference center.
- ▶ agricultural, cultural, scouting, and informational/educational classes and programs;
- ▶ multiple-day or overnight educational, agricultural, cultural, and scouting camps (subject to agreement and conditions determined by the County on a case-by-case basis) including a commercial kitchen. Overnight activities would be confined to the facility development zone; and
- ▶ access for school programs, such as cross-country training and meets, and educational field trips that are consistent with passive recreation and education.

Any large events that would exceed the capacity of the on-site restrooms would need to supply portable toilets, and events with 200 individuals or more would be required to obtain a Temporary Event Permit from the County and would undergo separate environmental review. Size, timing, duration, and other variables related to these events are not known at this time, therefore, consistent with other County Park operations, these would separate environmental review would be needed as part of the permit application process.

A variety of renovation and use options are being considered for the existing ranch house. Uses under consideration include:

- ▶ a nature education center with meeting room facilities;
- ▶ a classroom;
- ▶ an event facility;
- ▶ a volunteer and information center;
- ▶ interpretive and educational displays; and
- ▶ an environmental education camp.

The two existing former residences and outbuildings located southwest of the ranch house would be demolished. Similar sized buildings may be erected within the facility development zone for use as a maintenance shop or caretaker residence, or they would be incorporated into an educational/camp program. Up to 10 additional buildings may be constructed for use as bunkhouses near the existing ranch house, if the ranch house is used for overnight camp functions or environmental education. If constructed, these buildings would be located in the proximity of the existing ranch house and would be approximately 16 feet by 28 feet each. In addition, up to two restroom facilities that would be approximately 400 square feet each may be constructed in this area to serve the bunkhouses. One or two campfire pits may also be constructed in this area as part of the overnight camp uses. Campfires would require a permit and would not be allowed outside of the designated fire pit areas or on high fire hazard days as designated by CalFire.

Organized camping accommodation would be subject to the provisions of California Health and Safety Code standards for Camps (Division 13, Part 2.3) and other applicable state and local regulations.

3.4.4 FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION

Pending identification of implementation and maintenance funding, the following wildlife and habitat restoration elements would be allowed and encouraged along Coon Creek and throughout the project area:

- ▶ fish passage amenities;
- ▶ nesting boxes;

- ▶ natural erosion control along streambanks, roadbeds, and other areas;
- ▶ habitat revegetation projects, including native planting of oak woodlands, grasslands, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian habitat; and
- ▶ protective measures to direct visitors away from protected resources.

3.4.5 AGRICULTURE

Agricultural uses that would be allowed in the Park include:

- ▶ continuation of current grazing agricultural activities;
- ▶ farm management practices (e.g., maintenance of fences, expansion of irrigated pastureland);
- ▶ agricultural research projects conducted by qualified institutions;
- ▶ agricultural education programs; and
- ▶ grazing for specific vegetation management purposes (e.g., use of goats).

3.4.6 STREAM CROSSINGS AND DRAINAGE FEATURES

The proposed trail system would cross Coon Creek in three locations. One bridge would provide access for pedestrians, equestrians, and emergency vehicles and two bridges would provide access for pedestrians, equestrians, and small maintenance vehicles only. Approximately eight pedestrian/equestrian foot bridges would also be constructed over drainages along the trail system including Deadman Creek. Bridges would be designed to fit the rustic character of the surroundings and may include suspension, covered, truss, and/or other designs. Abutments would likely be concrete subject to engineered design. Decking and other structural components may be made of weathering steel, fiberglass, concrete, steel cable or other suitable materials. Local rock or imitation rock may also be used as facing on concrete abutments. Up to 25 additional drainage crossings would require construction or replacement of culverts or the use of rock-lined stream crossings. Rocks would be placed in ephemeral drainages to provide a level surface and prevent erosion.

3.4.7 INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

A kiosk would be placed at each parking area to provide information to Park users. Kiosks would include informative displays on topics such as water quality, wildlife, habitat, and general park information. Interpretive and directional signage or audio-visual displays, or both, would be placed at key points throughout the property. Interpretive signs would include information on topics such as native and nonnative plants, mining and Native American history in the area, conservation and restoration programs, and wildlife that can be found in the Park.

3.4.8 MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The Park would include the following maintenance facilities that would be located within the facility development zone:

- ▶ a maintenance yard near the ranch house and parking area, used to store and maintain equipment (e.g., tractors, mowers, all-terrain vehicles);
- ▶ a maintenance shop/barn—either a new building or renovated existing building;
- ▶ irrigation system to support landscaping near parking areas and restrooms if landscaping is installed;
- ▶ security and safety lighting for the maintenance yard; and

- ▶ perimeter and cross fencing to enclose maintenance areas.

If construction of a new maintenance building is necessary, the building would be constructed within the facility development zone.

3.4.9 SIGNS, FENCES, AND GATES

Perimeter fencing around the property would be repaired in kind or replaced with barbless wire. New sections would be constructed of barbless wire as needed. Cross fencing and exclusionary fencing would be constructed in riparian and other sensitive areas throughout the Park and along the access road from Garden Bar Road to the proposed western parking area. Fencing may be constructed of a variety of materials including wood rail, barbless wire, and large rocks. Signage with trail etiquette would be posted at trailheads. Directional signage would be placed along primary public-access routes from both Auburn and Lincoln in addition to the informational signage described above in Section 3.4.7.

3.4.10 FIRE SUPPRESSION FACILITIES

Fire suppression facilities would include emergency water facilities, a new helistop in the Spears Ranch portion of the Park and a relocated helistop in the Didion Ranch portion of the Park. The helistops would be flat unpaved areas where emergency helicopters can land during emergencies. Emergency water facilities would be located between the proposed parking area within the western portion of the property and the existing ranch house to allow for emergency access. Water for the emergency water system could come from Whiskey Diggins Canal, well backup, a potential new Nevada Irrigation District raw water conveyance line, off-site water sources via water trucks, and/or existing or new ponds. The emergency water system would include standard fire hydrants and may include any combination of the following components:

- ▶ 12,000-gallon water tank with gravity flow to the hydrant system;
- ▶ existing and/or new ponds;
- ▶ raw water service to the hydrant system from the Whiskey Diggins Canal; or
- ▶ raw water service to the hydrant system from the proposed Nevada Irrigation District (NID) raw water conveyance pipeline.

3.5 USES NOT ADDRESSED IN THIS EIR

The following uses are not analyzed in this EIR and would not be allowed in the Park:

- ▶ use of motorized vehicles outside of designated access/parking areas, except for motorized wheelchairs, maintenance vehicles, film crews, and vehicles permitted by separate permit;
- ▶ hunting during open Park usage hours;
- ▶ amplified noise;
- ▶ active recreation sports (e.g., soccer, baseball, basketball);
- ▶ lighting other than security and safety lighting around the caretaker residence, maintenance yard, ranch house building, and camp; and

Additional approvals by the County, following supplemental environmental and public review, would be required if any of these uses are considered in the future.

3.6 TRAIL AND FACILITY CONSTRUCTION

Mechanical and hand construction techniques would be used to build the proposed trail system. One or more crews from the California Conservation Corps, licensed contractors, volunteers, and/or County staff would be used to construct the trail system and other facilities.

Vegetation along the trail corridors would be cleared by hand before construction. Vegetation removal along the trail corridors would be minimized to the extent possible; however, a selective vegetation removal within a 15 – 20 foot trail corridor would be performed to accommodate multiple trail uses. Selective vegetation removal means that the trail corridors would not be clear cut. Rather, underbrush, limbs, and select smaller trees would be removed around the trail envelope leaving the trail to meander around larger trees within the corridors. Vegetation removed for trail construction would be chipped or lopped and scattered near the trails. Soil stabilizers and crushed rock, mulch, and/or straw may be needed along the trail tread in some areas to prevent erosion. Topical areas prone to erosion would be stabilized with certified “weed-free” grain straw. The alignment of proposed trails would be located to minimize the removal of native trees greater than 6 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh). Trees larger than 6 inches dbh that are removed would be mitigated with preservation of existing oak woodland within the project area and payment of in-lieu fees for oak woodland preservation consistent with the Placer County Tree Ordinance.

The tread widths of the proposed trail alignments (i.e., the actual surface on which trail users actively place feet, hooves, or wheels) would vary depending on the type of trail. Multiple-use trails would be 4–8 feet wide, service and emergency access roads that can also be used as trails would be 8–12 feet wide, and nature hiking trails would be 2–6 feet wide. Trail widths would vary as needed based on safety considerations and avoidance of biological or cultural resources. The trail tread would be excavated using a Sweco trail dozer, mini excavator, and/or other machinery capable of conforming to the dimensional requirements of the trails. Dips and undulations in the design would follow the natural drainage patterns to facilitate effective surface flow of water off the trail tread.

Construction of parking areas and other recreational facilities would require moving and placing soil, rough and fine grading, installing signage, removing vegetation, paving, installing equipment, finishing, and cleanup. Large equipment such as graders, excavators, pavers, dozers, and haul trucks would be used to construct the proposed roads, parking areas, restrooms, and other facilities. A drainage system would be installed adjacent to parking areas to compensate for any alterations in water flow. Vegetation around the proposed parking areas would be mulched, stockpiled, and placed on exposed areas after construction.

Protective fencing would be installed around sensitive areas during bridge construction and protective measures would be implemented, consistent with Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulations, to ensure that concrete residue would not enter Coon Creek.

Construction of the trail system and associated recreational facilities is expected to generate a maximum of 400 delivery trucks. However, construction-related traffic would be spread out over several years as described below in Section 3.6.1, “Construction Schedule.” For Phase 1 of construction, truck traffic is expected to be approximately 10–20% of the total needed or 40–80 truck trips. Construction activities would generally take place Monday through Saturday, although construction activities that are inaudible from areas outside the Park may be permitted on Sundays. From Monday through Friday, work would be allowed between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. during daylight savings time and between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. during standard time. Construction activities would be allowed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

3.6.1 CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

The proposed project would be constructed in phases over several years as funding allows. Each phase would allow an additional level of public access to the Park. The project elements included in each phase are described above in Table 3-1. Phases 1 through 3 are addressed in this EIR. Improvements intended to accommodate large events with more than 200 individuals on-site at a given time or large events that would exceed the parking capacity in combination with regular day use are not being proposed at this time and would require a Temporary Event Permit. Temporary Event Permits are issued by the County Community Development Resources Agency (CDRA). CDRA evaluates Temporary Event Permit applications and assigns the appropriate level of environmental review to each application based on the specifics of the proposed event.

Construction of some of the project elements would need to coincide with favorable weather conditions. Vegetation clearing would be scheduled in the nonbreeding season for raptors (September–March) or outside nesting areas documented by preconstruction surveys conducted by a qualified biologist. Bridges would be built during dry periods of the year.

Phase 1 amenities are expected to be constructed and corresponding uses allowed within the next 5 years. Phase 2 and 3 amenities and uses are expected to be constructed in succession following Phase 1 as funding becomes available.

3.7 LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

The proposed trail system and recreational facilities would be designed to be as low maintenance as possible, although some regular maintenance of the Park facilities would be required. The majority of Park maintenance would be conducted by County staff, volunteers, and user groups.

Trail maintenance would include activities, such as selectively clearing vegetation; regrading trail tread; removing loose rocks, roots, and dead trees; and replacing trail surface material, if necessary. Localized spraying of herbicide may be required along the trail corridor to prevent vegetation from overgrowing the tread. Herbicides would be applied by County staff members certified in herbicide/pesticide application. Additional maintenance may be required as a result of weather-related events (e.g., removal of downed trees and slide removal); routine wear from hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians; and unauthorized activities such as vandalism. Other maintenance activities, such as litter cleanup and sign repair, would be conducted as necessary.

Material that is low maintenance and weather and graffiti resistant would be used for Park amenities throughout the property. The Park's restroom facilities would be cleaned by a janitorial service on a regular schedule, and the County would generally maintain parking areas and other paved areas, including sealing cracks as needed. The County would also repair, maintain, and winterize the existing ranch house as needed, and inspect and maintain water wells in the project area in accordance with their public water permits.

Oversight of Park activities would be provided through the collective efforts of any combination of County sheriff staff, County maintenance staff, volunteer patrol groups, and/or Park users. The project area is located within the sheriff's patrol district for the Auburn area. A resident caretaker may also be used to help minimize the incidents of vandalism, crime, and misuse of Park property. The Park would be closed at night and all gates on access roads to the Park would be locked, which would further deter unauthorized activities.

3.8 ONGOING MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Current and long-term operation of the Park property requires ongoing management activities to ensure the safety of Park users, maintain existing access, reduce fire risk, minimize erosion, protect habitats, control animal depredation, and manage ongoing ranch operations. These management actions are currently under way and are expected to continue as needed throughout the life of the Park. Under a categorical exemption, the County is

proceeding with some of the actions described below, which are ongoing standard land ownership and management and maintenance practices.

3.8.1 FUEL LOAD MANAGEMENT

Fuel load management and fire reduction measures in the Park would include:

- ▶ thinning vegetation and clearing a defensible space around parking and improvement areas and buildings and maintaining fuel break areas;
- ▶ maintaining fire safe areas adjacent to the main vehicle-access road system within the Park;
- ▶ creating shaded fuel breaks;
- ▶ flagging all work-area boundaries and erecting temporary signs to notify Park users of the work areas;
- ▶ developing a maintenance plan for maintaining areas of defensible space around existing and immediately proposed improvements, roads, and shaded fuel breaks;
- ▶ grazing within the property on a year-round basis or seasonally at or below the property's carrying capacity (i.e., 75 cows);
- ▶ exploring the use of goats or other suitable grazers as a vegetation management tool; and
- ▶ developing additional livestock watering points to help improve livestock distribution.

3.8.2 RANCH ROAD MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION

- ▶ implement storm water Best Management Practices under guidance of an erosion control specialist.

3.8.3 PARK PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

Additional planning and construction activities being proposed for the Park include:

- ▶ evaluating additional amenities and uses that are consistent with the goals of the Placer County General Plan, Placer Legacy Program, and the terms of the use permit as opportunities and demand arise;
- ▶ further developing agricultural uses;
- ▶ developing nature and cultural education elements as resources and programming partners emerge;
- ▶ refining the trail system and associated amenities as user and wear patterns evolve;
- ▶ administering controlled hunting of legal game and nuisance species (e.g., feral pigs) during times of Park closure for population management. Hunting would be allowed for up to two 2-day seasons per year with 10 hunting permits being issued per season or through depredation permits; and
- ▶ demolishing unsalvageable outbuildings.

3.9 INTENDED USES OF THIS EIR

An EIR analyzes the environmental effects of a project, indicates ways to reduce or avoid significant and potentially significant environmental effects resulting from the project (i.e., mitigation measures), and identifies alternatives to the project that are also capable of avoiding or reducing project-related significant environmental impacts. An EIR must also disclose significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided, growth-inducing effects, significant cumulative impacts, and effects found not to be significant. The purpose of an EIR is not to recommend approval or denial of the project, but to provide information to aid the public, decision-makers, and permitting agencies in the decision-making process.

3.9.1 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Permits and approvals required by federal, state, and local agencies for the proposed project are listed in Table 3-2. These permits and approvals are discussed in more detail below.

Table 3-2 Agency Roles and Responsibilities	
Agency	Permit/Approval
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Permit under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit
California Department of Fish and Game	Consultation under the California Endangered Species Act and authorization of incidental take; permit under Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code (streambed alteration agreement)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Consultation under the federal Endangered Species Act and authorization of incidental take
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency	Conditional Use Permit
Placer County Department of Public Works	Encroachment permit for Garden Bar Road improvements
Placer County Environmental Health Division	Evaluation of the sewage system permit for the water system
California Department of Public Health	Public water provider's permit (administered by the Placer County Environmental Health Division)
Source: Data provided by EDAW in 2008	

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

It is anticipated that fill would be placed in jurisdictional waters of the United States as part of the proposed project; therefore, a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would be required under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. If the project's impacts would be less than 0.5 acre or 300 linear feet, the County would obtain a Nationwide Permit 42 that serves as compliance with the Clean Water Act for dredging and/or fill activities related to the construction of recreational facilities, specifically the creek crossings and bridge installations. If the project's impacts exceed 0.5 acre or 300 linear feet, the County would obtain an individual 404 permit. It is likely that separate applications will be submitted related to facility development within the Park and Garden Bar Road improvements.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The proposed project has the potential to affect species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered. If take cannot be avoided, consultation would be required under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act. Section 7(a)(2) requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed project would not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species. If fill of USACE jurisdictional waters for implementation of the proposed project could result in take of California red-legged frog and Central Valley steelhead, consultation between USACE, USFWS, and NMFS under Section 7 of ESA would be required.

CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

The proposed project may have the potential to degrade water quality of other waters of the United States as regulated by the Central Valley RWQCB. A water quality certification from the Central Valley RWQCB would be required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. An application for Section 401 certification would be submitted to the Central Valley RWQCB with the CEQA documentation.

It is anticipated that the project construction area would exceed 1 acre in size; therefore, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit would also be required by the Central Valley RWQCB on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (see Chapter 11.0, "Hydrology and Water Quality").

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

It is anticipated that the proposed project would affect Coon and Deadman Creeks and/or adjacent riparian habitat; therefore, a streambed alteration agreement from DFG is required pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code. An application for a Section 1602 streambed alteration agreement would be submitted to DFG.

If the proposed project has the potential to affect a state-listed or special-status species, consultation under the California Endangered Species Act would be required. For direct or indirect impacts on state-listed species, an incidental take permit would be required under Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code. If the state-listed species is also federally listed, a consistency determination would be required under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code.

PLACER COUNTY PERMITS

An encroachment permit from the County Department of Public Works would be required for proposed road improvements along Garden Bar Road. In addition, a Conditional Use Permit from the County Community Resource Development Agency would be required, and a sewage system evaluation, public well construction permit, small public water system provider's permit, and well abandonment permit (if applicable) would be required from the County Environmental Health Division.

Prior to submitting any County application or improvement plans for approval associated with the Park, the applicant for each proposed project shall complete a Subsequent Conformity Review questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire will be to enable the County to determine whether the proposed project is consistent with this EIR, to examine whether there are project-specific effects that are particular to the project or its site that were not considered in this EIR, and/or whether an event as described in Section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines has occurred. The County may require additional information to make such a determination, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Preliminary Grading Plan (including off-site improvements)
- ▶ Preliminary Geotechnical Report

- ▶ Preliminary Drainage Report
- ▶ Preliminary Water Quality Best Management Practices (BMP) Plan
- ▶ Acoustical Analysis (and associated Traffic and Circulation Studies)
- ▶ Hazards/Past Use Studies (Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and Phase II limited soils investigation, and/or Preliminary Endangerment Assessment with California Department of Toxic Substances Control, as determined by County Environmental Health Services)
- ▶ Mosquito Control Design Features (for waterways, underground water detention structures, water facilities, etc.)
- ▶ Water Quality Related Studies/Details (BMP's, Preliminary Grading Plan, Preliminary Drainage Plan)
- ▶ Utility Will-Serve Requirements Letters (water, sewer, solid waste, reclaimed water, etc.)
- ▶ Senate Bill (SB) 221 Water Supply Assessment Information
- ▶ Hazardous Materials Usage Information
- ▶ Water Supply Well Information (as applicable)
- ▶ Biological and Cultural Resources Study; and
- ▶ Public Safety Assessment

Based on the information provided, the County will determine whether the proposed development entitlement is consistent with this EIR, whether additional environmental compliance is required, and if so, the correct mechanism of such compliance.

3.9.2 OTHER AGENCIES USING THE EIR AND CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

This EIR will be used by the County and CEQA responsible agencies to fulfill the requirements of CEQA. It will also be used as an informational document by federal agencies that could have permitting or approval authority for the project and by other state and local agencies, including CEQA trustee agencies that may have an interest in the project. See Chapter 1.0, "Introduction," for detail on the lead, responsible, and trustee agencies for the proposed project.

Consultation with these responsible and trustee agencies as well as Native American interests is ongoing. As described in Chapter 6.0, "Cultural Resources," consultation was initiated with representatives of Native American groups during early planning phases for the project. Because the project area could be of cultural significance to Native Americans, individuals and representatives from local Native American tribes were consulted before any field surveys and ground-disturbing activities were conducted. The United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation, and Rose Enos were all contacted by letter, with requests for information on sacred or sensitive resources within the project area. The Native American Heritage Commission was also contacted concerning the proposed project.

The following is a list of entities that may use this EIR for discretionary or informational purposes:

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ▶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ▶ National Marine Fisheries Service

STATE AGENCIES

- ▶ California Air Resources Board
- ▶ California Department of Conservation
- ▶ California Department of Fish and Game, Region 2
- ▶ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- ▶ California Department of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ California Department of Transportation, District 3
- ▶ California Highway Patrol
- ▶ California Resources Agency
- ▶ Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- ▶ State Water Resources Control Board

LOCAL AGENCIES

- ▶ City of Auburn
- ▶ City of Lincoln
- ▶ Placer County Board of Supervisors
- ▶ Placer County Department of Public Works
- ▶ Placer County Community Resource Development Agency
- ▶ Placer County Environmental Health Division
- ▶ Placer County Air Pollution Control District
- ▶ Placer County Department of Facility Services
- ▶ Placer County Sheriff-Coroner-Marshall
- ▶ Placer County Office of Emergency Services