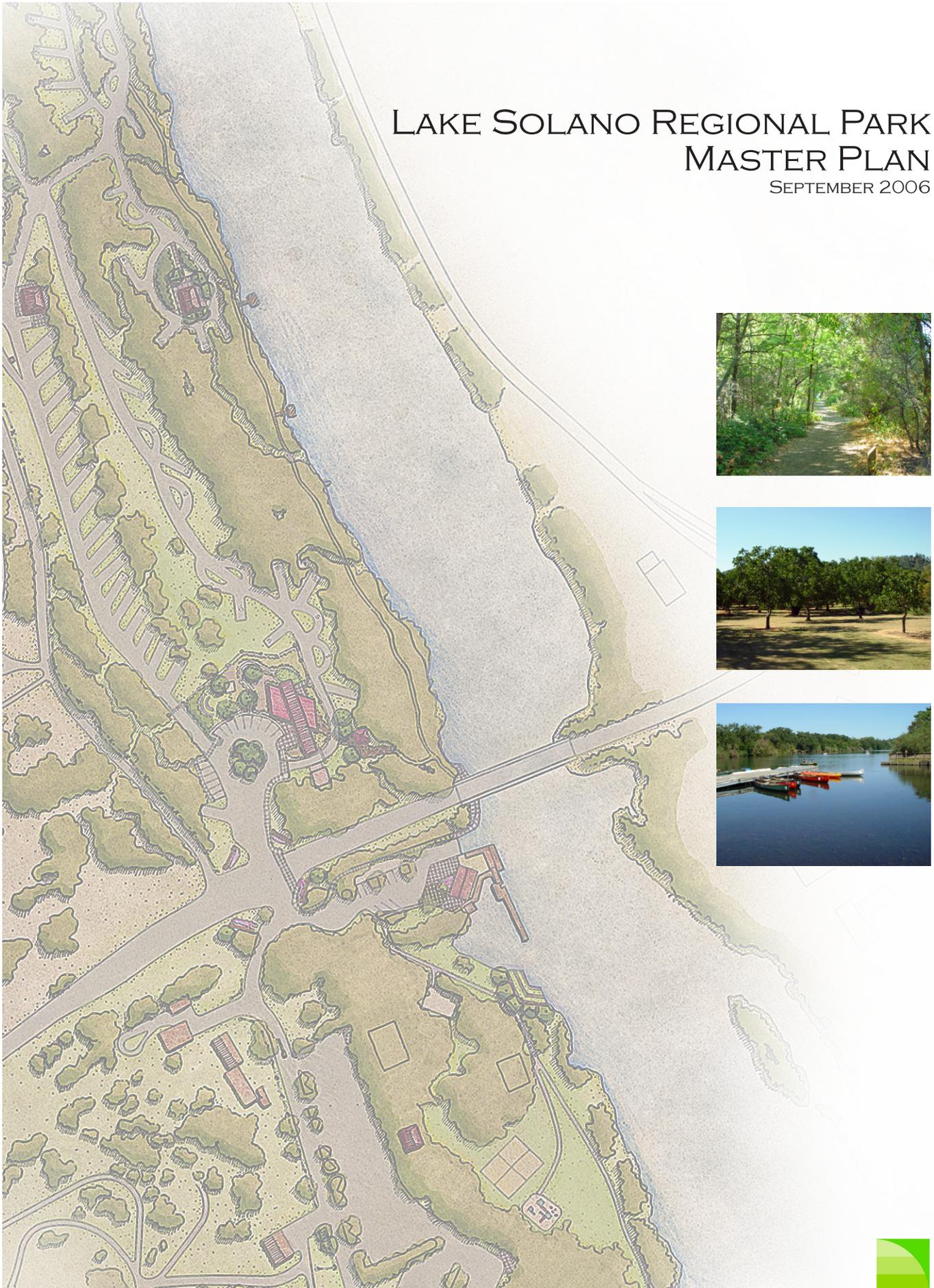


# LAKE SOLANO REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2006





# LAKE SOLANO REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN - COUNTY TEAM

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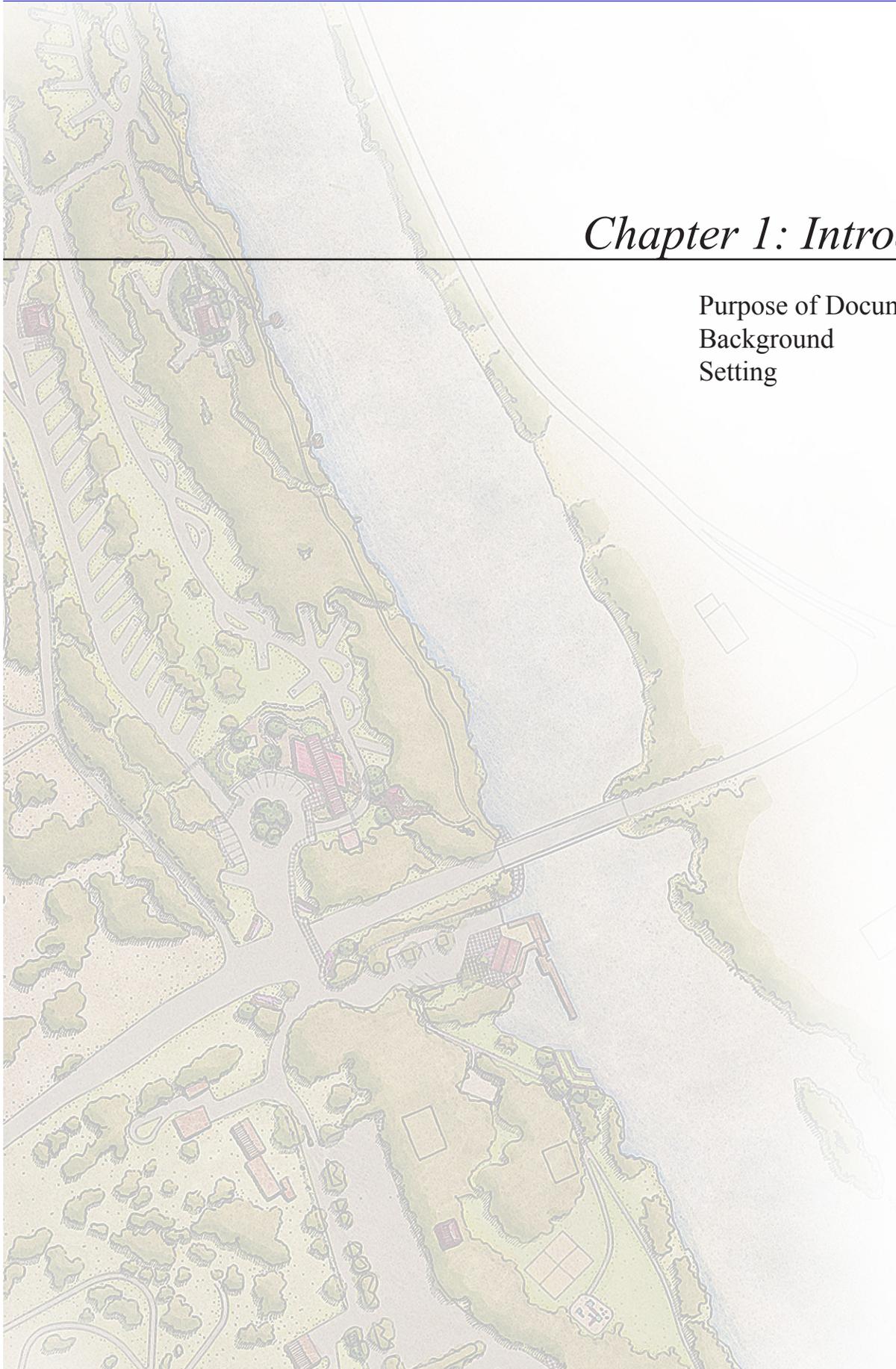
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# *Chapter 1: Introduction*

Purpose of Document  
Background  
Setting



**Purpose of Document**

Solano County operates the Lake Solano Regional Park under a management agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Over the next 20 years the County anticipates significant population growth and demand for the recreation opportunities that Lake Solano Park offers. This Master Plan document is a blueprint to guide future development of the park so that current and future recreational needs are accommodated without diminishing the unique ambient assets of the site.

A major challenge to recreation planning in Solano County is the robust pace of growth in the region, placing increasing pressure on the park system. The County population is also becoming increasingly diverse and multi-cultural. Hispanic and Asian/Pacific populations account for much of the growth. In addition, large segments of the population are aging, as more Californians of the mid-20th century generations become senior citizens and continue to be active in their later years. These populations, demographics, and cultural changes will be reflected in future recreational growth.

Solano County’s recreation demand will likely mirror statewide recreation preferences which place high value on hiking, waterfront activities, visiting museums, picnicking, wildlife viewing, camping, bicycling, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and other activities.

**Background**

The County General Recreation Development Plan for Lake Solano was last updated in 1976. The majority of the existing Lake Solano Regional Park facilities were built under this plan. The existing facilities include:

- A campground for 51 RV sites, and 40 tent sites, for a total of 91 sites.
- Family and group picnic areas
- Non-motorized boat launch ramp
- Boat dock with rental concession
- Restroom and shower facilities
- Handicap accessible fishing pond
- Playground
- Trails system
- Parking area

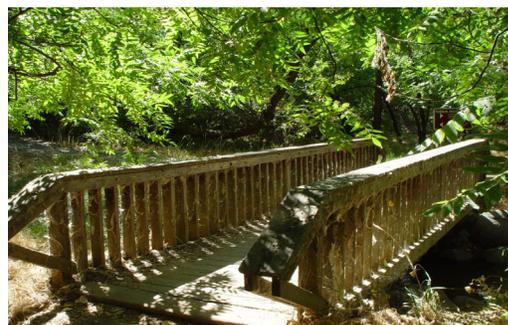
Since the last update the use of the park has evolved, demand for recreation activities has increased, the natural resources have come under additional pressures, and some park facilities and improvements have deteriorated.



*Figure 1.1 Tent Camping*



*Figure 1.2 Lake Solano Park Day Use Side, 1980 Flood.*



*Figure 1.3 Existing bridge to campgrounds*

### The Setting

Lake Solano was created in 1957 by completion of the Putah Diversion Dam. The primary purpose of the reservoir section is to enable regulation of Monticello Dam release waters for diversion to the Putah South Canal.

The lake is an impounded section of Putah Creek on the Yolo-Solano border, twelve miles north of Vacaville. The reservoir section has a water surface area of approximately 110 acres. Much of the land surrounding the lake is under Bureau of Reclamation ownership.

Yolo County maintains five fishing access sites built by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, on the upstream portion of Putah Creek. Picnic, camping and fishing facilities east of the bridge are privately owned and operated.

Regional access is provided by Highways No. 128, No. 121, No. 505 and Interstate 80. Pleasants Valley Road provides access from Fairfield and Vacaville.

Of the six miles of waterway and adjoining lands between the Monticello Dam and the Diversion Dam, three miles of the waterway and frontage land is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation and managed by the County of Solano as a park. The park lies within both Solano and Yolo Counties. The principal elements of this area are the “campgrounds” west of the bridge, the “Day Use Area” on the east side, an area designated for organization group camping, known as “Russian Flats,” and an orchard area west of the campgrounds.

The Bureau of Reclamation has a management agreement for 177 acres with the County for recreational use, effectively securing public access to the entire shoreline of the lake proper, including 3,500 feet of Putah Creek Road frontage, 2,000 feet along Pleasants Creek, and 7,500 feet of frontage along Highway No. 128. The County owns the 1.25 acre parcel on Putah Creek Road known as “Russian Flats”.

The County is currently negotiating with the Solano Irrigation District (SID) to utilize the 6.8 acre parcel referred to as the “Orchard Annex”. The total acreage included in The Lake Solano Master Plan is 185 acres. The north side of the upstream section, between the creek and the roadway and from the head of Lake Solano to Recreation Beach, is owned by the State of California and administered by the Department of Fish and Game for public fishing access along this 3.2 mile stretch.

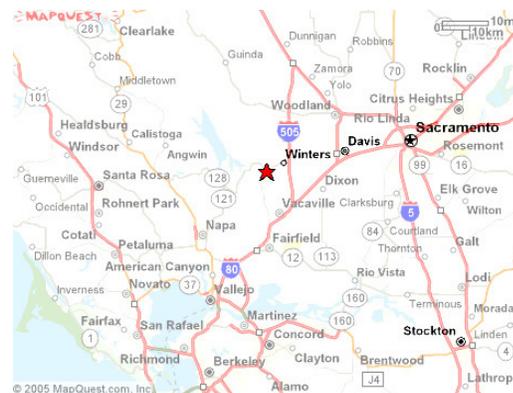


Figure 1.4 Regional Map - proximity to Davis, Sacramento, Stockton, and the Bay Area

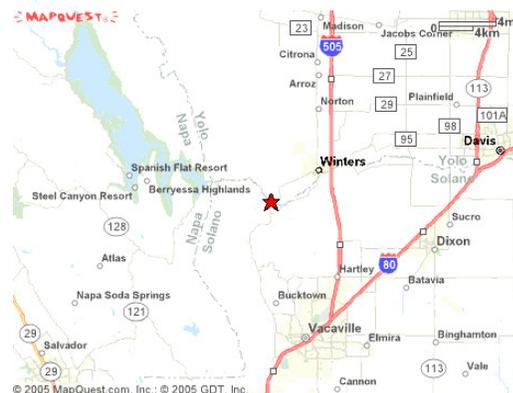


Figure 1.5 Local Map - proximity to Winters

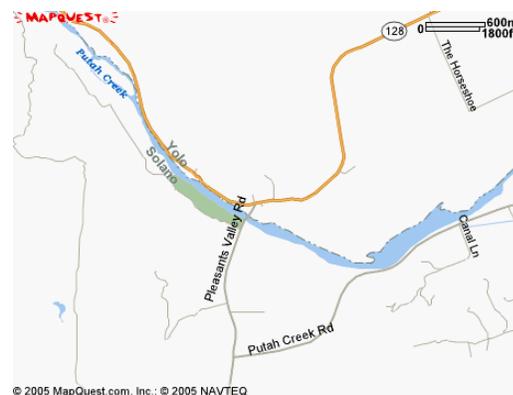


Figure 1.6 Lake Solano Park and immediate surroundings

# Lake Solano Park Boundary

September 2006

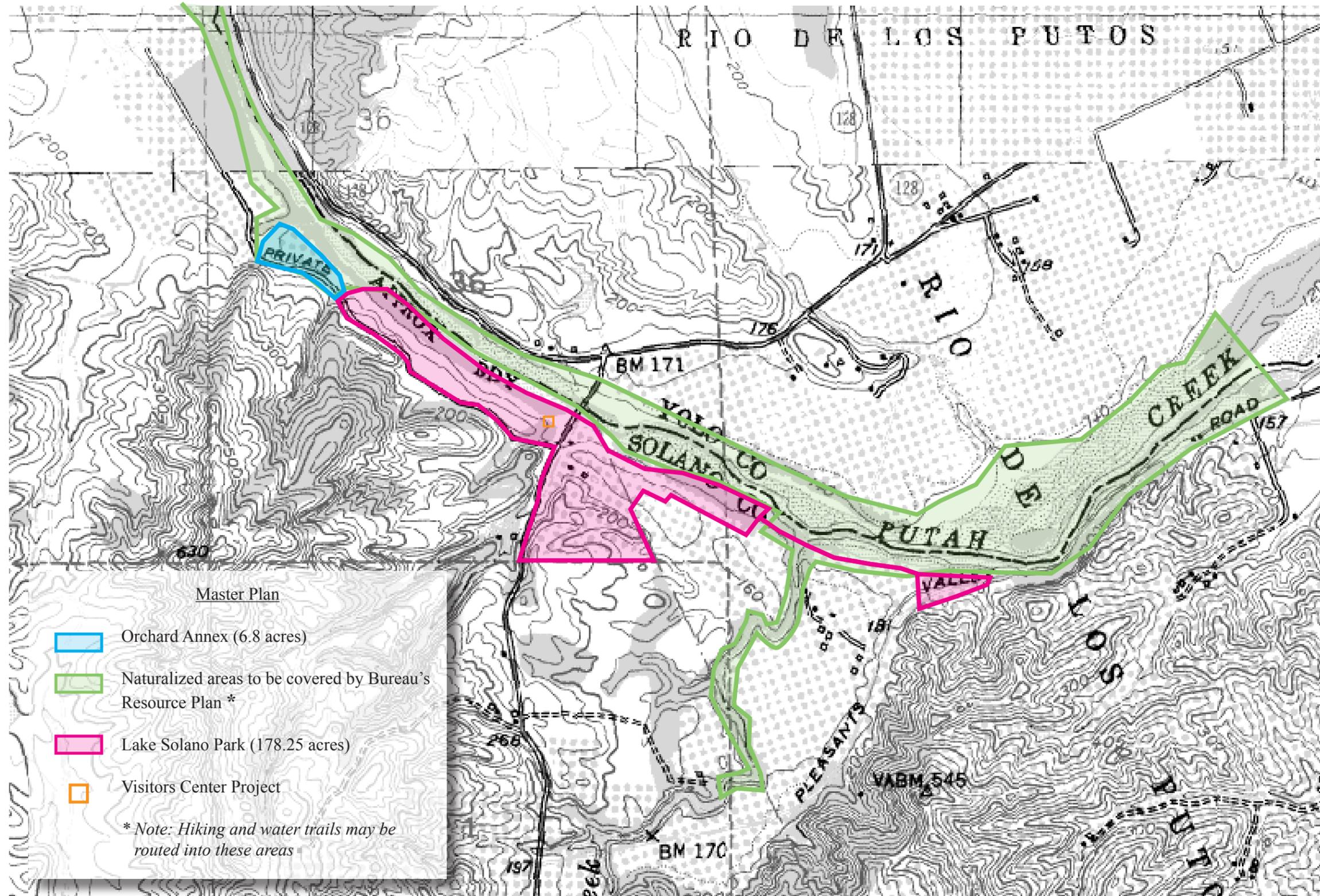


This map is not intended to be an exact representation of the Lake Solano Park boundary. It is for illustrative purposes only.



## PARK BOUNDARY MAP

FIG. 1.7



# BOUNDARY MAP



FIG. 1.8

SCALE: 1: 24,000

In general, the land surrounding Lake Solano Park is private property in smaller parcels of 1 to 100 acres, about half of it fairly steep and the other half utilized for orchards or pasture.

The lake is surrounded by orchards and rolling foothills with steep mountainous terrain bordering the stream section. Summers are hot and dry, 80° to 100° daytime. Winters are cool and rainy, 50° to 75° daytime, with an average of seventeen inches of rain.

### Vegetation

Vegetation includes blue valley and interior oaks, gray pine and chaparral on upland slopes with heavy stands of cottonwood, native black walnut, willow, alder and aquatic plants along streambanks. Elderberry, which can be found throughout the park area, is protected as a plant host for the threatened species, Valley Long Horned Elderberry Beetle. The area adjacent Pleasants Creek is abundantly infested with invasive, exotic species of giant reed. Tree of Heaven trees are reducing the cover of desirable native species.

### Wildlife

The riparian vegetation along Putah Creek provides critical habitat. The site is popular with bird watchers from at least three surrounding counties; Napa-Solano Audubon Society has recorded eighty-three species, including twenty-nine that nest in the vicinity. The full year-round list would probably number about one hundred species, including varieties of grebes, herons, ducks, hawks, quail, doves, kestrels, osprey, magpies, turkeys, kingfishers, woodpeckers, kingbirds, flycatchers, swallows, jays, tits, wrens, thrushes, kinglets, warblers, orioles, finches, towhees, sparrows and other families. This diversity can be attributed to the constant fresh water flow, dense and varied undergrowth, abundance and variety of trees and overall food and cover conditions provided by the riparian habitat zone. Trout are abundant and regularly stocked upstream. Black-tailed deer, ground squirrels and California quail are plentiful. Introduced Peacocks have taken up residency in the campgrounds.

The cold waters of Putah Creek are also popular fishing areas. Lake Solano and adjacent Putah Creek reaches are nationally known destinations for fly fishing sports enthusiasts. The native brown trout is a regular attraction. Mammals are abundant with black tailed deer and California ground squirrels the most evident.\* Recreational development and use at the current stage does not appear to have had serious negative impact on wildlife in this area.

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\*An active family of river otters have made Lake Solano their home. Beavers and water rats are active denizens as well. An endangered species of the Elderberry Longhorn Beetle finds its home here in the most dense



Figure 1.9 Blue Heron



Figure 1.10 Canada Geese at the Day Use Area



Figure 1.11 Black-tailed Deer

**Existing Facilities**

**Campgrounds**

The campground is heavily used and there are limited opportunities for expansion of existing campgrounds without disruption of existing natural ambiance. The day use area is now essentially complete except for the concession building, subject only to refinements or evolution of use policies and programs.

**Day-Use Area**

This facility includes picnic pads, play areas, boathouse / natural history museum, handicap accessible fishing areas, concession building, floating boat docks, and educational trails.

**Russian Flats**

This is a triangular site between the lake and Putah Creek Road, it is currently used for camping by groups such as Boy Scouts, with minimal facilities including parking, assembly area, restrooms, tent space, and barbecue grills. A host campsite has recently been established to facilitate use increase of this area by campers. The “Russian Flats”, group camping area and the orchard area has the potential for further development to meet group camping demand.

Pleasants Creek separates the day use area from Russian Flats.

**Orchard Annex**

This 6.8 acre parcel to the west of the campgrounds is currently cultivated as a walnut orchard. Drainage from Sachett Lane crosses the property causing a deeply incised swale that narrows access to the parcel from the campgrounds, though a rudimentary access road exists.

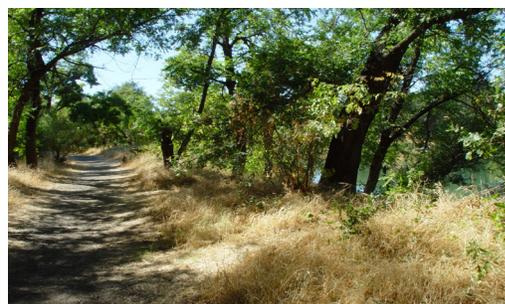
**Operation and Maintenance**

The Solano County Parks Department currently administers the campground and day use area with a permanent staff of three Park Rangers (one residing on site), summertime temporary employees, and four camp hosts. With the expansion of the camping grounds, intensification of the day use area, and an addition of the visitors center, additional staffing will be required.

-----  
 population of native Elderberry habitat in the entire region. Many species of invertebrates can be observed as well as amphibious and reptilian specimens. Lake Solano occupies a unique place at the very center of a nationally recognized “hot spot” of bio-diversity.



*Figure 1.12 RV camping*



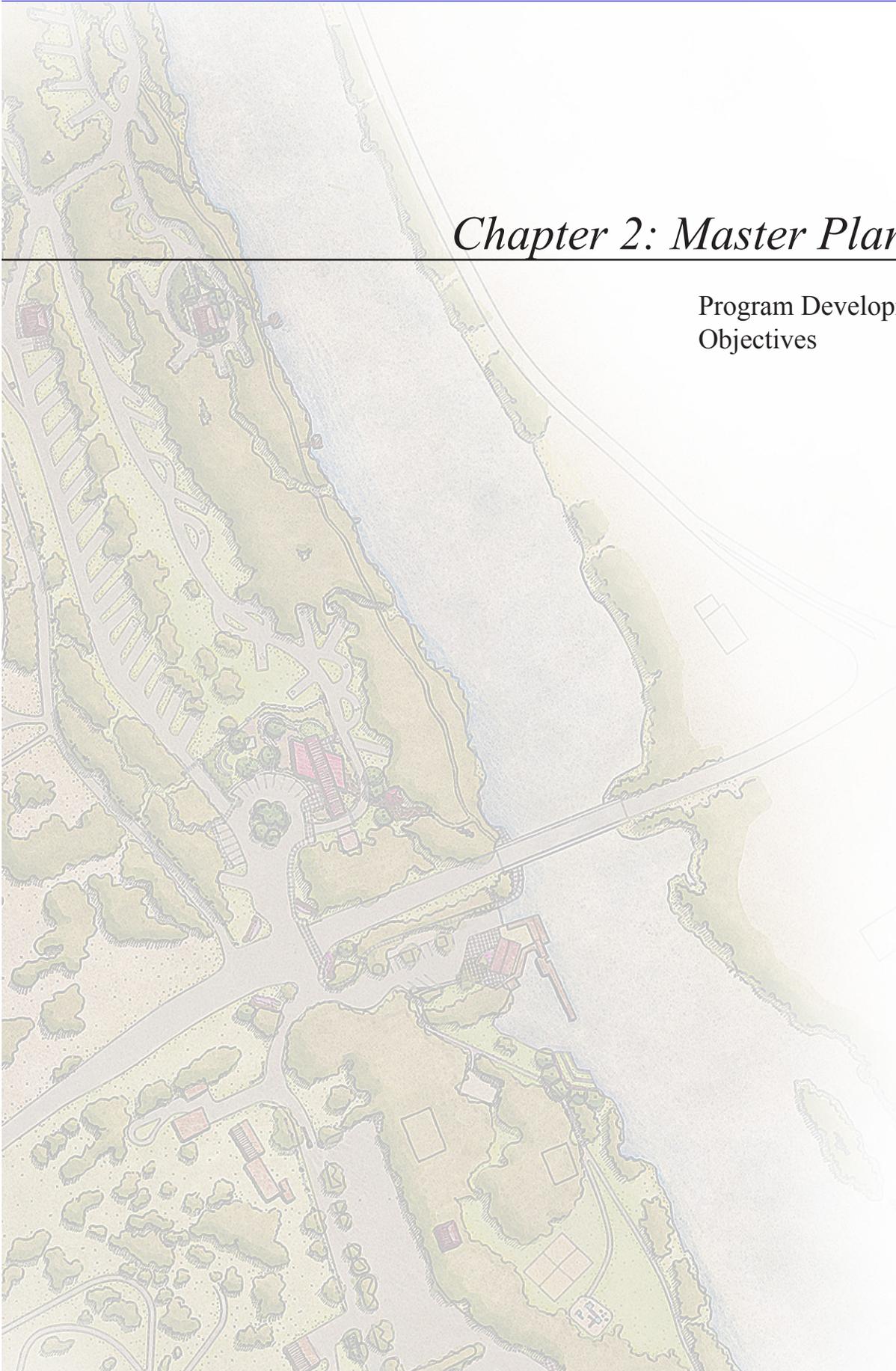
*Figure 1.13 Existing trail*



*Figure 1.14 Peacocks on trail*

## *Chapter 2: Master Plan Vision*

### Program Development Objectives



**Program Development**

There exists a marked deficiency of camping sites, picnic facilities, non-motorized boating, fishing and environmental interpretive facilities for Sacramento, Stockton, and San Francisco East Bay Metropolitan areas. As Lake Solano is located within a one hour travel time of the Sacramento and Stockton Metropolitan Areas and the one-to-two hour travel time zone of the San Francisco East Bay Metropolitan Area, Lake Solano Park can play a major role in satisfying some of the demand for these types of recreational facilities.

The supply of outdoor recreation facilities may never catch up with the ever-increasing demand, and great care is needed to avoid over-exploitation of an area such as this, where an attempt to accommodate too many people could detract from the quality of recreation experienced by users as well as the protection of natural resources.

Waters, wildlife and vegetation of Lake Solano and Putah Creek attract and benefit recreationists. Yet the human presence and development must be controlled to maintain the ecological equilibrium and protect prime riparian habitat. Scrupulous environmental respect and protection is in line with contemporary trends for the long term and generally is acknowledged as being in the public best interest.

The opinions, concerns, needs and desires of citizens are an important part of the park planning process. To gain insight as to the feelings of citizens regarding the type of recreational improvements desired at Lake Solano Park, the County distributed a survey to park visitors during August and September of 2004.

Of the 24 people surveyed, the majority expressed a desire to see more traditional nature park activities emphasized. The top facilities desired by this group were overwhelmingly a swim area, followed by cabin camping, spray ponds, additional family camping areas, and special events or festivals. See Survey Results in the Appendix.

The program for the Lake Solano Plan was further refined based on input from the Putah Creek Discovery Corridor Group (PCDCG) Solano County staff, the Solano County Parks and Recreation Commission, and the general public. Most of this collaboration occurred in the form of meetings, public workshops, a survey and multi-media correspondence.

The County sought input from the PCDC Partnership for their unique insights. This regional partnership of owners, managers and educators are stakeholders with interest in the enhancement and protection of Putah Creek.

Their cooperative includes representatives from:



*Figure 2.1 Lawn and boating area, Day Use Area*



*Figure 2.1 Nature learning*



*Figure 2.3 Bicycling*

- UC Davis Public Service Research Program
- UC Davis Natural Reserve system
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- Solano County Water Agency
- Solano County Parks
- Solano County Park and Recreation Commission
- Solano Resource Conservation District
- Yolo County Parks
- Solano Irrigation District
- Putah Creek Council
- US Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish & Game
- Solano Land Trust
- BRBNA Conservation Partnership
- Berryessa Trails and Conservation
- Adjacent land owners

The cooperative is committed to maintaining and improving the Putah Creek Corridor as a “place for discovery”. They provided invaluable input to the process to improve public awareness and appreciation of this corridor’s resources.

The PCDC Cooperative has been instrumental in developing a public outreach initiative with two components: a school outreach program, which will include field trips, after school programs, and day camps, and a general public component, including special events and family field days. This outreach focuses on building understanding, appreciations, and stewardship of Putah Creek and the diverse needs and uses of its water. “Water Ways”, the school outreach program, is an outdoor site-based water education program designed to serve school groups from Solano County and members of the public visiting Lake Solano Regional Park and nearby sites along the Putah Creek Discovery Corridor. The continued support of this school outreach is a basic part of the park program.

The Solano County Parks and Recreation Commission also conducted two Community Workshops to gain additional input on desired park amenities and improvements. Community input coupled with guidance from PCDC Partnership and County staff led to the development of this Master Plan. An additional public workshop was conducted in the town of Winters to supplement the outreach efforts of this planning process.

Lake Solano is located on a unique site which encompasses several highly complex types of natural resources. These resources should be respected while providing the recreational amenities desired by the community. The following list outlines the master plan’s objectives for making this valuable resource recreationally sustainable for the next several years.



Figure 2.4 Linda Gates and the PCDC at Lake Solano Regional Park



Figure 2.5 Trail walking



Figure 2.6 Watercraft rental area

## Objectives

1. Meet the future recreational needs of the community

It is the primary aim of the new master plan to meet or exceed the future recreational needs of Lake Solano users. Provide for a variety of recreational uses; provide gathering places for people to share special activities or events; provide settings for “generational outings,” where families and other visitor groups made up of people of various ages can all visit the same park and find activities that suit their ages and activity levels.

2. Protect the existing natural environment and retain rural ambiance of the park.

- Lake Solano contains resources of scenic, environmental, and cultural heritage significance. Promotion of conservation values is recognized as also enhancing the recreational value for a spectrum of people who use the parks.

- Provide a place for the public to enjoy recreational activities yet protect natural areas through context-sensitive design and management.

3. Expand Camping Facilities.

Campsites are a source of revenue that off-set park management costs. The overall number of campsites should be increased via expansion by creating additional camping opportunities in the “Orchard Annex” and the developed use of the “Russian Flats”. Campsites should be improved with amenities in order to stay competitive with other local camping facilities. Furthermore, different types of camping facilities should be expanded to accommodate a broader range of campers and camper experiences.

4. Provide ADA access

Park facilities should be upgraded to provide adequate accommodations for disabled access to amenities.

5. Enhance the day use facilities.

Improve existing facilities such as the group picnic areas, concession area, restrooms, and the playground. Add new facilities including: boat launch area, wading beach areas, boardwalk at the pond area.

6. Improve circulation, parking facilities, and connectivity between the Orchard Annex, Campgrounds, Day Use Area, and Russian Flats.



Figure 2.7 Group picnic area

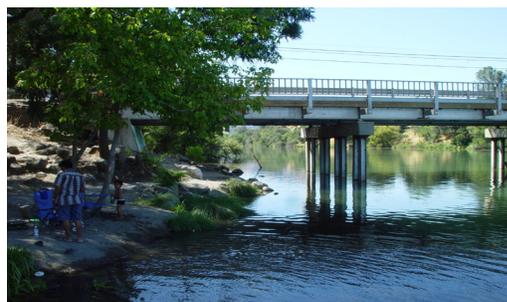


Figure 2.8 Bridge under-crossing, looking west



Figure 2.9 Bridge under-crossing, looking east



Figure 2.10 Handicap accessible fishing area

- Provide a creekside trail linking all areas of the park.
  - Provide improved pedestrian connection under the bridge.
  - Improve pedestrian connection between upper parking area and lower day use area.
  - Improve “stacking” areas for cars and RV’s entering the park.
  - Clarify distinctive parking areas – short term, handicap, day use, bus, camping overflow.
7. Address maintenance and stewardship considerations.

Design of the park needs to consider limited Ranger staff to meet maintenance and surveillance needs. Continue use of supplemental ranger staff. Park hosts are on-site representatives of the County. They perform a variety of important duties at Lake Solano Park including encouraging proper public use of facilities, discouraging vandalism, and helping foster the stewardship ethic. Where appropriate consider use of concession services to supplement and manage the recreation activities.

8. Enhance the outdoor education opportunities.

Provide outdoor education facilities both for organized groups such as the “Water Ways” school outreach program and the casual visitor. Provide education stations and interpretive signage which tells the Lake Solano story.

9. Enhance the landscape system.

- Preserve and enhance the mosaic of landscapes including:
  - Orchard
  - Riparian corridor
  - Upland
  - Grassland/chapparral
  - Improved park areas
- Improve irrigation system. Use subterranean systems where possible.
- Remove exotic weeds along creek and emphasize the use of native plant material.

10. Further Partnerships with Other Agencies & Groups

Cooperative agreements between Solano County and other entities provide unique opportunities for the development and management of Lake Solano recreation facilities and resources.

Work with Yolo County to create an enhanced recreational oppor-



Figure 2.11 Exploring

tunities within the Putah Creek corridor including trail connections, interpretive features, and fisheries restoration.

Enlist the aid of non-profit organizations and watershed and conservation groups in the restoration of habitat and to help address the problems of invasive plant species.

11. Provide a comprehensive signage system.

- Improve directional signage to the park as well as entrance signage to identify the location and improve traffic safety at the park entrance.
- Create a “way finding” signage system to increase visitor awareness of park amenities. Develop interpretive displays.

12. Dredge silty areas of Lake Solano.

Create a plan which would assure continued dredging or discourage silt build-up in Lake Solano. Designate an area for dredging spoils from the Lake.

13. Protect Valuable Resources

Resource protection must be considered in conjunction with recreation and other public uses. Provide protection for special-status species such as Blue Elderberry and the habitats on which they depend. Provide protection as well for the wildlife that those species support. It is in the public interest, including the interests of generations to come, to protect natural resource areas and to contribute to regional conservation.

Cultural resources in the campground should be protected.

For many people, part of the enjoyment of visiting a park is learning about what one is seeing and experiencing. Interpretation is a key element in the visitors’ experience. Resource interpretation on County park lands should generally be directed towards helping people learn about the place in which they live, their bioregion. In turn, as people learn about the value of the resources, they are most apt to help protect them.

Lake Solano Park should tell the landscape stories of the region, including the natural, ecological, and cultural themes mentioned in this plan. A wealth of material is available for interpretation in Lake Solano.

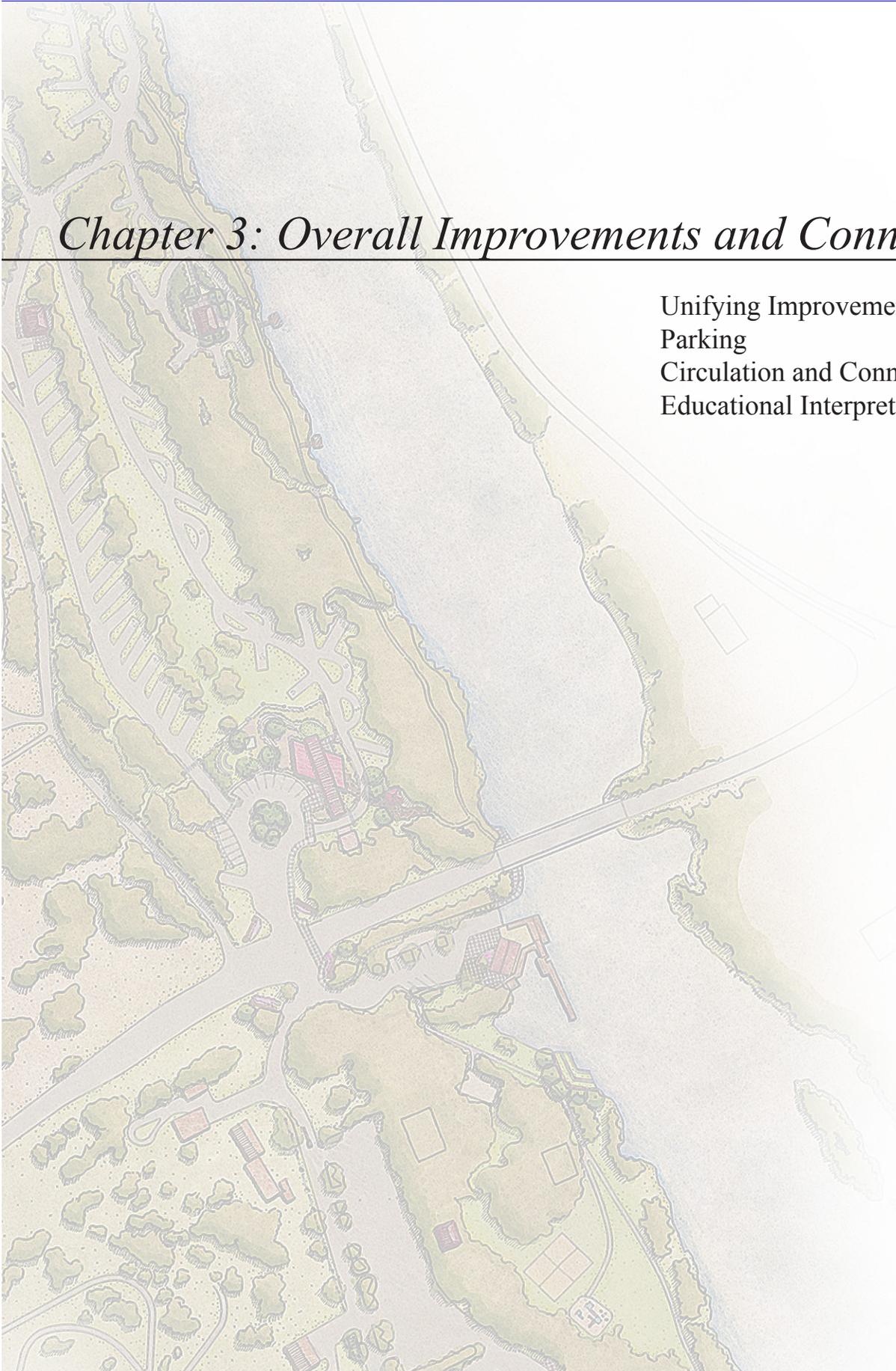


# LAKE SOLANO PARK MASTER PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 200'-0"

## *Chapter 3: Overall Improvements and Connectivity*

Unifying Improvements  
Parking  
Circulation and Connectivity  
Educational Interpretive Stations



### **Lake Solano Park, Overall**

The intent of this master plan document is to generally update the Lake Solano Park master plan for the next twenty years. Included in these endeavors is to update and replace the former master plan, include as part of this master plan the Orchard Annex, plan for the accommodation of added amenities, add diversified camping opportunities, and to create an educational experience by strategically placing interpretive stations throughout the park, while maintaining the current integrity and ambiance of the park.

In updating the plan, connections between pieces of the park will be strengthened, unifying the plans through pedestrian, auto, and watercraft accessibility. One of these pieces of the plan is the addition of the Orchard Annex, located to the west of the existing campgrounds, which had not been included in the former master plan.

In order to reference the specific areas more efficiently, the park has been divided into the following six general areas: Day Use West, Day Use East, Russian Flats, the Orchard Annex, the Campgrounds, and the Visitors Center. See figure 3.2.

#### **Issues:**

- Several separate parcels are included within Lake Solano Park, but they are currently a bit dismembered. The park lacks cohesiveness.
- Poor signage
- Weak pedestrian, auto, and watercraft connections
- No identifying / unifying theme
- Handicap accessibility is limited

#### **Goal:**

Unify the park.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Display a plan of the park which shows the entire park, what activities are offered, and how they are connected (i.e. trails, roads, etc.)
- Create or strengthen pedestrian connections throughout the park by adding signage (and perhaps distances as well). Construct a bridge over Pleasants Creek to connect Russian Flats and cut a trail to the Orchard Annex.
- Create or strengthen auto connections throughout the park by adding signage and simplifying circulation.
- Create watercraft connections throughout the park by adding piers, docking areas, and signage directed towards watercraft traffic.
- Unify the disparate parts by using identifying elements such as:
  - Vertical structures
  - Thematic barriers
  - Identifying signage
  - Using a cohesive color scheme
- Provide handicap (ADA) accessibility to all restrooms



*Figure 3.1 Pier fishing*



- 1. DAY USE WEST
- 2. DAY USE EAST
- 3. RUSSIAN FLATS
- 4. ORCHARD ANNEX
- 5. CAMPGROUNDS
- 6. VISITORS CENTER

# OVERALL SITE DIVISION DIAGRAM

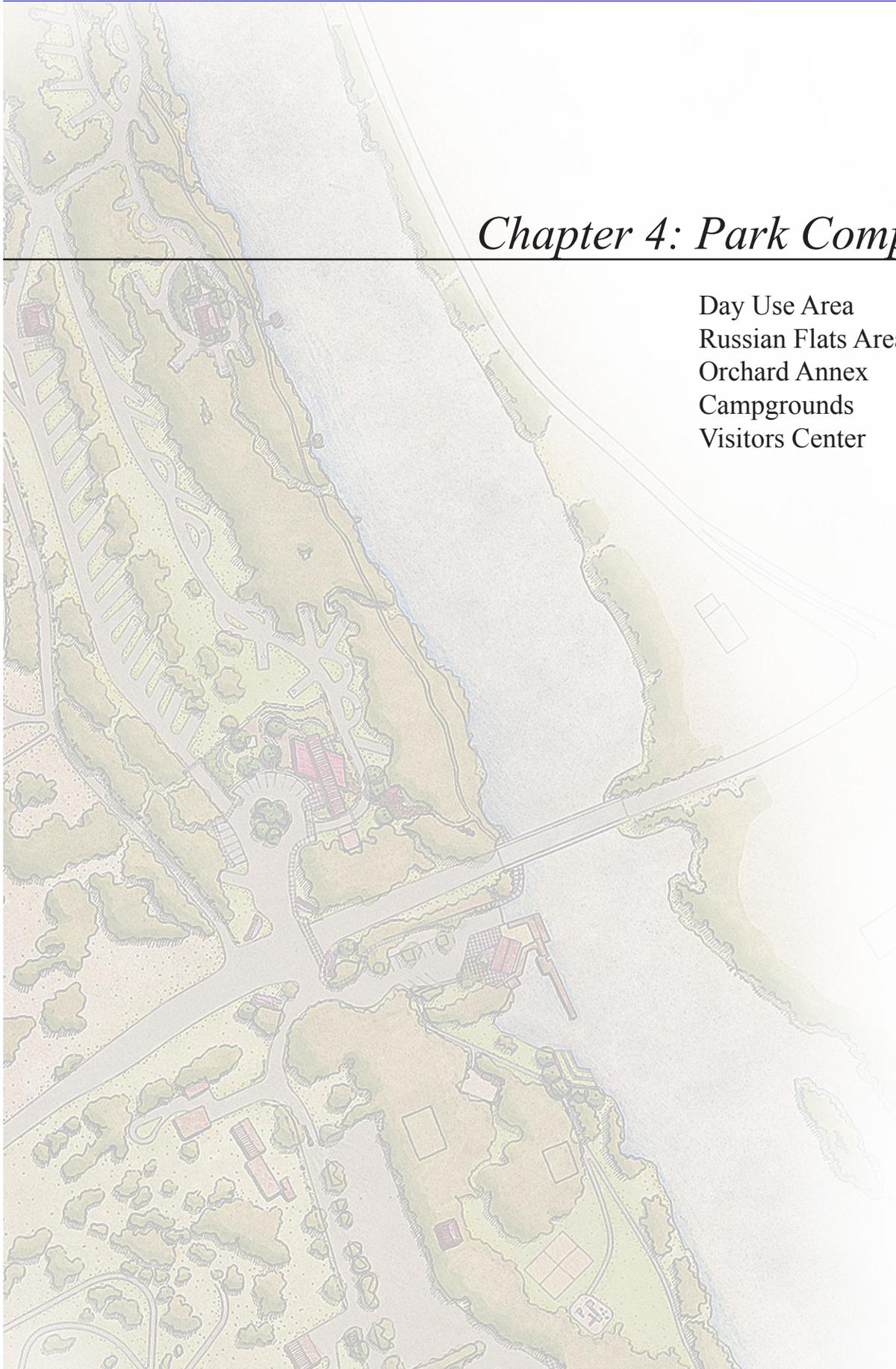
FIG. 3.2



SCALE: 1" = 500' - 0"

## *Chapter 4: Park Components*

Day Use Area  
Russian Flats Area  
Orchard Annex  
Campgrounds  
Visitors Center



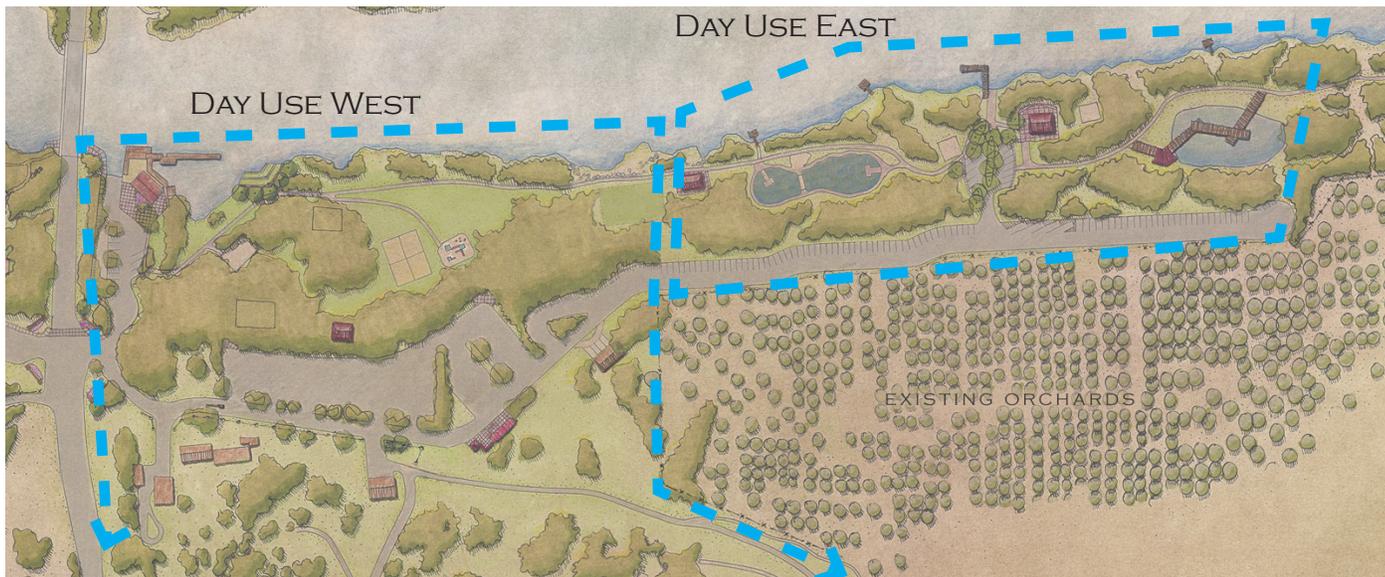
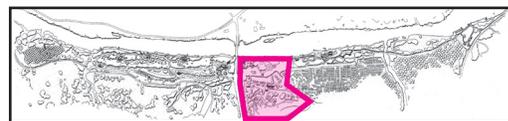


Figure 4.1 Day Use Area Division Diagram



**Improvements to the Day Use Area**

The “English Hills Day Use Area” is commonly known as simply the Day Use Area. To facilitate the discussion of the Day Use Area, it has been divided into western and eastern sections. See figure 4.1.

**Day Use West**

The western portion of the day use area is also currently the most used portion of the park. It includes at the lower level the main entrance, the connection to the campgrounds area, the boat launch, the boat dock, and watercraft rental facilities, the wildlife center, the main group picnic areas, the volleyball courts and horseshoe pits, and the children’s playground. The upper level to the south includes the upper (main) parking lot, ranger’s residence, maintenance area, fire house, and a series of intertwined trails. This southern portion of the Day Use West is bordered by existing private walnut orchards.

Several issues exist in Day Use West which warrant attention in the master plan. In order to more easily discuss the Day Use West area, it has been further divided into four areas: the Entry Area, the Boat Launch Area, the Recreation Area, and the Upper Parking Lot, as illustrated in figure 4.2.

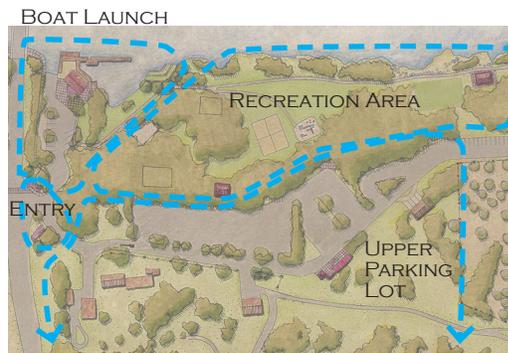


Figure 4.2 Day Use West Site Division

### The Entry Area

Entry to Lake Solano Park is approached from the north-south road, Pleasants Valley Road. Upon entering, the visitor immediately intercepts the toll booth before turning left to the boat launch area or turning right to ascend the ramp to the upper parking lot.

#### Issues:

- The entrance to the park is difficult to spot from Pleasants Valley Road
- The toll booth at the entrance does not allow for vehicular stacking.
- Pedestrian crossing at Pleasants Valley Road potentially unsafe.

#### Goal:

Create better visibility for the entrance, improve auto circulation, allow for vehicular stacking, and create a safer pedestrian crossing at Pleasants Valley Road.

#### Recommendations:

- Provide approach signage from both directions of auto traffic by notifying drivers of the “Lake Solano Park Entrance”, preferably displayed with a distance, i.e. “Lake Solano Park Entrance 500 yds. ahead.”
- Also pair pedestrian crossing signage with approach signage. Install blinking yellow lights at the crossing.
- Provide large identifying signage at the entry that includes County logos, fonts, and colors, etc.
- Remove toll booth for smoother entry into park.
- Direct vehicular traffic to the upper parking lot by placing signage just beyond the entry at the T-intersection.
- Plan for a future automated toll booth at the upper level.

### Boat Launch Area

The boat launch area and the recreation area are the two most used areas of the park. The boat launch area attracts many people due to its connection to the water and the related activities which occur there.

#### Issues:

- There is conflict between pedestrians and boat launch traffic.
- No handicap accessible crossing to the campgrounds.
- Restroom does not comply with current ADA standards of accessibility.
- The spatial layout of the concession area is ambiguous.
- Auto circulation at the boat launch is overcrowded and difficult to navigate.
- No area for safe human - water interaction.
- Cove is shallow with silt build-up.



Figure 4.3 Entrance to Lake Solano Park Day Use Area from Pleasants Valley Rd.



Figure 4.4 Entrance to Lake Solano Park Day Use Area



Figure 4.5 Watercraft rental area

**Goals:**

Comply with ADA standards for accessibility to all restrooms and for crossing to the campgrounds area, improve auto circulation, and create a safe place for people to interact with the water.

**Recommendations:**

- Redesign the pier / restroom to provide a more welcoming and straightforward central plaza area for gathering and meeting.
- Parking at the lower level in the boat launch area should be limited to handicap and short term parking (for loading and unloading) only.
- Provide drop-off areas at the group picnic area and at the boat launch plaza area.
- Dredge the cove and silty areas of Lake Solano.
- Close off the boat launch area during the summertime and open it for wintertime use only. Divert boat launch traffic east to the proposed boat launch area north of group picnic areas D and E.
- Add signage at the pier directed towards oncoming water traffic.
- Provide areas where visitors can interact with the water. Steps down to the water a safe distance away from boat trailer traffic can be made wide enough to accommodate large groups of people.

**Recreation Area**

The Recreation Area of Day Use West includes the group picnic area, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, playground, and extensive shoreline where fishing activity often takes place. It is typically accessed through the lower parking or via stairs from the upper parking lot.

**Issues:**

- There is no area for human - water interaction. Consequently, people access the water opportunistically, which often results in an eroding shoreline.
- Existing activity areas are not often utilized
- No lawn areas exist for field sports, i.e. soccer, wiffleball, etc.
- The slope between upper and lower (north and south) parts of the park are eroding and there is currently very little cover.
- Stairs from upper parking lot unstable, need renovation
- The western stairs from the upper parking lot lead down to the middle of the group picnic area, at times causing a conflict of activities, i.e. pedestrian traffic through a private party.



Figure 4.6 Canoes for rent



Figure 4.7 Canoeing



Figure 4.8 Windsurfing

**Goals:**

Create more accommodating spaces for park activities.

**Recommendations:**

- Revegetate eroding slopes and shoreline. Amend the soil in these areas.
- Renovate the sand volleyball courts and horseshoe pits.
- Regrade area west of the northern restrooms (near shoreline) to create an informal lawn sports field.
- Construct piers to allow access to the water without eroding the shoreline through use.
- Renovate the stairs from the upper parking lot
- Redirect the lower terminus of the western stairs away from the group picnic area.
- Designate a sand beach area where people can enter and exit the water safely.

**Upper Parking Lot Area**

After entering into the park, one must turn left to the Boat Launch Area or right to the Upper Parking Lot Area. The Upper Parking Lot Area encompasses the upper parking lot, the maintenance area, and the Beetlepoint trail system, just southeast of the maintenance area.

**Issues:**

- Stairs to the lower park area are hard to spot from the parking lot.
- Limited visual connection from upper parking lot to the lower park activity area.
- Maintenance area and public areas not visually separated.
- Parking limited in Maintenance Area

**Goals:**

Create better visual divisions between public and private areas, visually accentuate stair areas to lower park area, better connect the upper and lower areas of the park, and add accommodations for future needs.

**Recommendations:**

- Draw attention to the stair areas by using thematic elements, such as banners, flags, or other vertical elements.
- Provide a larger landing area at the top of the stairs.



Figure 4.9 Fire Station



Figure 4.10 Educational Trailer entrance

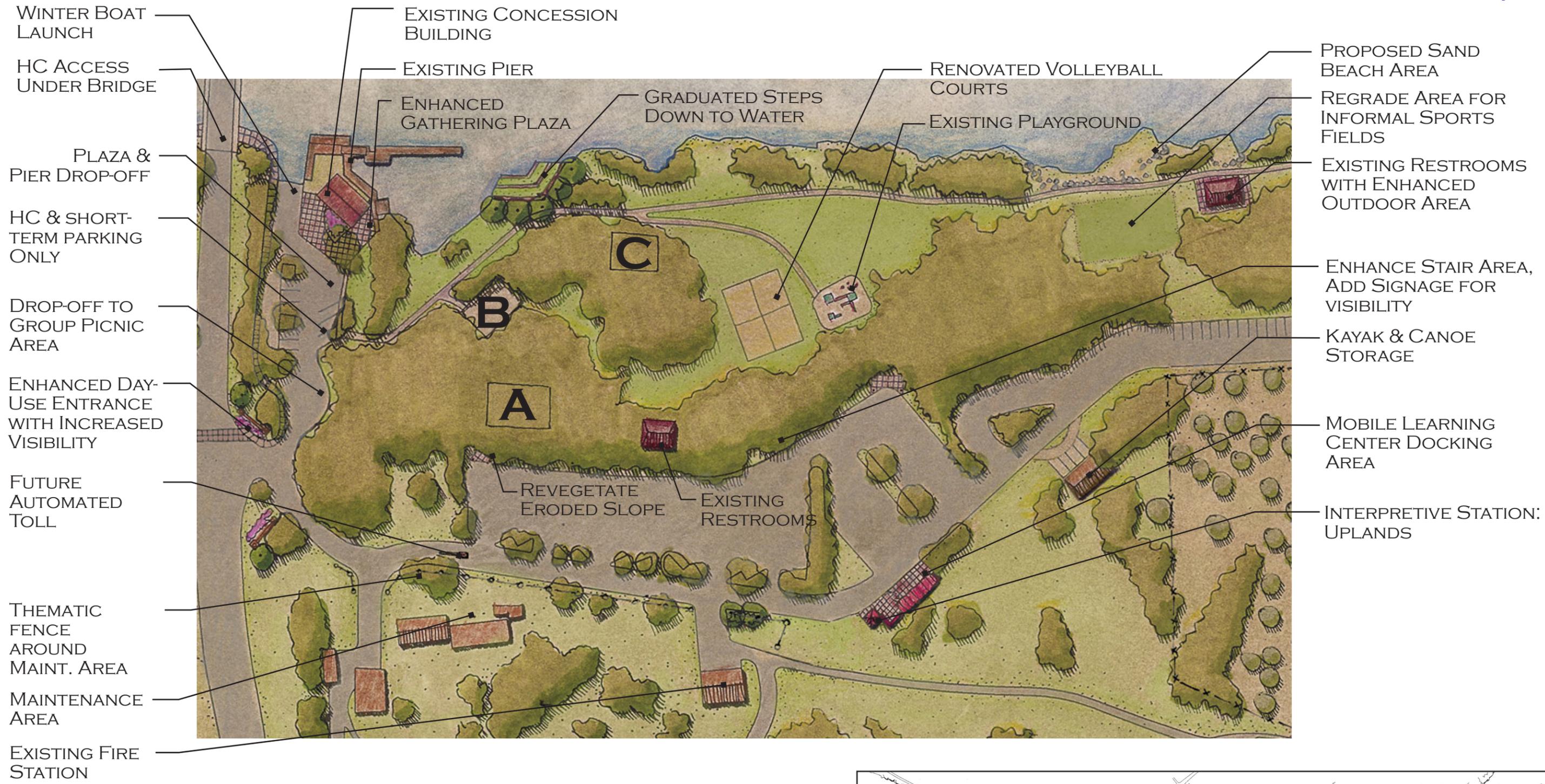


Figure 4.11 Educational Trailer

- Use thematic, descriptive, and/or iconic signage to communicate to visitors in the upper parking lot what activities or amenities exist in the park below, i.e. “to sand volleyball courts”, “to boat launch”, etc.
- Use contrasting color schemes to visually signal a separation between maintenance / service areas of the park and the public access areas.
- Use a thematic barrier to separate maintenance areas from public access areas.
- Reserve an area for future parking in the maintenance area.
- Add storage area for kayak and canoe storage. Fees collected could be a minor source of revenue while providing a valuable resource to visitors.
- Add an interpretive education area and docking station for a mobile trailer unit. Create a gathering space to accommodate large groups of students. The interpretive station should provide a connection to the Beetle Point trail system to the south. (See Figs. 4.10, 4.11)
- Plan for a future automated toll system that will allow for vehicular stacking after entry to the park.



*Figure 4.12 Adjacent orchards*

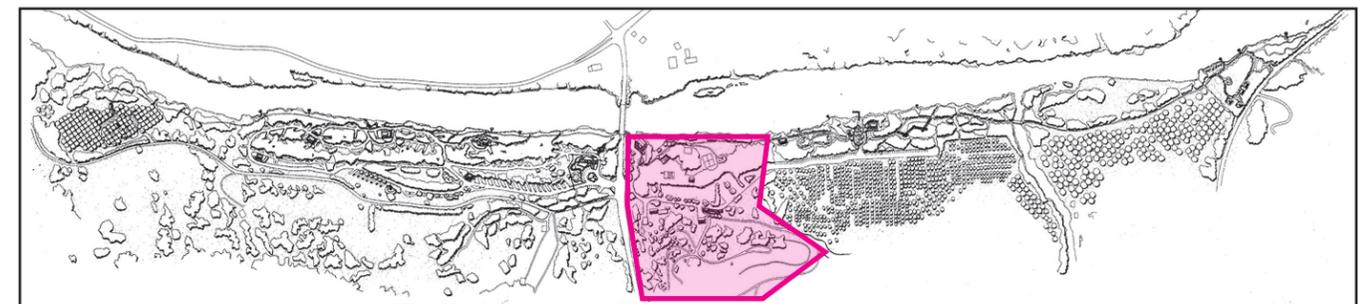


# DAY USE WEST DIAGRAM

FIG. 4.13



SCALE: 1" = 100' - 0"



### Day Use East

The eastern portion of the day use area sees much less usage than the western portion. Some of this is due to the fact that many of the amenities most in demand such as the boat launch, the group picnic area, and the watercraft rental facility are located near the entrance. There is also limited vehicular access to the eastern area. For many visitors, the lower park area is ostensibly non-existent. A greater connection from the western side to the eastern side of the day use area and from the upper parking lot to the lower activity area are desirable.

### Issues:

- The shoreline is eroded from fishing access and wading activities.
- The eastern side of the park is severely underutilized.
- No visual connection between upper parking and lower activity areas.
- Visually, the eastern side is disconnected to the western side of the park.
- The wetlands cannot be traversed, it is messy to visit, and it cannot accommodate large groups of people.
- Restrooms are unwelcoming, the space within unused.
- There exists no parking for oversized or boat trailer parking at the eastern end of the park

### Goals:

Activate the eastern part of the park by reconnecting it with the western and upper portions. Facilitate the uses of existing amenities and accommodate future activities and uses. Provide ADA accessibility to restrooms and activities.

### Recommendations:

- In the upper parking lot, provide thematic or iconic descriptive signage to direct visitors to specific places or activities in the lower active park area.
- Create a summertime-only boat launch and pier leading from the ramp from the upper lot. This will redirect summertime traffic through the park and activate the eastern portion of the day use area.
- Widen the ramp down to the proposed boat launch area to increase visibility and visual connection from the upper lot to the lower lot and water. Add safe pedestrian access.
- Create an easily navigable roundabout for easy boat launching, drop-off, and handicap and short-term only parking.
- Add fishing piers along the shore edge to provide water access without eroding the shore.



Figure 4.14 Handicap fishing

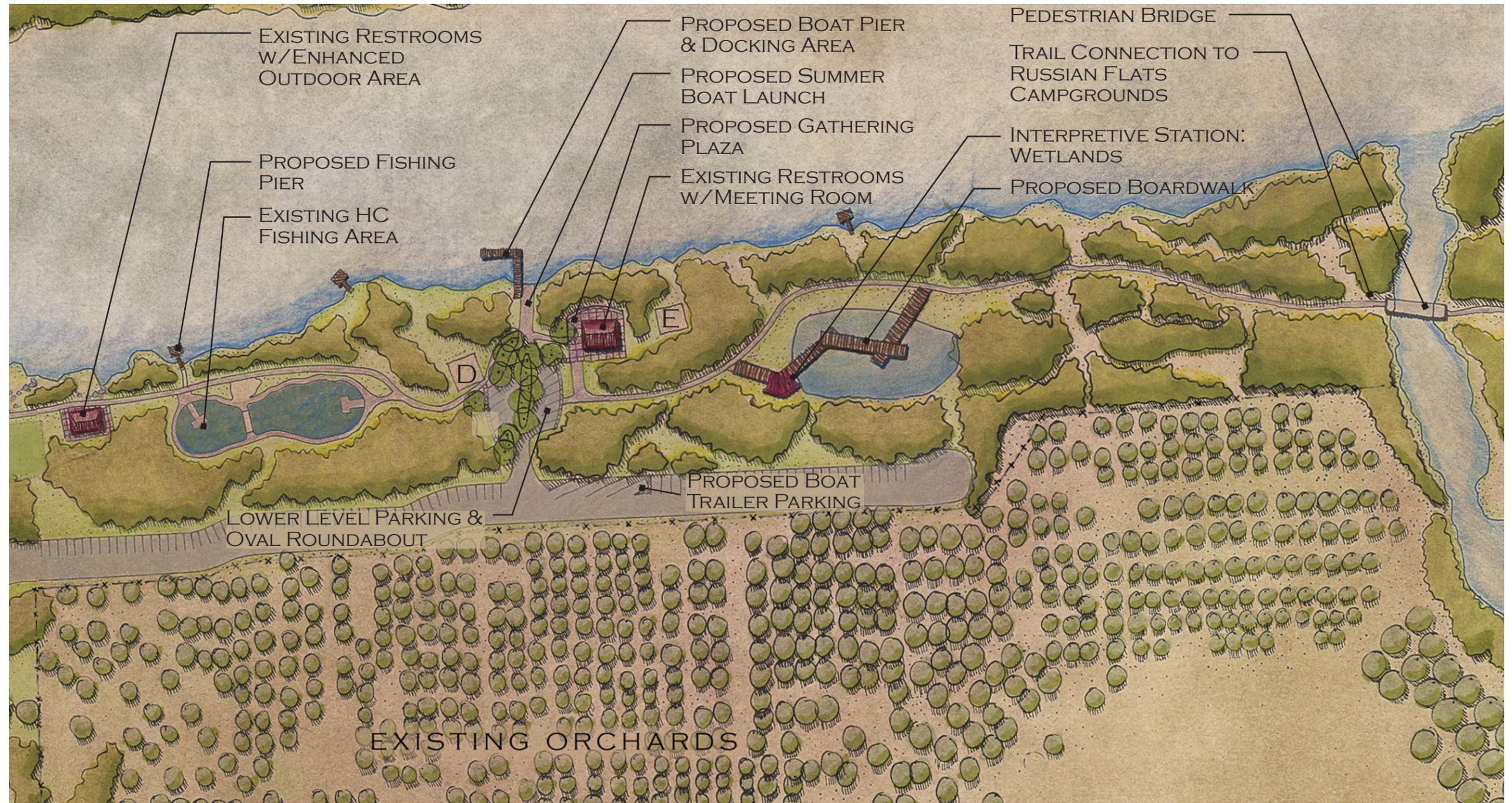


Figure 4.15 Ramp from existing upper parking lot to proposed boat launch area

- Add boat trailer parking near the ramp to the boat launch.
- Construct a suspended boardwalk through the wetlands so that educational groups may visit at close proximity without getting muddy. Include an interpretive station at the wetlands area.
- Create an attractive outdoor gathering area at the restrooms near the proposed boat launch.
- Use the extra space within the restroom building for meetings, storage, or for park-sponsored Rotary Club activities.
- Maintain the pedestrian trail connection east to the Russian Flats area.

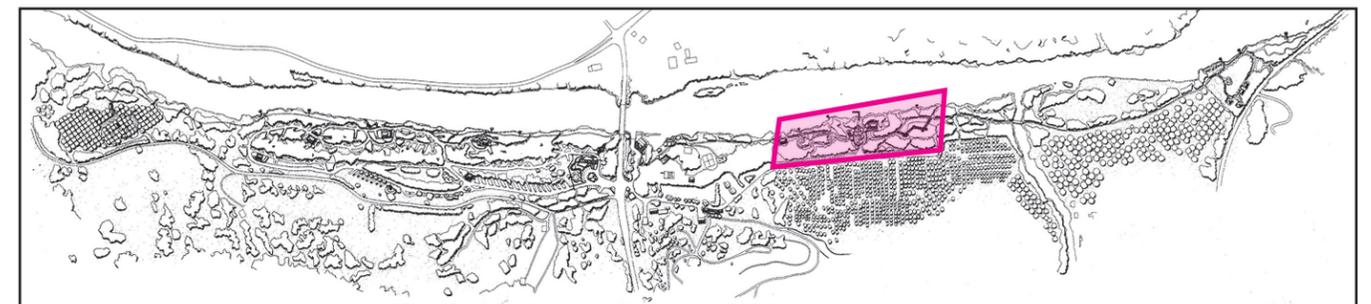
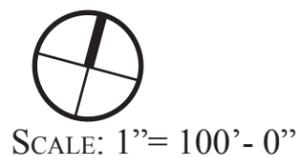


*Figure 4.16 Picnic pad D near proposed boat launch area*



# DAY USE EAST DIAGRAM

FIG. 4.17



### **Russian Flats Area**

The Russian Flats campgrounds currently being used for group camping activities. Historically, this triangular 1.25 acre parcel of land once belonged to Russian immigrants who had planned on developing it. When plans fell through, Solano County acquired the land and named it after its previous owners. There exists a parking lot, restrooms, picnic pads, areas of undifferentiated open spaces, and the Buckeye Grove nature trail. The Russian Flats can be accessed on foot, via trail extending east from Lake Solano park. However, Pleasants Creek must be traversed, which remains a muddy endeavor. The auto connection to Russian Flats exists only via Putah Creek Road. Lake Solano Park proper must be exited in order to drive to Russian Flats. See figure 4.21.

#### **Issues:**

- Shoreline eroding from water activity access.
- Vehicular entry lacks identity.
- Pleasants Creek uncrossable.
- Picnic areas are not sheltered.
- No showering facilities exist.

#### **Goal:**

Unify this parcel with the rest of Lake Solano Park and add accommodations for park visitors.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Add fishing piers to access water.
- Add docking area and signage directed toward oncoming watercraft traffic.
- Construct pavilions to shelter the picnic areas.
- Add an interpretive station.
- Add showering facilities adjacent to the existing restrooms.
- Create an attractive entrance at the vehicular entry. Include identifying signage with elements with which to identify Russian Flats with Lake Solano Park.
- Secure the park grounds with a fence and locking gate at the vehicular entry and pedestrian entry (at the connecting trail).
- Include a camp host station.
- Add a group fire pit.
- Delineate individual campsite areas.



Figure 4.18 Tent camping.

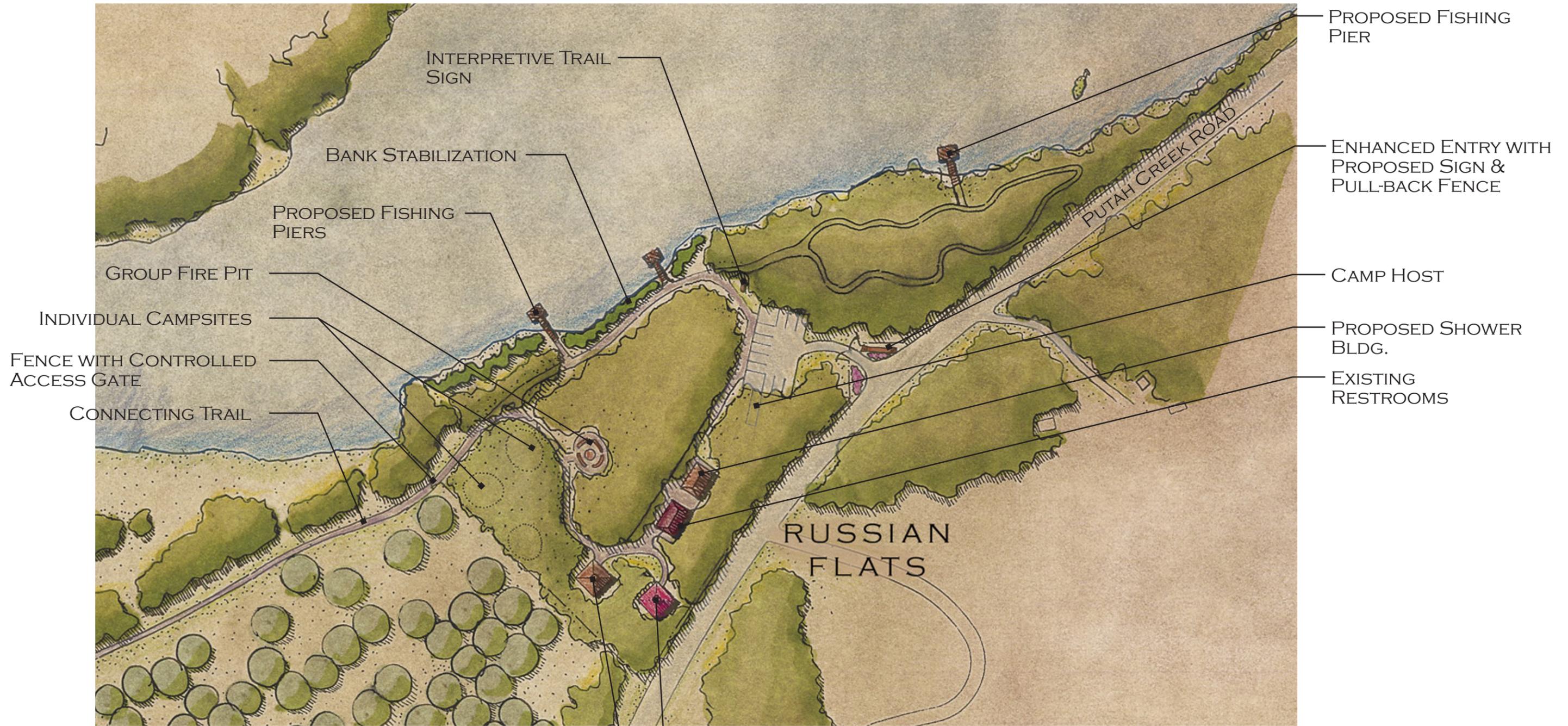


Figure 4.19 Kayaking.



Figure 4.20 Boat fishing.

- Enhance the interpretive trail with signage.



# RUSSIAN FLATS



SCALE: 1" = 100' - 0"

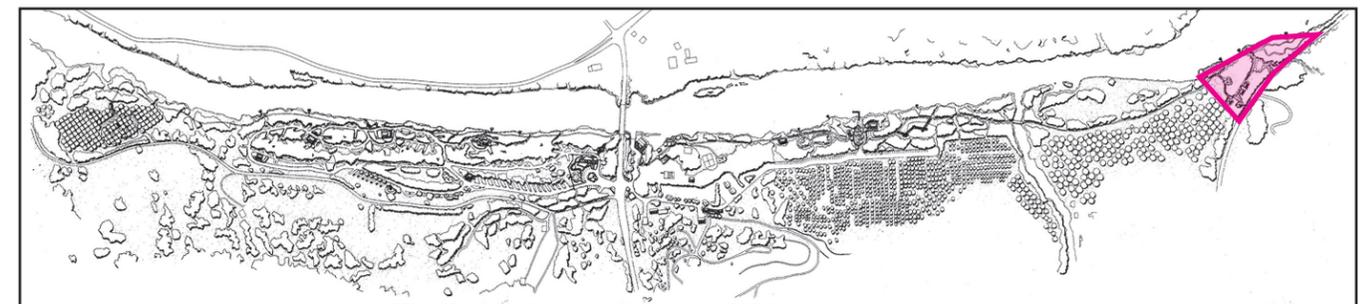


FIG. 4.21

### **Orchard Annex**

The Orchard Annex is a 6.8 acre site located just west of the campgrounds. Currently owned by the Solano Irrigation District, it is soon to become part of Lake Solano Park. The orchard consists of mature walnut trees, many of which are out of the production loop. The only connection to this land is the privately owned road bordering the property to the south. It is desired that part of this land remain agricultural-- if not commercially, then at least in gesture. A portion should remain undeveloped, preserving the marks of an agricultural past. As this land is currently undeveloped, many improvements are needed to render the land usable by park visitors.

#### **Issues:**

- Currently there is no connection to the property. The only road that exists is a privately owned road bordering the property to the south.
- There is limited space within Lake Solano Park which can include more RV camping. The Orchard Annex can accommodate campers.
- There are no camping facilities in Lake Solano Park for people who do not own their own camping gear.

#### **Goal:**

To effectively plan the use of the Orchard Annex and unify it to Lake Solano Park.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Create connections to the campgrounds area of Lake Solano Park.
- Create a vehicular connection from the campgrounds area of Lake Solano Park.
- Create a pedestrian trail connection from the campgrounds to the east.
- Construct a boat launch and pier for watercraft travel and connection.
- Add signage at the pier to communicate to visitors that this area exists and is part of Lake Solano Park.
- Add signage at the vehicular entry and pedestrian trail
- Add cabin camping as an option for individuals or groups, such as Girl Scouts.
- Add restrooms and shower facilities.
- Add group pavilions and gathering areas.



*Figure 4.22 Cabin camping.*

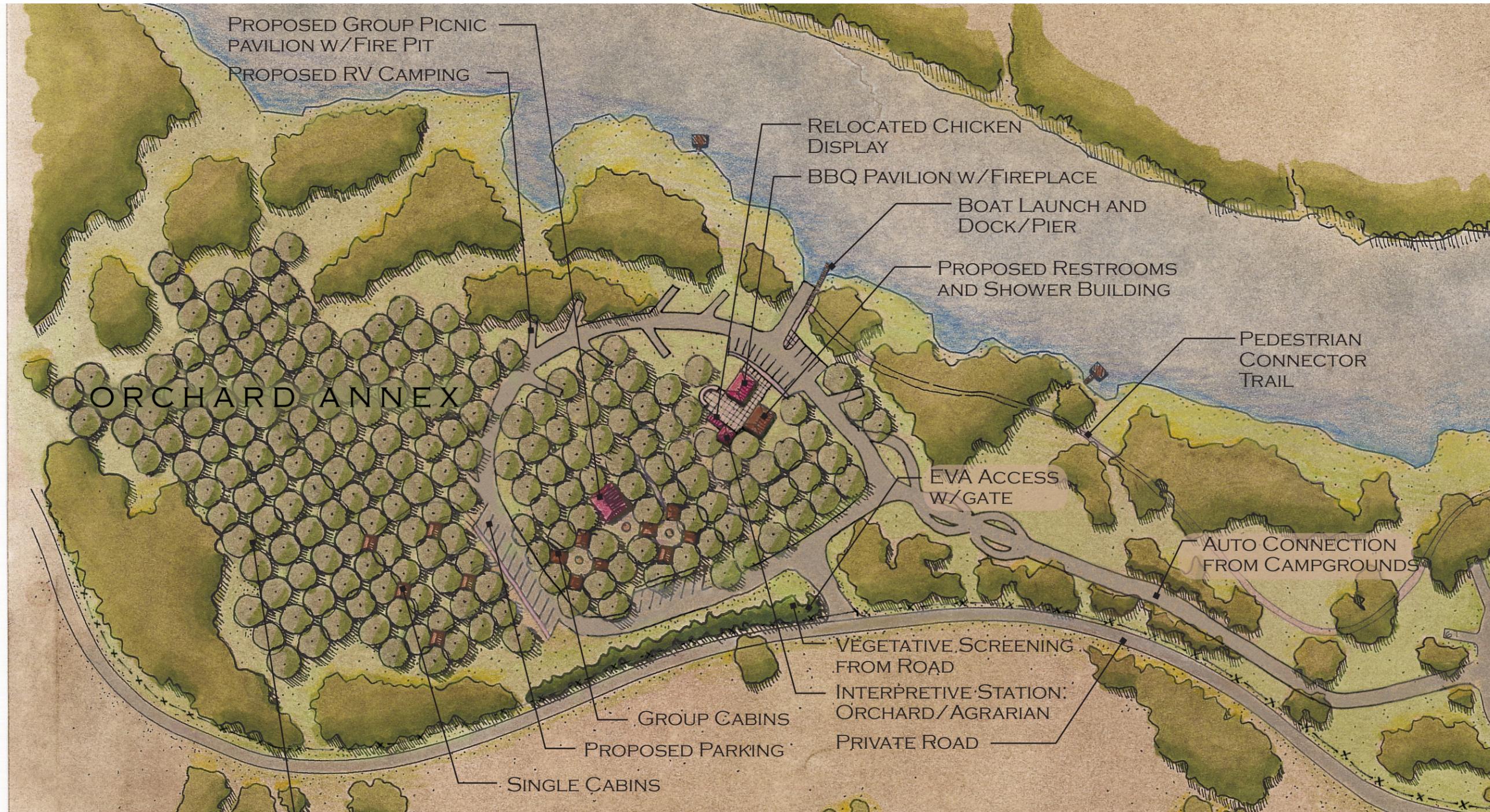


*Figure 4.23 Fire pit.*

- Add RV camping.
- Add a group picnic / BBQ area.
- Add an interpretive station to highlight the park's agricultural resource.
- Relocate the chicken display here to go with the agricultural theme of the Orchard Annex. Possibly expand the display with an additional live bird display.
- Add vegetative screening at the southern fence for privacy.
- Add fishing piers along the shore and prevent the shoreline from eroding.
- Add a host campsite.



*Figure 4.24 Recreational Vehicle picnic*



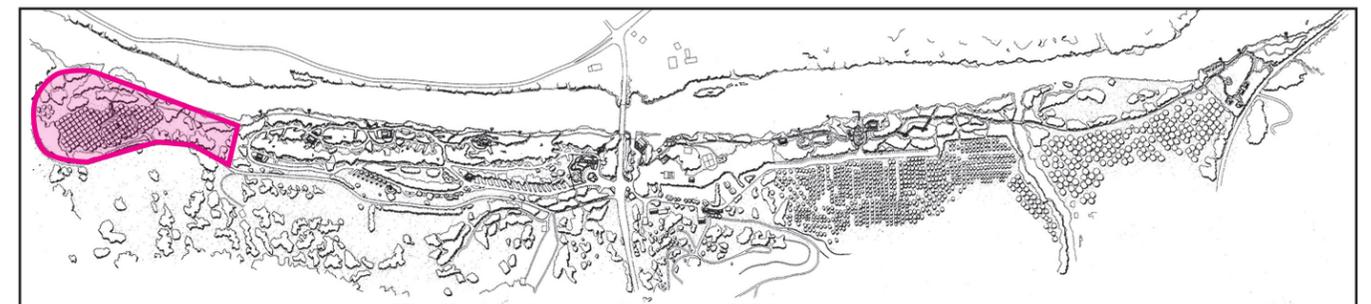
PRESERVED ORCHARD AREA

# ORCHARD ANNEX

FIG. 4.25



SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"



### **Los Putos Campground Area**

The Los Putos Campgrounds currently includes 91 RV or tent camping sites. It is considered a gem by many who visit it, due to its ambiance within the large stands of mature trees and its close proximity to water. The rangers currently consider this campgrounds at maximum capacity, with no room to include additional camp sites. While there are some areas which could be condensed to accommodate more sites, the fear is that any further additions would subtract from the quality instead of adding to it. Wildlife may not find the park as enticing a place to live if it were to experience further buildout.

#### **Issues:**

- Connection to the Day Use Area is not ideal and there is no ADA accessibility for this purpose.
- Lake Solano Park is running out of campsites.
- RVs have only water and electricity hookups. Waste stations must be used.
- Shoreline and slopes are eroding.
- Swim area is small and overcrowded.
- There is no place to gather.
- No areas exist with a shelter for group activities.
- There is no play area for children.
- The archeological heritage is not recognized.
- Overflow parking is limited.
- Pay station is too close to the road and does not allow for vehicular stacking.
- The existing parking lot is difficult for buses and RVs to navigate.
- The parks needs a visitors center where information can be gathered.

#### **Goals:**

Reconfigure the entry and drop-off areas to accommodate the visitors center and its traffic. Accommodate and plan for future uses.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Include a Visitors Center
- Remove the toll booth and relocate the pay station in the Visitors Center. Reconfigure the entry area to accommodate the visitors center.
- Create a ADA accessible below-bridge connection from the day use area to the campgrounds.
- Improve the current trail conditions through the campgrounds.
- Create a pedestrian trail connection to the Orchard Annex.
- Create an auto connection to the Orchard Annex.



*Figure 4.26 Fishing is one of the many activities several visitors enjoy.*



*Figure 4.27 Existing Campgrounds.*



*Figure 4.28 Tent camping*

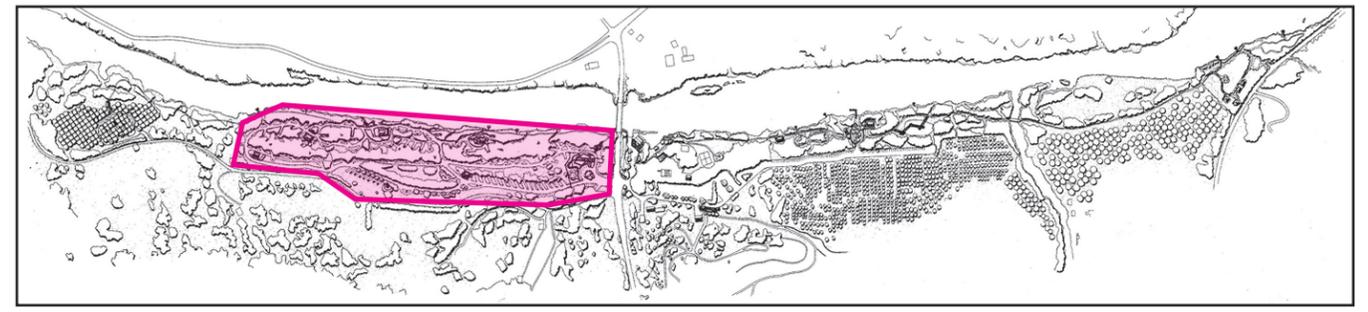
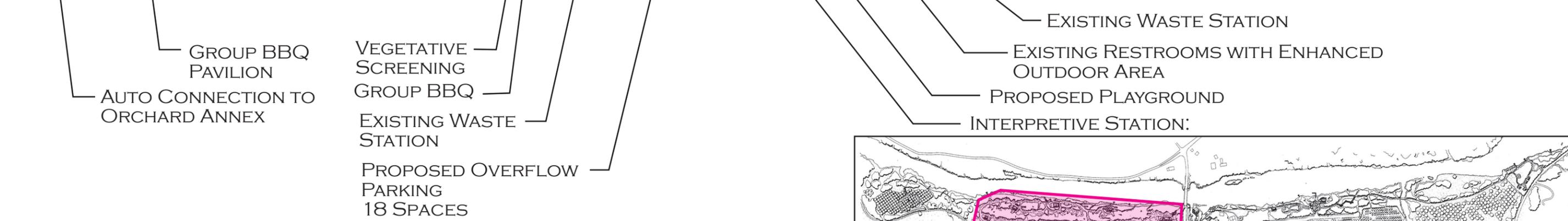
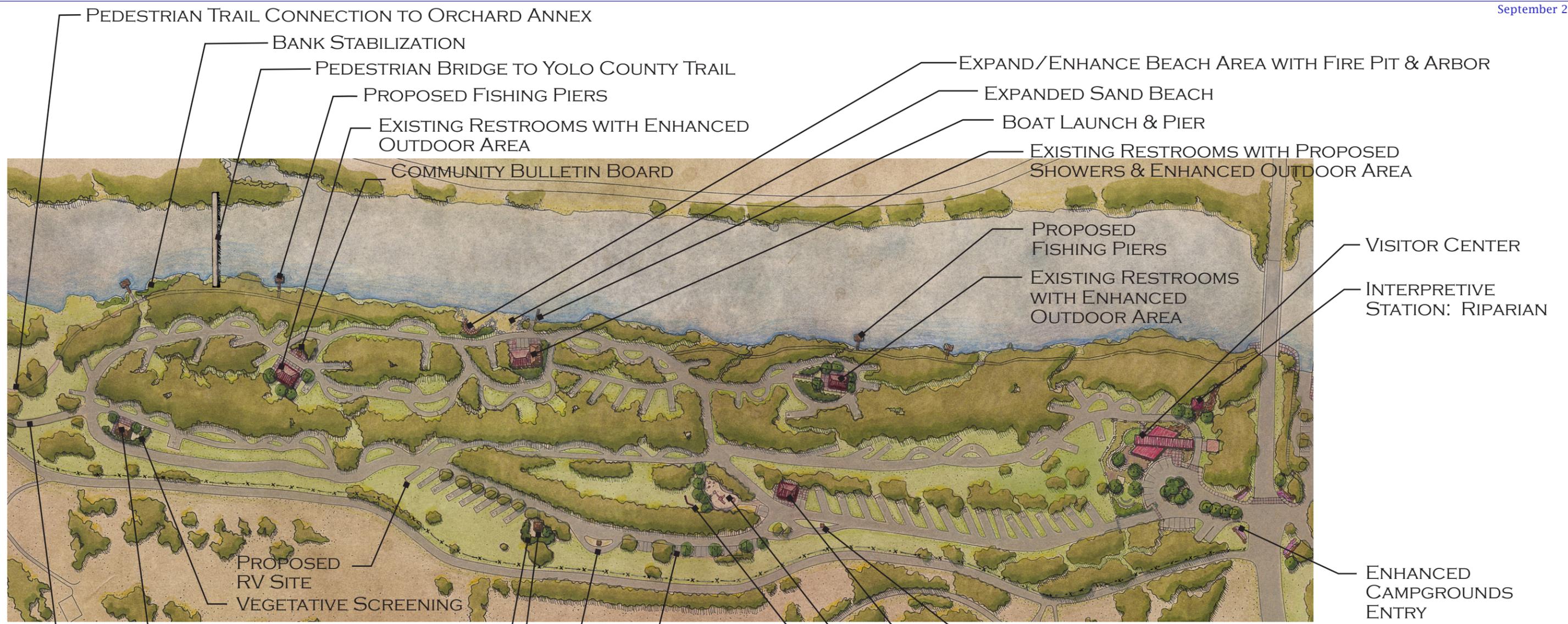
- Expand and enhance the current sand beach area to accommodate more people. Include an arbor, group fire pit, and attractive structures.
- Add a boat launch and pier at the existing restrooms near the beach area.
- Include identifying signage at the pier, directed towards oncoming water traffic.
- Address erosion on slopes and shoreline by stabilizing with vegetation and regrading and amending the soil where necessary.
- Create shoreline access points and piers for fishing.
- Enhance the restrooms with outdoor gathering areas.
- Include group camping and barbecuing opportunities with shelters.
- Add campsites in strategic locations, i.e. in area west of campsite #68
- Add interpretive stations at the SID well, Visitors Center, Riparian, and Archeological preserve.
- Add playground for children.
- Include additional overflow parking opportunities.
- Add an informational kiosk for community activities and events.
- Improve campsites by providing water, electricity, and waste hook up to all RV sites (eventually).



*Figure 4.29 RV camping.*



*Figure 4.30 Tent camping.*



# CAMPGROUNDS DIAGRAM



SCALE: 1" = 200' - 0"

FIG. 4.31

### **Visitors Center**

Solano County\* wanted to allocate a location within the park where people can gather information on the natural and recreational resources of the region. The two agencies envisioned an informational gateway for the visitors to the Solano Project Area serving urban residents of Solano County. This location developed itself into the form of a Visitors Center building. After many discussions and design charrettes to determine the appropriate site for the Visitors Center (between the campgrounds side or the day use side), a consensus was reached, siting the building near the water on the campgrounds side. A matrix was created to qualitatively enumerate desires of the stakeholders involved. The benefits of siting the Visitors Center on the campgrounds side was favored by providing the following:

- A strong connection to the water
- A connection to the interpretive stations, an immediate connection to the SID well
- Allows vehicular stacking
- Allows the ranger to simultaneously oversee the park, campgrounds, and Visitors Center while collecting tolls.

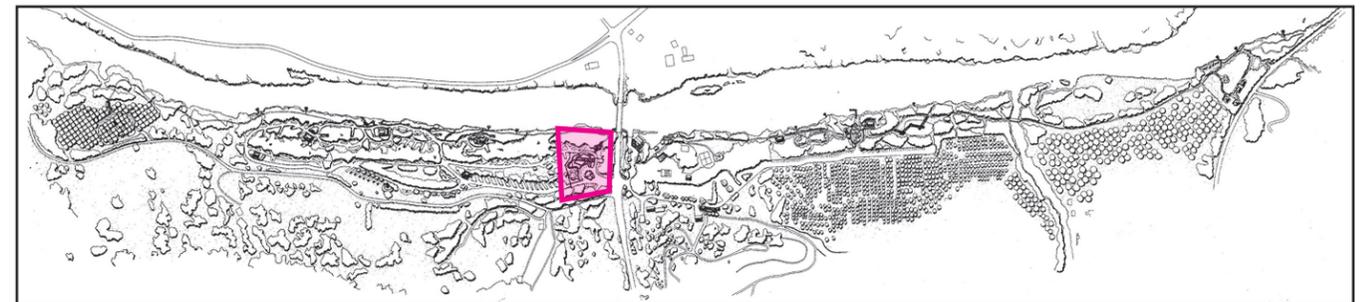
Other recommendations for amenities to be included in the Visitors Center area include the following:

- Provide a place for discovery of the region's natural resources for urban residents of Solano County.
- Enhance vehicular circulation by providing a bus turnaround area with drop-off.
- Include a receiving plaza for visitors and a gathering area at the drop-off.
- Allow parking for handicapped users and short term parking only during the day.
- Include a lawn area for outdoor activities.
- Include a rear outdoor patio area for meeting and gathering.
- Secure the Visitors Center area with a fence and gate to the campgrounds area.
- Plant demonstration gardens.
- Include outdoor interpretive stations at the SID pump and near the water.

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 \* Parks and The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



- OUTDOOR PATIO
- VISITORS CENTER
- INTERPRETIVE STATION
- TRAIL CONNECTION TO VISITORS CENTER
- TOLL/RANGER WINDOW
- SID PUMP DISPLAY
- VISITORS CENTER RECEIVING PLAZA
- DEMONSTRATION GARDENS
- ROUNDAABOUT WITH PARKING
- OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER
- VEGETATIVE BUFFER
- PROPOSED TRAFFIC ISLAND
- PROPOSED RV AFTERHOURS PARKING
- ENHANCED CAMPGROUNDS ENTRY



# VISITORS CENTER

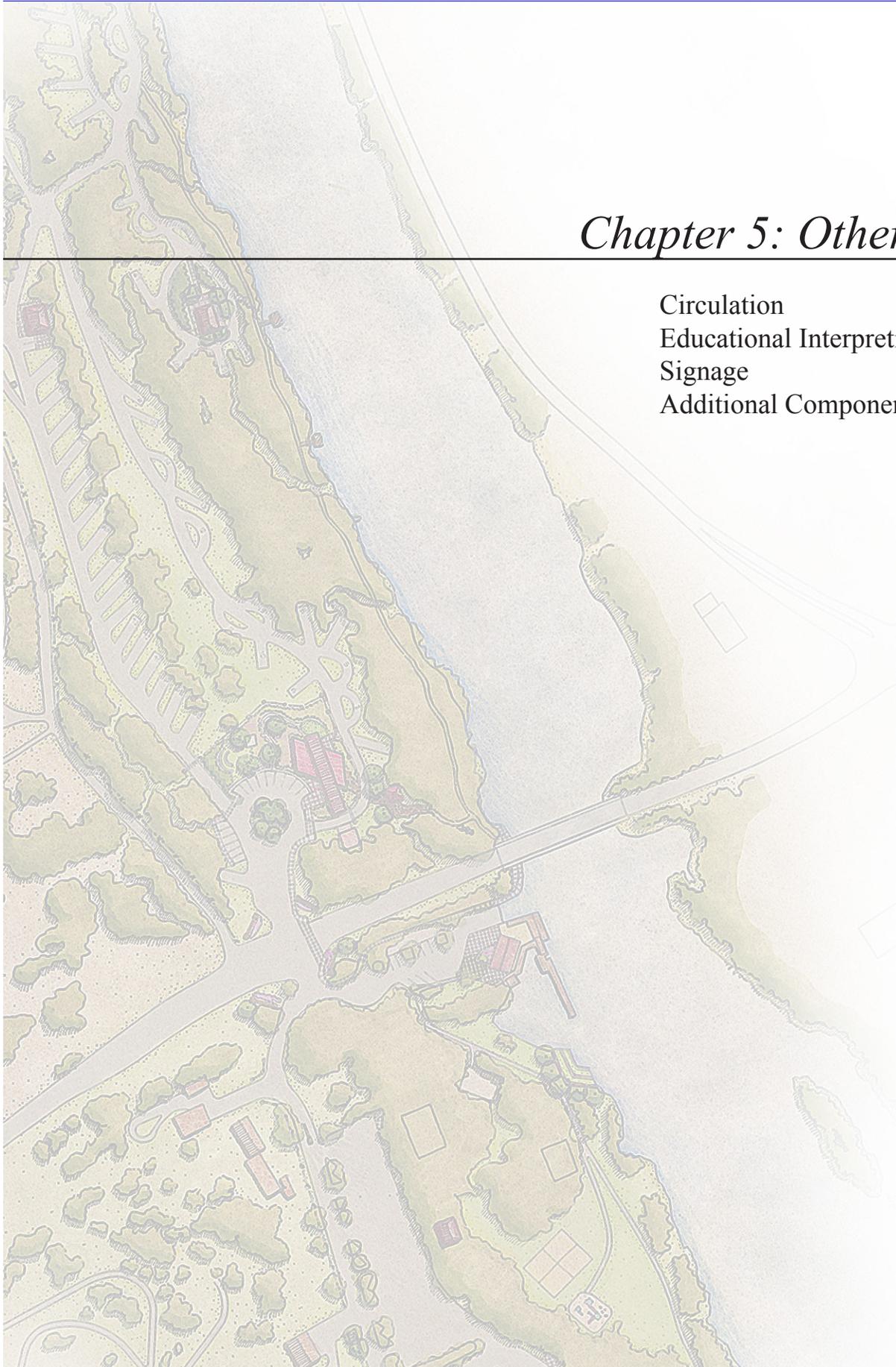
FIG. 4.32



SCALE: 1" = 60' - 0"

## *Chapter 5: Other Issues*

Circulation  
Educational Interpretive Stations  
Signage  
Additional Components



**Circulation**

The intent at Lake Solano Park is to enable travel through the park to be safe and easy through a plethora of means, such as auto, pedestrian, bicycle, and canoe. Circulation can be a pivotal factor when visiting a park. If vehicular conditions are such that stacking occurs past the entry road, it can be unattractive to visitors, deterring them from entering. Pedestrian circulation in the park should be safe and straightforward.

**Vehicular Circulation**

Vehicular circulation through the site is currently a bit confusing at the entry area to both the campgrounds and to the day use area. At the campgrounds entry, the proposed roundabout will allow vehicles and buses to easily enter and drop off passengers. If there is some confusion as to where to go after entering, the driver may choose to circle in the roundabout until a decision is made.

Entry to the day use area is also a bit confusing. Although the greatest concentration of activity occurs to the north of the entry, it is advisable for traffic to head south to the upper parking lot. The lower lot has a low capacity and the circulation there with the boat launch traffic does not allow for large numbers of vehicles to enter. The proposal to close this boat launch during the summertime will direct the bulk of the traffic to the eastern portion of the park. One major component of the parking issue was the handicap parking availability. Allocating all lower level parking and the parking at the Visitors Center to loading/unloading, handicap, and short-term parking should offer a sufficient number of spaces. See figure 5.4.

The addition of the road through to the Orchard Annex will allow access to this part of the park via an opening south of campsite number 67. Access to the Russian Flats campgrounds can only be reached via Putah Creek Road.

**Pedestrian Circulation**

It is desirable for a pedestrian trail to traverse the entirety of Lake Solano Park seamlessly from end to end, and to continue further in both directions. The proposal is to connect the trail west from the campgrounds to the Orchard Annex and beyond, and east and over Pleasants Creek via a proposed bridge crossing to the Russian Flats campground. Ideally, this would make up the middle portion of a proposed Dam to Dam trail, which would connect the Diversion Dam to the Monticello Dam. This trail would move freely between Yolo and Solano Counties. A future pedestrian bridge is proposed at the narrowest part of Lake Solano which would afford pedestrians access across the lake.

Pedestrians crossing at the park entrances at Pleasants Valley Road will occur at times when the water levels are too high at the pre-



Figure 5.1 Auto traffic through campgrounds.



Figure 5.2 Pedestrians.



Figure 5.3 Bicyclists.



-  HANDICAPPED & SHORT-TERM PARKING ONLY
-  OVERFLOW PARKING
-  AUTO CONNECTIONS
-  WATERCRAFT CONNECTIONS
-  PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
-  BICYCLE ACCESS POINTS

# CIRCULATION & PARKING DIAGRAM

FIG. 5.4



SCALE: 1" = 150'-0"

ferred below-bridge crossing. “Pedestrian crossing” signage should be strategically placed along the highway to warn oncoming traffic. Flashing yellow lights may effectively augment the signs.

### **Watercraft Circulation**

Water traffic should be easily navigable with several choices for docking along several different parts of the shoreline.

### **Bicycle Circulation**

Lake Solano Park often hosts bicyclists from around the surrounding region. In consideration of this, the park should also become more bicycle friendly by adding bicycle racks and storage where appropriate. The park is currently a destination for bicycle passes traversing through from University of California, Davis. Additional bicycle-friendly facilities could persuade their day trips to become overnight or multi-day ventures.

Figure 5.4 illustrates bicycle access points coinciding with auto entries and exits to and from the campgrounds and Day Use Area at Pleasants Valley Road. Bicycle traffic coming from Davis via Putah Creek Road could enter at the Russian Flats area, ride through Lake Solano Park, and exit at the Day Use Area to Pleasants Creek Road (Hwy 128) and onto Winters. In the future, if a Dam to Dam trail is implemented, bicycle accessibility would be available for through traffic.

### **Educational Interpretive Stations**

The Putah Creek Discovery Corridor cooperative envisioned a string of educational interpretive stations appropriated to different parts of the park according to eco-system or cultural experience, etc. This trail system of interconnected stations is illustrated in figure 5.6. Where possible, include a roofed structure for shelter from sun and rain.

### **Signage**

The linear configuration of the park, the varied topography, and segmentization created by Pleasants Valley Road and Pleasants Creek make an organized signage system essential. Both directional and interpretive signage can enhance the visitor experience.

An interpretive signage system can provide opportunities to learn about agricultural practices and history, waterways and floodplains, biodiversity and wildlife, Native American heritage, Euro American history, and other characteristic features. Interpretive signage can provide opportunities where visitors can develop appreciation for sensitive species and habitats, the winged migrations, the returning salmon.

Lake Solano Park signage should be consistent with overall County



*Figure 5.5 Boys examining a bug.*



- 1. ORCHARD/AGRARIAN
- 2. ARCHEOLOGICAL
- 3. RIPARIAN
- 4. BOAT LAUNCH
- 5. UPLANDS
- 6. WETLANDS
- 7. RUSSIAN FLATS
- ★ VISITORS CENTER

# INTERPRETIVE STATION DIAGRAM

FIG. 5.6



SCALE: 1" = 150'-0"

park system signage. A County logo identity can define and reinforce the unique character of place and demonstrate the continuity of the County's multiple resources. A well designed, coherent signage system can present and interpret park resources, explain recreational opportunities, direct the public to appropriate use areas, and help in the management of the park.

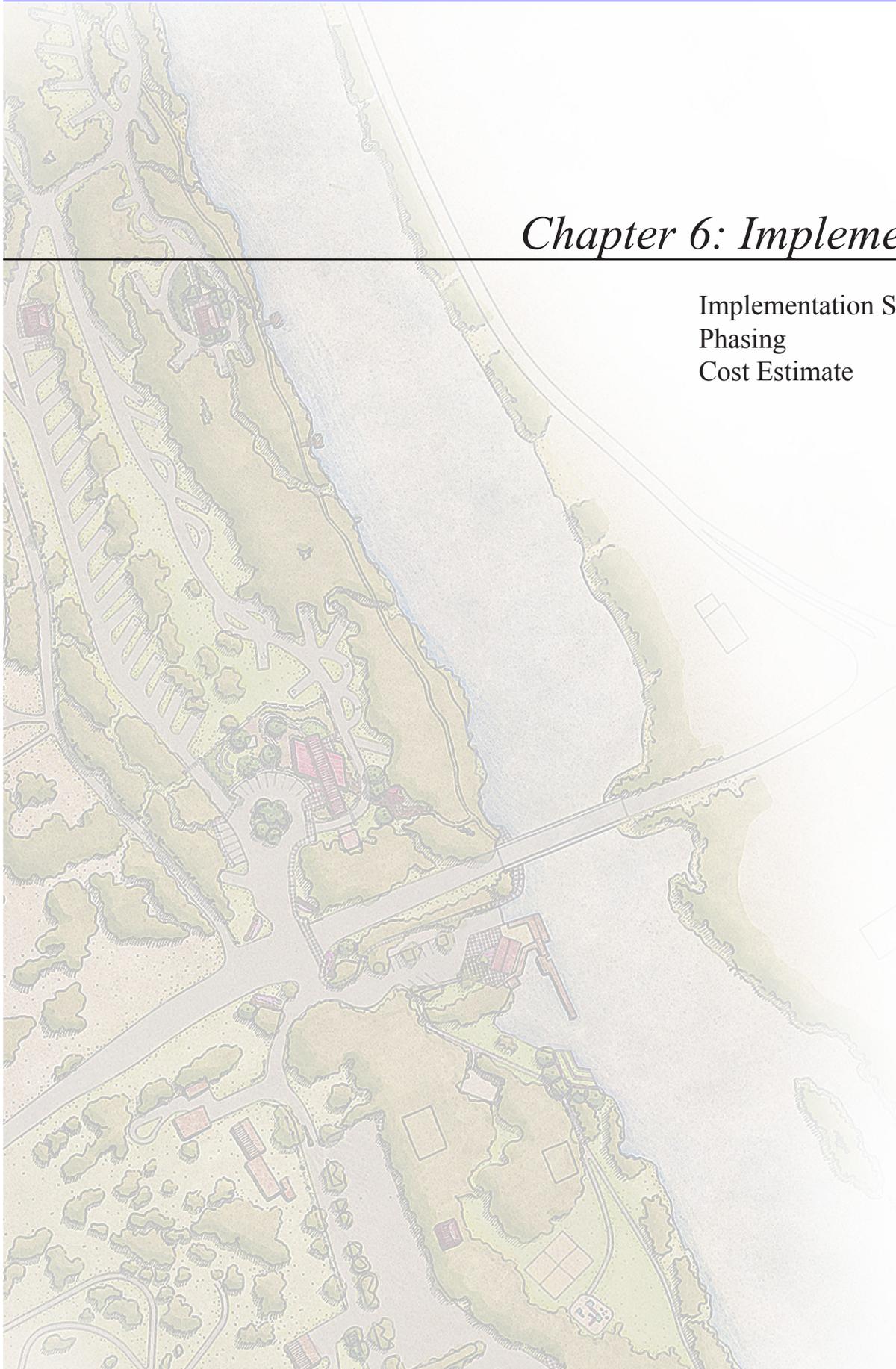
Basic considerations for signage include the following:

- The signage program should include a unique logo or icon to represent the overall parks identity for Solano County, as mentioned above. Under this main logo, the secondary identities of the individual parks should be developed.
- The signage program should convey an understanding of the natural and rural agricultural character of the County. It should also use creativity, quality of craftsmanship, durable materials, simple design, and an economy of words.
- An overall coordination of sign types, sizes, shapes and colors should be undertaken as an integrated sign system for County parks.
- Signage should be limited in quantity and size to that which is necessary for information and safety purposes in order to avoid clutter.
- Where appropriate, particularly for signs related to public health and safety, signs should include other languages in addition to English.
- Whenever feasible, the signs specified in the signage program should comply with universal access requirements (e.g., ADA\*). Raised characters and Braille for the visually impaired should be used where possible on logos, onsite park maps, and other graphic information.
- The existing signage should be gradually phased out and replaced to conform to an integrated signage system.

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\* Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

## *Chapter 6: Implementation*

Implementation Strategy  
Phasing  
Cost Estimate



### **Implementation Strategy**

Because of funding issues, implementation of this Master Plan will occur in phases according to a combination of prioritization and funding.

#### **Issue:**

The cost of implementing the Master Plan is greater than the funds available for the project. Thus, the Master Plan outlines a vision that can be incrementally achieved over a number of years.

#### **Goal:**

To implement the Master Plan vision in an orderly fashion with the flexibility to respond to unique funding opportunities.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Utilize recycled materials in construction. Use energy efficient and conserving operations and programs wherever practicable.
  
- Initiate amenities for restroom, shower, and ADA access at the first phase of Master Plan implementation.
  
- Explore opportunities to partner with private concessionaries to develop park amenities such as concession area or camping cabins.
  
- Improve campsites and maintain a fee structure competitive with other similar facilities.
  
- Implement windbreaks, planting, and irrigation system improvements in early phases of Master Plan implementation.
  
- Explore potential grant sources including:
  - CALFED funds
  - National Parks Service; Land and Water Conservation Fund
  - National Parks Service; Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
  - Department of Boating and Waterways
  - Coastal Conservancy
  - State Park Bond Act
  - Recreational Trails Program; Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
  
- Ensure that maintenance funding is linked to park improvements and the associated increase in maintenance requirements.

## Preliminary Phasing for Master Plan Improvements

Phase 1: American Disability Act upgrades to the interiors of all existing restrooms and the alternate to add a shower facility to the Group camping area. The project also includes ADA signage through out the park. Revise the Ranger Residence area above the day use parking lot entrance.

Phase 2: Construction of a Visitor's Center at the main entrance to the camping side of the park. This will include a revised entry sign, landscaping and parking lot at the camping side of the park. Also included will be landscaping at strategic locations to shield park areas from road noise and sight lines.

Phase 3: Revise Day use side of the park – this will include the following key areas:

- Construction of a Boardwalk over the wetlands area.
- Enhance access to the water by adding fishing piers and beach areas.
- Provide educational study areas and a location for a Mobile display trailer at strategic locations throughout the park.
- Enhance the existing picnic, play and sports areas.

Phase 4: Expand camping facilities into the Walnut Orchard at the West end of the park and upgrade and expand the current camping areas at selected locations. This phase will include the construction of a new restroom facility, roads, utilities and campsites at the West end of the park. Also this phase will include providing ADA accessible paths to all facilities and installing new directional signage and location maps throughout the park.

Phase 5: Enhance water access and hiking trails through out the Park:

- Rebuild stairs and paths connecting parking areas to the rest of the park.
- Construction of a bridge over Pleasants Creek.
- Build Solano County's portion of the Dam to Dam trail.
- Remove invasive plants and add native plants to stabilize the soil.

-

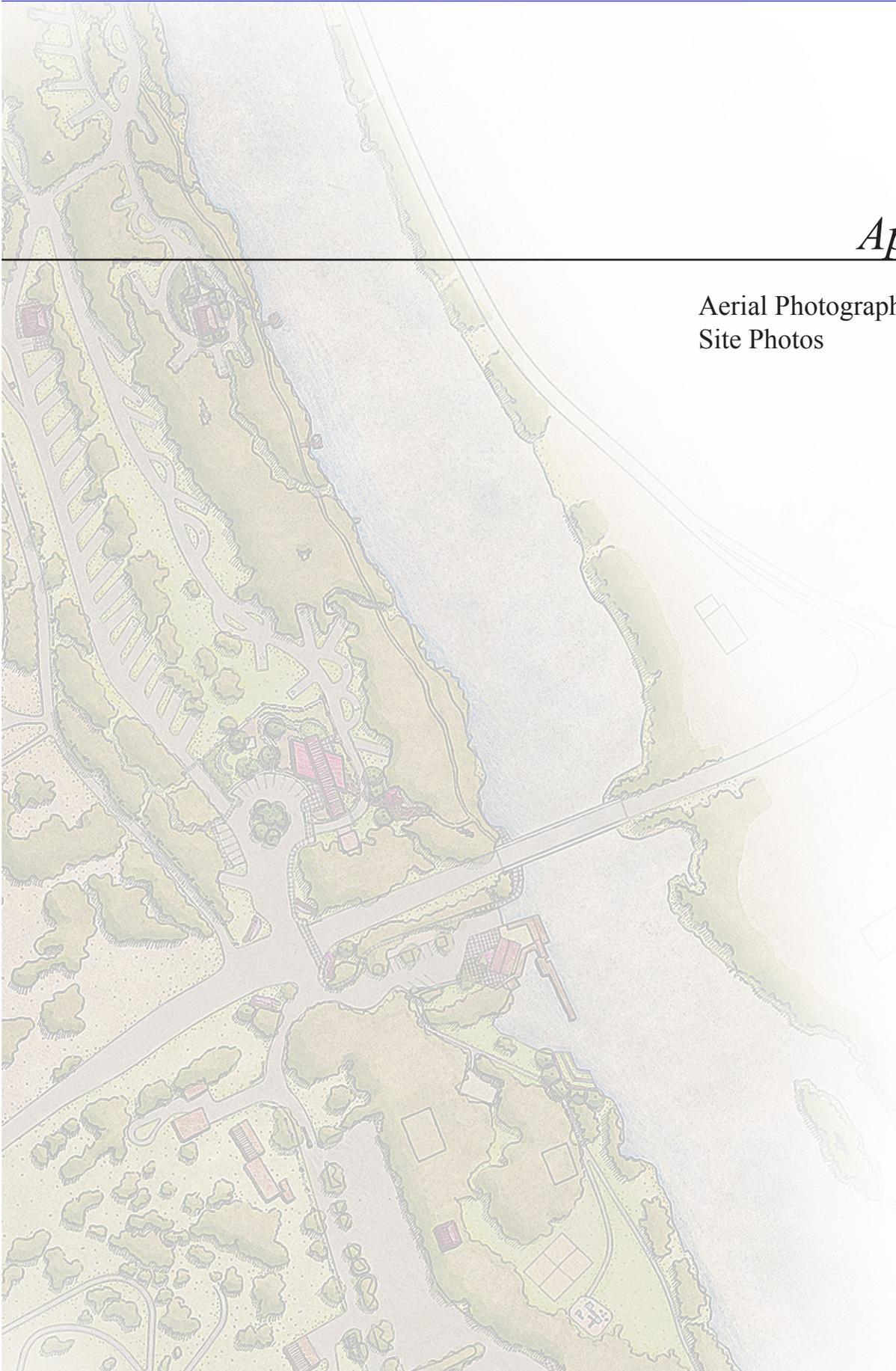
## **Cost Estimates**

Cost estimates are being developed and will continue to be modified to best fit the projects reflected in the above suggested guideline for phasing the Master Plan. These cost estimates are important for leveraging off of projects that are substantially funded as well as applying for funding in subsequent phases. Estimates will be incorporated into a capital improvement projects program administered by the County. The following general areas of cost will be considered while forming the estimates:

- **Technical and Planning Support;** which can include site surveys, testing, architectural and engineering project design, permits and fees, contract drawings, specifications and bid documents and related preliminary project activities.
- **Facilities Development and Upgrades;** which can include all construction related activities, FF&E, relocation, inspections, establishment maintenance, warranty work and contingencies.
- **Annual Operations and Maintenance;** This will include all such costs stemming from the above facilities development and upgrades including stewardship responsibilities in security, education and interpretive programs.

# *Appendix*

## Aerial Photograph Site Photos





LAKE SOLANO PARK AERIAL

SCALE: 1" = 200'-0"



Existing Volleyball Courts



Eroded Bank



Upper Parking Lot



Stairs from Upper Parking Lot



Lawn at Boat Rental Area



Existing Boat Launch



Ramp from Upper Parking Lot at proposed Boat Launch



Lower-level parking at proposed Boat Launch



Existing Restrooms



Upper Parking Lot



Ramp to Proposed Boat Launch Area



Orchards bordering upper Parking Lot



Existing Toll Booth



Upper Parking Lot



Stairs from Upper Parking Lot



Existing restrooms, former concession stand at current Boat Launch Area



Under Bridge Crossing Looking West



Campgrounds Parking Lot



Existing Swim Beach



Wetlands Area (former swim hole)



Campgrounds Parking Lot



Existing Boat Launch