



Mendocino County Parks Needs Assessment

Final Report and Next Steps

Board of Supervisors Meeting | February 25, 2020



Needs Assessment Process & Purpose

Mendocino County | PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Phase I. Inventory, Mapping & Needs Assessment

Ongoing Project Management and Coordination



Engagement Window 1: Kick Off & Park Tours (5 days)

- Project Team Meeting
- Park Tours
- Park Staff Discussions/ Interviews



Engagement Window 2: Needs and Gaps (2 Days)

- Project Team & Staff Meeting
- Review Conditions Report
- Survey Review



Presentation to Supervisors/ County



Kickoff Call:
Refine Scope,
Schedule &
Process



Collect GIS
Data & Identify
Methodology
for Mapping



Park Inventory
& Conditions
Analysis &
Mapping



Online
Survey



Needs
Assessment Report
- Community Profile
- Visitor Needs & Uses
- Issues & Constraints
- Opportunities



Review Existing
Documents,
Gather Data
and Details



Comparables Analysis
- Fees
- Staff and Operations



Inventory
Development



Demographic
Analysis &
Trends Analysis



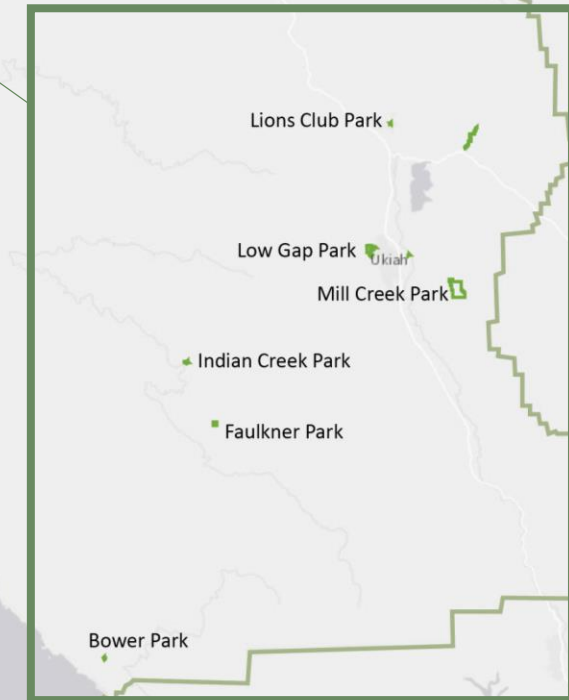
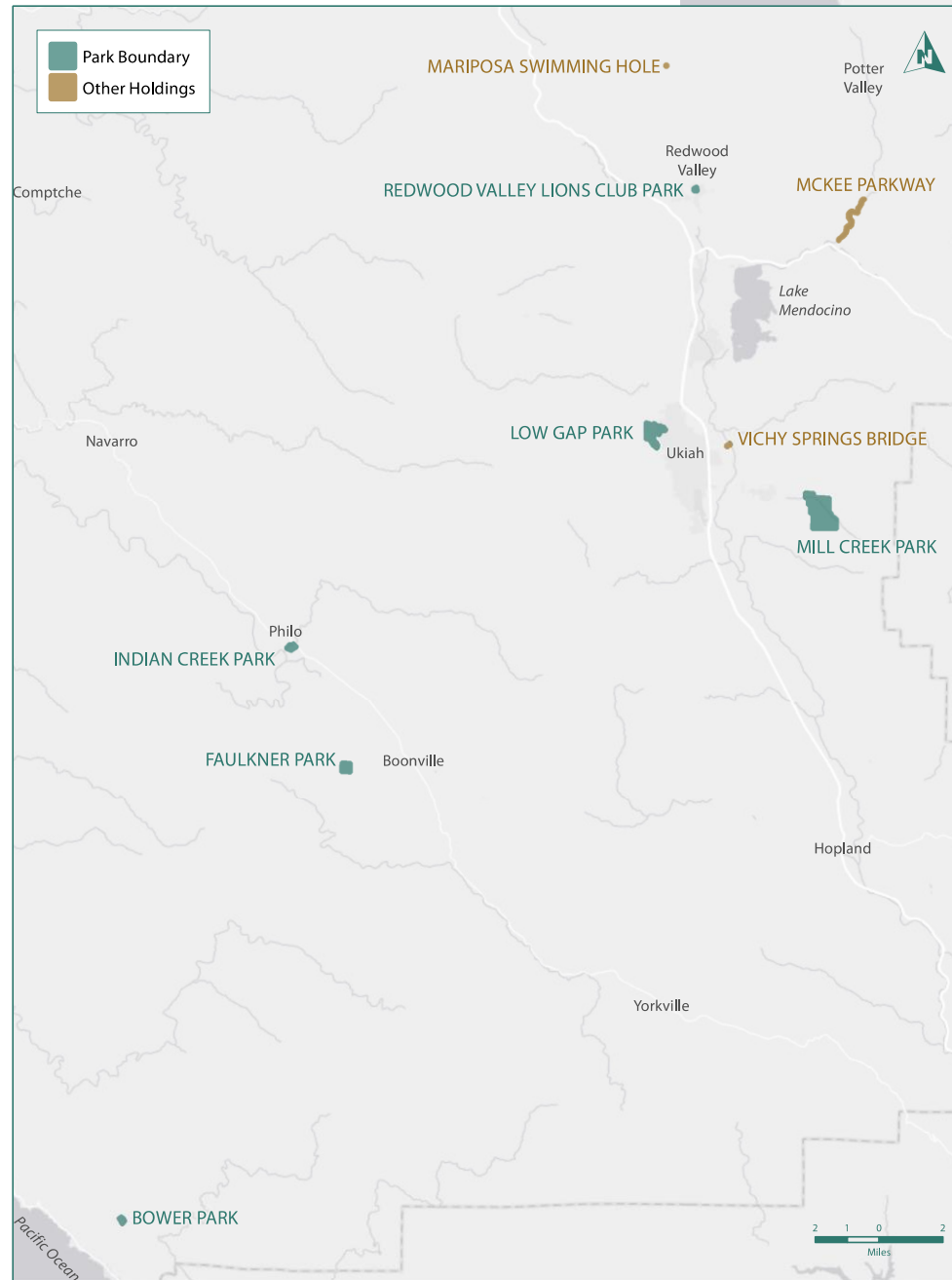
Facilities/
Amenities
Analysis



County Launch
Project Web
Page

About County Parks

- 6 Parks – 583 acres
- 3 unimproved access areas
- 3 Community Parks with dog parks, picnic areas, a ball field, playgrounds
- 3 Regional Parks, including trails, camping, picnic areas and swimming



Comparable Communities

County Name	# of County owned parks	Population 2017 (rounded)	County Size: sq. miles	Parks Acres	Budget	Revenue	Budget per acre	Type of parks	User Fees	Camping
Mendocino	6+3	87,000	3,878	583	\$220,000	\$21,000	\$377/acre	Community, Regional, Camping	Day Use, Rental Fees	Yes
Tehama	7	63,000	2,962	72+	\$ 55,081	\$11,932	\$765/acre	Neighborhood, Community Sports Field, Facilities	Rental fees	No
Lake	25	64,000	1,329	1,800	\$ 2,952,078	\$1,354,886	\$1,640/acre	Neighborhood, Community Sports Field, Facilities	Rental fees	No
Tuolumne	9	54,500	2,235	341	\$ 743,000	\$153,000	\$2,179/acre	Neighborhood, Community Sports Field, Facilities, Camping	Facility fees	Yes
Yuba	5	75,000	644	115	\$ 363,212	\$ 223,212	\$563/acre	Regional, Camping	Rental fees	Yes
Humboldt	17-20	135,000	4,052	900	\$913,438	\$525,366	\$1,014/acre	Regional, Boat Ramps, Campgrounds	Day Use & Rental fees	Yes

NRPA Operational Risk Assessment

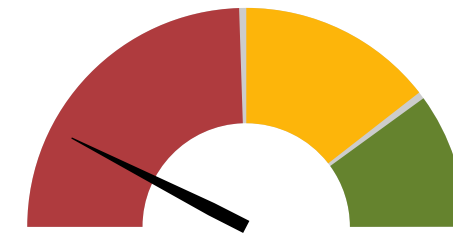
- “Your agency’s ability to deliver high quality park and recreation amenities and services to all members of your community in the future is at HIGH RISK.”
- Lack of funding to adequately implement necessary physical upgrades, replace failing equipment and amenities
- Inability to keep up with garbage and bathroom maintenance
- Increased fire and safety issues, particularly in more remote parks due to illegal fires, overgrown vegetation, and dying trees
- Low level of maintenance and staffing to support parks
- Inability to effectively collect fees for rentals, events, and day use

Park and recreation agencies across the country provide a vital service to an ever-growing population. Operations and maintenance funding, staffing, access, dedicated funding sources and accreditation all play a role in the success of a park and recreation agency being able to provide high-quality amenities and services. Agencies that do not meet those principles are at risk of being unable to serve all members of their community in the future.

Mendocino County

Aug 22, 2019

Based on the data you provided, your agency’s ability to continue delivering quality park and recreation amenities and services to all members of your community in the future is at:



HIGH RISK

Your agency's ability to deliver quality park and recreation amenities and services to all members of your community in the future is at **HIGH RISK**. Please review Page 2 to identify the factors leading to your agency's risk profile.

Learn more about the key principles behind NRPA Park Check at www.NRPA.org/Park-Check

The information presented in this NRPA Park Check report is based on agency data provided by the survey respondent. The validity of the results presented within this report depends on the accuracy and completeness of this data. © National Recreation and Park Association



Community Input

Outreach Elements

- An Online Survey
- Community Meetings (Areas: Ukiah, Gualala, Laytonville, Fort Bragg, Anderson Valley)
- Park Needs Assessment Website
www.mymendocinoparks.org, describing the project, and providing the opportunity for community members to make comments, be involved, and join the e-mail list
- Library book mobile outreach throughout the county
- Announcements of all of the outreach activities on the City's website and Facebook page



About The Project

The County of Mendocino has a rich tapestry of outdoor experiences for residents and visitors - from the rugged coastline to the verdant inland valleys. The County oversees a relatively small portion of the overall parkland in the County, but provides important services, access, and amenities to the residents and visitors alike. The Needs Assessment process has the opportunity to fully characterize the potential for these parks, and create strategies to improve the value, visibility, and availability of these important assets. Perhaps

Key Themes

Need for:

- Public safety improvements
- Addressing transient populations in parks
- Overall maintenance
- Increased restroom cleanliness, and trash collection
- Increased accessibility
- Increased partnerships and coordination with community-based organizations and other agencies

The Community expressed the desire for the following amenities and facilities:

- An indoor recreation facility
- Community gardens
- Community pool
- Horseback riding opportunities
- Sports fields
- Additional and better signed trails
- Skate parks
- In general, more parks, particularly in northeast part of the county



Existing Parks Assessment

Bower Park

Community Park

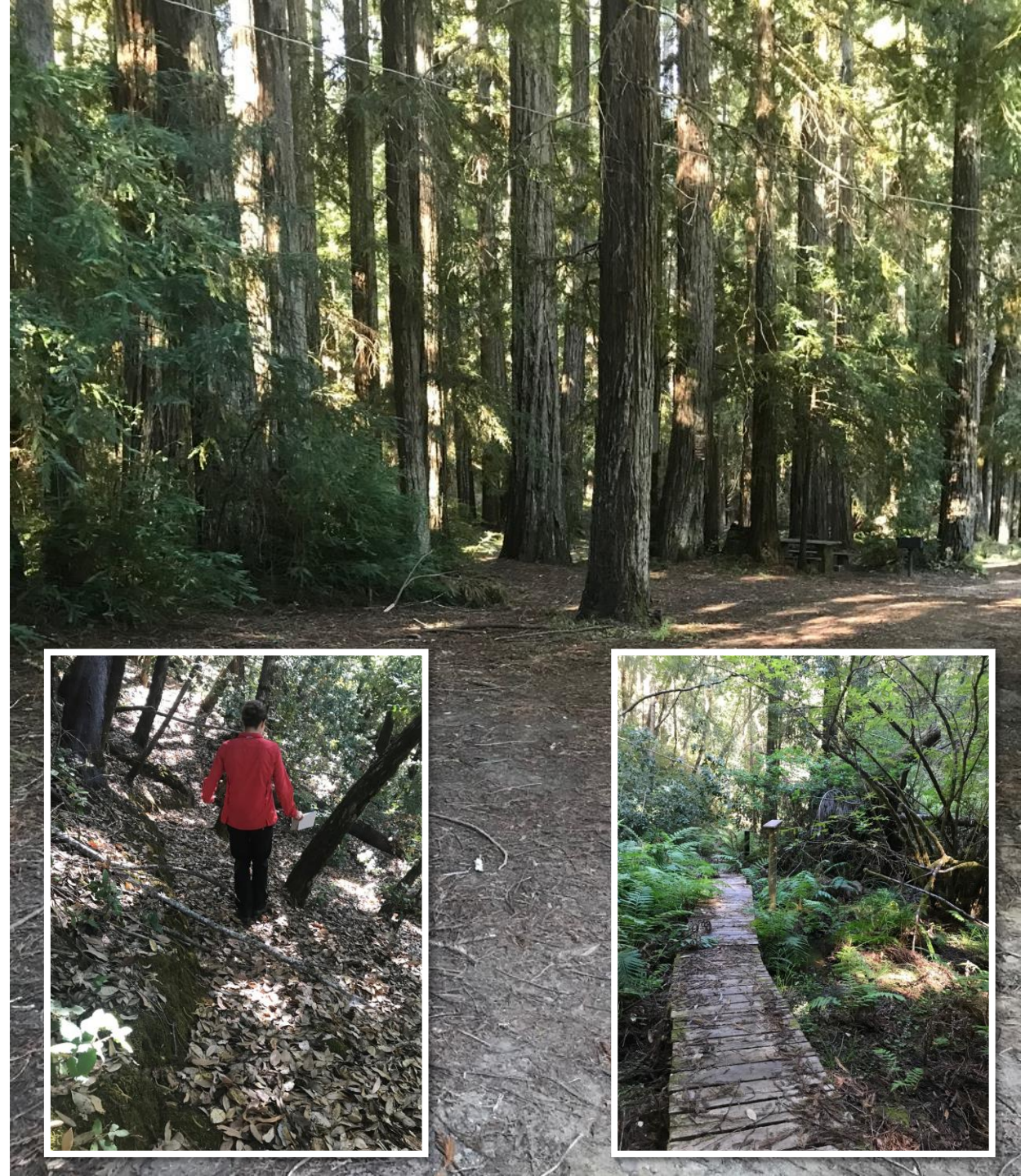
- Overall assessment: Very nice park setting, lots of space and ability to make a unique and special place.
- Concerns: Dying trees, poor maintenance, many facilities are in disrepair, hardscape throughout park cracking and potential safety issues
- General recommendation: Renovate the entire park including reorganizing activities to work better together, new master plan is needed for the park.
- Is this an active community park or more of a natural environment? Clarifying the character is important to focus future updates.
- Only community park in area.
- Coordinate with neighbor recreation project.



Faulkner Park

Regional Destination

- Overall impression: Beautiful location with amazing redwoods and potential location for camping. Out of the way unless you are in Boonville.
- Concerns: How can the County effectively maintain park? Not maintained and potential fire hazards with overgrown vegetation, trails underutilized, picnic areas are in poor repair. Parking and access needs improvement.
- General recommendations: Consider allowing overnight group camping only with reservation and/or summer camp (day/overnight?) establish as a refuge for firefighters in case of fire in area. Renovate natural areas, stream, and nature trail.
- Partner with Anderson Valley Fire + CalFire



Indian Creek Park

Regional Park

- Overall Impression: Beautiful spot for car camping with access to swimming hole and nice trail. Highest revenue of all parks.
- Concerns: Lots of social trails eroding landscape, inadequate bathrooms for camping, not clear registration system for day use. Illegal fires are a major concern. Fencing along creek and along property is in disrepair.
- General Recommendations: Establish a way to maintain and monitor park to reduce fire danger and improve fee collection, improve stream access, trails, and nature signage. Add an additional bathroom.



Low Gap Park

Community Park

- Overall Impression: Well used community park with potential for enhancements to amenities, reduction of impacts from use.
- Concerns: Some facilities needs to be replaced or updated (amphitheater, picnic shelter, care taker space, bridge) Some areas need maintenance, ecological restoration. Lots of social trails, overgrown brush and poison oak.
- General Recommendations: Focus on improving group picnic area and expanding opportunities for picnics with new restrooms, shade and facilities, do general maintenance, and work on enhancing trails with addition of bench and view spots. Restore creeks and habitat, and reset frisbee golf course to reduce environmental impacts.



Mill Creek

Regional Destination

- Overall Impression: Beautiful regional/ community asset used well for fishing, swimming and group picnics. Trails to big views!
- Concerns: Remote location encourages late night partying and trash. Safety issues on certain parts of the dam. Port-a-potties are poorly maintained, bathrooms are dark and unappealing, wayfinding is lacking, lack of maintenance personnel for picnic rentals. Lots of social trails/erosion along lake.
- General Recommendations: Consider a boardwalk along inside lake to improve access and reduce erosion, better awareness and maintenance system, add restrooms – potential chemical toilets, enhance trails and signage, add/improve individual picnic areas.



Lions Club Park

Community Park

- Overall Impression: Nice community park that appears well maintained and well used.
- Concerns: Bathrooms were badly vandalized and operations hours are 24/7. Broken fencing along creek.
- Recommendations; Add shade areas, and replace porcelain fixtures with more sturdy bathroom fixtures. Bring back the dog park, provide more individual picnic areas and registration system for group picnic areas. Transform 2 half court basketball into a full court.



Mariposa “Swimming Hole”

Access Area

- Located in recent burn area which impacted access (wooden steps) and trees.
- Close to neighbors and housing
- Fencing is broken or damaged
- Inadequate parking - just off the road
- Old signage with warnings
- Dangerous access
- Large Drainage tunnel under road
- Appealing swimming area but tough to regulate or manage



McKee Parkway

Access Area

- Large parking area off of the road with ample access for a number of cars. There is a gate.
- Multiple access routes to water - mostly informal with some remnants of old cement stairs.
- Beautiful site, lots of poison oak.
- River is fast and dangerous with lots of large boulders with fast current
- There is a hint of a trail with signage for portage for boaters.
- No trash cans
- There are two pull outs. One location has a portapotty it also has county park signs.



Vichy Springs Fishing Area

Access Area

- Large parking area off of road with relatively easy access to the Russian River
- Large beach area under road typically used for fishing.
- River appears to be wide and slow in this section which might allow for boat launching. Not clear what the river is like ahead.
- Lots of trash - not necessarily due to park in the parking area
- Historic location for homeless encampments



Policy & Operations Assessment

- A major concern for the county is establishing adequate funding and staffing for maintenance and operation of current and any future parks
 - Support events and rentals
 - Physical upgrades and enhancements
 - Garbage and bathroom maintenance
 - Fire and safety issues
- Need dedicated funding and people to manage parks
- Need an online reservation system
- Community partnerships (and volunteers) are critical!
 - Adopt A Park
 - Leverage activities
 - Create stewardship
 - Requires staff and oversight
- Strategic uses, fees, and operations are important
- Need a new model for bathrooms
- Potential for additional programs and community services!



Next Steps: Recommendation for Phase II

Next Steps: Recommendations for Phase II

- Quantify the order-of-magnitude, planning level capital costs for safe upgrades, park enhancements, and overall improvements.
- Determine operational costs and appropriate funding for staff.
- Identify other revenue sources for sustained operation of the parks as well as one-time capital funding.
- Assist with prioritization of projects, policies, and improvements.
- Evaluate different operation, partnering, and ownership scenarios.



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