

## 4.14 RECREATION

This section evaluates potential recreation impacts that could result from future development within the proposed project areas. The analysis examines the regional and local park facilities and identifies direct and indirect impacts related to the proposed project.

### 4.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### REGIONAL

Nevada County is known for a wide variety of landscapes, scenic resources, and unique natural features, which provide high aesthetic resources for recreation. Recreational opportunities within Western Nevada County are varied, ranging from public parks with intensively used active recreational facilities, to vast tracts of forestlands, which provide a natural environment for passive recreation and nature appreciation.

Nevada County owns 80 acres of land at Western Gateway Park in Penn Valley and leases it to the recreation and park district serving that area. The County also owns and operates Tobiassen Park at the Eric Rood Administrative Center and the Veterans Buildings in Grass Valley and Nevada City. The County assisted in acquiring 11 acres of parkland in the San Juan Ridge area which is now owned and operated by the park and recreation district serving that area. There are several regional recreational resources within Western Nevada County, including the Tahoe National Forest, the South Yuba River State Park, Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park, the Empire Mine State Park, and the Nevada County Fairgrounds. From near the western/eastern Nevada County dividing line, the Tahoe National Forest extends eastward from the Sierra Nevada foothills across the Sierra crest to the California state line. It provides opportunities to hike, camp, swim, hunt, sight see, ski and snowboard, rock climb and bicycle. The South Yuba River State Park encompasses 20 miles in the South Yuba River Canyon. Visitors can enjoy swimming, hiking, panning for gold, exploring the trails leading to historic mining sites and docent-led history, nature and gold-panning tours. About 30 miles north of Grass Valley, Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park is the site of California's largest "hydraulic" mine. It contains a museum, the deserted mining town of North Bloomfield and picnic facilities. The visitor center has exhibits on life in the old mining town of North Bloomfield and visitors can pan for gold on Humbug Creek. Located adjacent to the City of Grass Valley (City), the Empire Mine State Historic Park is the site of one of the oldest, largest, deepest, longest and richest gold mines in California. The park contains many of the mine's buildings, the owner's home and restored gardens, as well as the entrance to 367 miles of abandoned and flooded mine shafts. The park consists of forested backcountry and eight miles of trails.

There are several recreation providers in Western Nevada County offering passive recreation opportunities and managing large open space lands for residents and visitors. Some major entities include the U.S. Forest Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Nevada Irrigation District, City of Grass Valley, City of Nevada City, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. In addition, there are three recreation and park districts: Western Gateway, Bear River, and Oak Tree. There are also a number of non-profit organizations and user groups that provide passive recreation opportunities and/or assist in managing recreation facilities owned by the major entities mentioned above. In addition to the public lands, Nevada County supports a variety of private and commercial

recreational facilities. These include ski areas and resorts, golf courses, community buildings, and campgrounds.

## **CITY OF GRASS VALLEY**

The Grass Valley parks and recreation system is comprised of approximately 108 acres of City park lands, and no formalized trails. There are seven developed parks (Dow Alexander, Elizabeth Daniels, Glenn Jones, Minnie, Memorial, Mautino and Condon) and one undeveloped park (Morgan Ranch) within City limits. Dow Alexander, Elizabeth Daniels and Glenn Jones are all pocket parks. Dow Alexander Park is 0.25 acres and has a children's play area. Amenities include two picnic tables and a bench. The Elizabeth Daniels Park is a 0.16-acre Urban Plaza with a rest area for downtown visitors. It is equipped with restrooms and two picnic tables with awnings. Glenn Jones Park is two acres. It is located next to the Pelton Wheel Mining Museum along Wolf Creek. The park is equipped with six picnic tables. Minnie and Morgan Ranch Parks are both neighborhood parks. The two-acre Minnie Park is developed with a children's playground containing swings, a climber, other play equipment and a large grassy area. Amenities include two restrooms, three picnic tables and two benches. The 4.08-acre Morgan Ranch Park is not developed at this time. Memorial and Mautino Parks are both community parks. Memorial Park consists of 7.6 acres developed with a swimming pool, tennis courts, ball field, group picnic area, Memorial Club House, Recreation Annex, Scout Lodge and children's playground. The park is equipped with five picnic tables and three benches. Mautino Park is 12.9 acres and developed with tennis courts, a soccer field, basketball courts, a playground and picnic tables. Condon Park is an 80-acre regional park with a disc golf course, skate park, dog park, bocce ball courts, baseball fields, walking trails, arboretum, reception hall, and two group BBQ areas and individual picnic sites.

Hennessy School and Sierra College within City limits and several local schools within the City's Planning Area, but outside City limits (Scotten Elementary School, Lyman Gilmore Middle School and Nevada Union High School), provide approximately 24 acres of additional recreational space, including athletic fields, tennis courts, swimming pools and gymnasiums. Additionally, there are several privately owned athletic clubs, and a privately operated driving range, golf course and country club within City limits.

### **4.14.2 REGULATORY SETTING**

#### **LOCAL FRAMEWORK**

##### **Nevada County General Plan**

The Nevada County General Plan Recreation Element includes goals, objectives and policies with respect to recreational resources, as identified below.

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| Goal 5.1      | Provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities.   |
| Objective 5.1 | Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities at a regional, district, community, and neighborhood level.   |
| Policy 5.4    | The provision of linear parks or greenways within Community Regions is encouraged to provide linkages between park facilities and from residential areas to parks. Inclusion of bikeways and pathways should be considered for all linear parks and greenways, and where possible |

- greenways should be utilized to link Community Regions to the County-wide trail system.
- Objective 5.2 Acquire, develop and maintain park lands to serve the needs of Nevada County.
- Policy 5.5 The County shall base park and recreation facility planning on the following level of service standard for County park land to provide regional parks serving both Community Regions and Rural Regions:
- 3.0 acres of park land for each increase of 1,000 persons in county-wide population.
- Objective 5.4 Implement funding strategies for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of park and recreation facilities.
- Policy 5.9 Park and recreation facilities shall be included in the County's comprehensive impact fee program. The comprehensive development fees shall be in amounts sufficient to offset the costs identified as the appropriate share of the park and recreation facility improvements necessary to serve future development. The comprehensive development fee structure shall ensure that future growth fully mitigates its direct and cumulative impacts upon the County.
- Objective 5.6 Implement a comprehensive, and where possible integrated, county-wide trail system.

### **Western Nevada County Non-Motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan**

The Nevada County Planning Department developed the Western Nevada County Non-Motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan to guide the review of discretionary projects for new development proposals in Western Nevada County. This plan is intended to be a tool for the Planning Department and decision-makers to work with developers to provide recreational trails consistent with a regional system. The primary components of the Plan include the location of existing trails as well as gaps in the regional trail system, goals and policies, design guidelines for trail development, and the regional trail system implementation programs. Those goals and polices included in the plan and applicable to the proposed project are identified below.

- Goal 1: Provide a wide-range of safe, convenient, and enjoyable recreational trail opportunities for multiple non-motorized users.
- Policy 1.5 Encourage the development of recreational trails that are accessible to physically challenged individuals.
- Goal 2: Provide a recreational trail system that connects or provides access to recreational, educational, natural, cultural, and historical resources.
- Goal 6: Provide a uniform framework to assist decision-makers when evaluating new development proposals to provide recreational trails in Western Nevada County.
- Policy 6.1 Review all discretionary projects for opportunities to obtain dedications or other legal land entitlements to implement the recreational trails system consistent with connectivity routes identified on the Technical Working Plan Map.

- Policy 6.2 Review all discretionary projects for opportunities to provide recreational trails, where appropriate and in a manner proportional to the size, type, and intensity of the development or use proposed.
- Policy 6.5 Evaluate all discretionary projects for accessible trail opportunities, and where topography, sensitive resources, and other site constraints do not preclude construction of accessible features, trails are encouraged to be designed to meet accessibility standards.

### **Nevada County Development Code/Recreation Mitigation Funding Program**

The Nevada County Recreation Mitigation Funding Program is a competitive grant program managed by the Nevada County Planning Department based on development impact mitigation fees for recreation collected in the Grass Valley/Nevada City and Twin Ridges Benefit Zones. These recreation fees are collected pursuant to Section 1.2 (Recreation Mitigation Fees for the Unincorporated Areas of Nevada County) of Chapter 9 of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code. Recreation fees are also collected in the Western Gateway and Bear River Benefit Zones and passed through to the recreation and park districts serving those areas. In addition to recreation fees, the dedication of parkland for subdivisions containing more than 50 parcels is required pursuant to Section 1.3 (Quimby Act Dedications of Land and Fees In-Lieu of Dedications) of Chapter 9 of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code.

This funding is intended for capital improvements only and cannot be used for salaries, routine operation and maintenance costs, or costs attributable to existing deficiencies in public facilities. The following types of projects are eligible for recreation funding provided that they are consistent with the Capital Improvement Expenditure Plan (CIEP) adopted for the applicable Benefit Zone: acquisition of new parklands, creation of a new recreation facility primarily open for public use, and significant expansion of the capacity or availability of an existing recreation facility primarily open for full and public use at low or no cost. The following types of entities are eligible to submit a proposal for use of recreation mitigation funding provided that their capital improvement project is located within the boundaries of the Grass Valley/Nevada City or Twin Ridges Benefit Zones: County, Cities, non-profit organizations, and other municipal public corporations with recreation facilities primarily open for public use.

### **City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan**

The City of Grass Valley 2020 General Plan (2020 General Plan) Recreation Element includes several goals, objectives and policies with respect to recreational resources, as identified below.

- Goal 1-RG Allow for expanded and diverse recreational programs, areas and opportunities.
- Objective 4-RO Assurance that an adequate amount of parklands are set aside proportionate to needs and growth.
- Goal 2-RG Facilitate community cultural opportunities.
- Objective 6-RO Establishment of general-purpose community gathering places and facilities.

Policy 1-RP Provide parks and open spaces of different sizes and types to respond to the needs of a diverse population, including trails for pedestrian and equestrian use, bicycle pathways, linear parkways and park-like natural areas.

### **City of Grass Valley Park and Recreation Master Plan**

The Grass Valley Park and Recreation Master Plan describes how the City will strive to provide park and recreation opportunities for residents over the next 20 years. The purpose of the plan is to establish policy, set standards, identify and prioritize capital investments, and to address operational and fiscal issues regarding park and recreation facilities and programs in Grass Valley.

The Park and Recreation Master Plan Map identifies existing and planned parks within and on the outskirts of the City of Grass Valley. The plan describes a neighborhood or pocket park as a local park within biking and walking distance of users that can be co-located with an elementary school. A community park, as described by the plan, provides active and passive recreational opportunities for all City and regional residents, and accommodates large group activities. They often include key natural resources such as lakes, streams, or other attractions. The proposed neighborhood and community park locations identified by the plan are not specific. Rather, the plan generally locates them in areas where park facilities do not exist. According to the plan, trails can consist of either pedestrian-only, soft-surfaced paths that are four to six feet wide or multi-use, hard-surfaced paths that are eight to ten feet wide. All trails would be separated from motor vehicle traffic by open space or a barrier, and their routes may be aligned with or independent of the street right-of-way. Multi-use trails are often located along greenways.

The plan identifies a trail connecting with the County of Nevada Trail Plan near proposed project Site 1. In addition, an existing trail along Brunswick Road, traversing Sites 8 and 9 from Sites 3, 5, and 6 is noted in the plan. A future community park is identified approximately one-quarter mile southeast from Sites 3 through 9, east of Brunswick Road and North of Idaho Maryland Road.

### ***Park and Recreational Facility Standards***

The availability of park and recreation facilities and their ability to meet the recreational needs of the community is usually measured by facility standards. These standards are expressed quantitatively by the number of facilities needed to serve a certain number of residents (e.g., 5-8 acres of community parks per 1,000 population, etc). The Park and Recreation Master Plan sets park and facility standards for Grass Valley as shown in Table 4.14-1, *Park Standards for Grass Valley*. The standards are set using an average of the standards from example communities.

**Table 4.14-1  
 Park Standards for Grass Valley**

Park Type	Standard (acres/1,000 population)
Urban Plaza	No Standard
Pocket Parks	.25 - .5 acres per 1,000
Neighborhood Park	1-2 acres per 1,000
Community Park	5-8 acres per 1,000
Regional Park	5-10 acres per 1,000
Trails	1 system per region
Multi-Use Bicycle/Pedestrian Path	1 system per region

Source: City of Grass Valley Park and Recreation Master Plan

### City of Grass Valley Development Code

Section 17.86.030 of the Grass Valley Development Code (Park Land Dedications and Fees) provides for land dedication for parks and recreation, and for in lieu fees through which residential developments might facilitate park land acquisition. The standard for park and recreation dedications or in lieu fees, established under provisions of the “Quimby Act” (Section 66477 of the State Government Code), is a maximum of five acres per 1,000 population.

### 4.14.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

#### THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the proposed project would have a significant impact on recreation if it would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment

#### POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

##### Physical Deterioration of Recreational Facilities

#### **4.14-1 THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD INCREASE THE USE OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD AND REGIONAL PARKS OR OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.**

**Level of Significance Before Mitigation:** Potentially Significant Impact

#### **Impact Analysis**

Nevada County owns few recreation lands and currently only operates three recreation facilities in Western Nevada County. The County’s primary focus is on planning for and facilitating the provision of park and recreation services (facilities and programs) throughout the County. Therefore, the County relies on government and non-governmental entities that own, plan, or manage recreation resources in Nevada County. However, the County does collect development impact fees for recreation and distributes those fees to existing park and

recreation districts or eligible recreation providers through a competitive grant program to enhance recreational opportunities.

Through build-out in 10 to 20 years, new residential development resulting from implementation of the proposed project may increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other existing recreational facilities by new residents such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. Development within the proposed project site areas would result in approximately 1,480 new high-density residential units within the Grass Valley Sphere of Influence and 1,201 new high-density residential units within the unincorporated areas of Nevada County. Based on the 2012 DOF estimate of 2.00 persons per household for Grass Valley and 2.03 persons per household for Nevada County, implementation of the proposed project would result in an increase in population of approximately 2,960 residents in Grass Valley and 2,438 residents in the County in 10 to 20 years. This additional population would increase the demand for park and recreational facilities in the County and City, collectively, potentially accelerating or resulting in their physical deterioration.

The proposed project does not identify the construction of trails, or community or regional parks to alleviate the increased demand on existing facilities. Therefore, the project has the potential to increase the demand for existing community and regional parks in the County or City, which could accelerate or result in their physical deterioration. To ensure that the proposed project meets the County's and City's public parkland requirements and mitigates this potentially significant impact, Mitigation Measure 4.14-1 would be implemented.

#### **Mitigation Measure:**

The following mitigation measure applies to all sites.

- 4.14-1 Prior to approval of a Site Plan, grading plan, or any permit authorizing construction for a property within the RH Combining District, the project developer shall to the satisfaction of the Director of the County Planning Department (or City of Grass Valley Planning Department for Sites 1-9):

Demonstrate that the proposed development is consistent with the County's Western Nevada County Non-motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan and pay recreation mitigation fees in an amount established by the County. For projects located within the City of Grass Valley SOI, the developer shall provide for community and regional parks consistent with the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan or pay an in-lieu fee in an amount established by the City.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact

#### **Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities**

- 4.14-2 THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES THAT MIGHT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.**

***Level of Significance Before Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

### ***Impact Analysis***

The proposed project does not include the construction of recreational facilities; however, implementation of the proposed project would result in an increase in demand on existing recreational resources.

Based on the level of service standard ratios for regional parks to population increase in the County, future development of the proposed project sites would require the creation of 7.3 acres of parkland in the County (see Policy 5.5). As projects are developed in the City of Grass Valley Sphere of Influence, inventories of existing parklands will be required to determine if the level of service standards identified in the Park and Recreation Master Plan will require future developments to construct new facilities. As such, in order to meet the needs of new growth the proposed project could indirectly result in the construction of new facilities through the inclusion of a park in future development plans or through the construction of parks which utilized fees paid by the developer of the proposed project sites from either the County's or City's recreation fee payment program. However, since the proposed project would not directly include the construction of recreation facilities, and the future construction of recreation facilities would require separate environmental review, impacts associated with the construction of additional recreational facilities would be considered less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation required.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Not Applicable.