



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

General Services Agency

JANELLE RAU
DIRECTOR

841 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, CA 95482-3734

Email: generalservices@mendocinocounty.gov
Website: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/general-services>

Office: (707) 234-6050

Staff Report

Date: October 31, 2023
To: The Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Janelle Rau, General Services Agency Director
Subject: Update on Mendocino County Parks Administration and Operations

The Board directed Parks Needs Assessment received by the Board in 2022 included the following: County parks amenities inventory, online community survey and community meeting findings, parks conditions assessment, community needs analysis, policy and parks assessment, an overview of the condition of each park, identified potential hazardous conditions and necessary improvements, potential collaborations with stakeholders associated with the ongoing operations and maintenance at certain parks, along with parks funding models regarding maintenance and operations.

Understanding that bringing the parks up to a sustainable standard for operations and function would require substantial investment and time by the County, the Parks Needs Assessment provided prioritized planning level capital cost estimates for hazardous and safety upgrades, park enhancements, and overall improvements, as well as identified estimated operational costs and funding and staffing levels based on industry standard in comparison to surrounding counties.

Since the time of the 2022 presentation, the Board of Supervisors has discussed the County's ongoing ownership obligations of the County's Parks systems including maintenance and administration during several workshops and meetings. Attached to this item is a Parks Profile Matrix of the County's parks, including profile and summary of parks attributes and considerations.

Staff have researched various potential stakeholder collaborations and the County's options associated with potential operational models, concessioning cooperative agreements, and/or surplus, transfer or decommissioning certain areas where feasible. This has included exploring potential stakeholder collaborations with the City of Ukiah and other interest groups, including local land trusts and business partners in areas surrounding the parks. Additionally, staff have collaborated with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council on multiple grant projects that include fire/fuel mitigation efforts at multiple parks locations. In order to prepare options for the Board to consider, staff also sought the input and opinion of the California Department of Parks and Recreation and County Counsel particularly with regards to land and/or deeded restrictions or dedications based upon historical parks improvements utilizing state bond grant funds. That information is included in the matrix and table presented for Board consideration.

The County has received State bond act financing over several decades which has been used for additions and improvements to its park system. Based upon the use of these funds, the County's ability to transfer, surplus or sell the properties is limited as it must maintain land tenure and site control in most situations (more thoroughly described in the Parks Profile Matrix). The parks matrix attached to this item, as well as the below table, includes an overview of the County's obligations and associated restrictions set forth in legislation.

In addition to the restrictions and limitations set forth in the various agreements with the State associated with the use of State bond act monies, the County is obligated to comply with the County

Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) and the Public Park Preservation Act (Public Contract Code Sections 5400-5409). Both statutes define the process by which the County could entertain options associated with ongoing parks ownership.

Since the early 80's, the General Services Agency has operated and maintained the County's parks system with the limited staffing or funding resources. The County decommissioned the "Parks and Beaches" division of the Department of Transportation in the mid 80's, resulting in the maintenance of County parks being transferred to the then General Services department. Since that time, staff have been mitigating certain safety and hazardous areas within the County parks system, including removal of hazardous trees, clean-up of the public nuisance site of the former caretaker at Bower Park, and coordinating vegetation management at multiple parks locations. However, this model is not sustainable and has resulted in decades of deferred maintenance.

This item was intended to be informational in nature and to provide the Board with an understanding of the County's obligations associated with the parks system. The General Services Agency will continue to collaborate with stakeholders related to the ongoing programs and operations of the various parks. Staff will continue to meet with the County's Parks ad hoc on various options associated with the County's parks systems as described in the attached Parks Profile Matrix and summarized below.

Park/Access Area	Restrictions	Options
Bower Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Perpetuity; Land Tenure expires 4/24/ 2035 No indoor facilities allowed per LWCF Must always be open to the public for outdoor recreation Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance
Faulkner Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Tenure Expires 4/20/2025 County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance Retain underlying ownership with another eligible entity assuming the remainder of the contract with the State
Indian Creek Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Tenure Expires 4/24/2025 County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance Retain underlying ownership with another eligible entity assuming the remainder of the contract with the State

Low Gap Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Perpetuity; Land Tenure Expires 4/24/2035 • No indoor facilities per State LWCF • Must always be open to the public for outdoor recreation • Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) • Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance
McKee Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) • Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) • Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance • Abandon/Surplus/Transfer/Sell
Mill Creek Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Tenure Expires 4/24/2025 • County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) • Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) • Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance • Retain underlying ownership with another eligible entity assuming the remainder of the contract with the State
Redwood Valley Lions Club Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Tenure Expires 4/24/2035 • County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) • Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) • Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance • Retain underlying ownership with another eligible entity assuming the remainder of the contract with the State
Vichy Springs Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Park Abandonment Law of 1959 (California Government Code Sections 25580-25588) • Public Park Preservation Act (California Government Code Sections 5400-5409) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility or land to another eligible entity (City, County, District, etc.) • Retain underlying ownership with a concessionaire/lease/cooperative/JPA agreement with third party entity for administration and maintenance • Retain underlying ownership with another eligible entity assuming the remainder of the contract with the State • Abandon/Surplus/Transfer/Sell