



Open Space Element

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

"Anything more gorgeously beautiful than the display in meadows and wild pasturelands on hillside and riverside, it were impossible for anyone but a mad florist to imagine. Along the railroads on either hand runs continuously the rich and radiant bloom."

Grace Greenwood, 1880
History of Colusa County

ORGANIZATION OF THIS ELEMENT

The Open Space Element of the General Plan is necessary to ensure that land in Colusa County will remain available for the production of food, the management of natural resources, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, and recreation. Open space is not a land use, but a characteristic of certain types of land uses. Its value is attributed to the fact that it is predominantly undeveloped or developed with uses that complement the inherent natural, scenic, resource, or hazardous characteristics of the land.

One of the contributors to the high quality of life enjoyed by Colusa residents is the vast amount of open land in the county. This essential ingredient of rural living makes open space a valuable resource. From the agricultural lands of the valley floor, there are uninterrupted vistas of the Coast Range to the west and the Sutter Buttes and Sierra Nevada to the east. The visual and aesthetic qualities which are unique to Colusa County must be protected from scattered and haphazard development. To preserve and protect open space land, a development pattern that concentrates growth in existing communities is highly recommended. The Open Space Element provides the basis for the county to regulate and restrict the use of undeveloped lands.

The county's economy relies heavily on agriculture and agriculturally-related businesses. In order to maintain this way of life, agricultural land must be preserved and urban uses of land must be prevented from encroaching onto agricultural land. Similarly, open space land for mineral resource extraction or conservation must be preserved. Other open space lands in the county of significant value are the hunting and fishing grounds. These places draw the regional population as well as tourists and are important to the local economy. As the county's population grows, provisions for open space in the form of both active and passive recreational areas need to be made. Park and recreational facilities at all levels--neighborhood, community, and county--should be considered.

There are five general subjects addressed in the Open Space Element: natural resource preservation, resource production and management, public health and safety, community character, and outdoor recreation. The Conservation Element covers in greater detail the natural resource preservation and resource production and management subjects. Likewise, public health and safety is more thoroughly addressed in the Safety Element. The focus of the Open Space Element is on the subject of outdoor recreation as it pertains to serving small communities, the larger county population, and an even larger regional population.

THE ROLE OF OPEN SPACE IN COLUSA COUNTY

NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION

Research Natural Areas

A research natural area (RNA) is an area set aside to preserve representative examples of specific botanic, aquatic, and geological features, primarily for scientific and educational purposes. The Frenzel Creek RNA is located in the Colusa County portion of the Mendocino National Forest, about six miles south of Stonyford. The area is approximately 935 acres and contains three botanical elements: Sargent Cypress, MacNab Cypress, and Serpentine Chaparral. It also has several plant species listed as sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service.

Wildlife Refuges

There are three wildlife refuges in Colusa County operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, comprising approximately 12,000 acres. Two are located entirely in Colusa County: the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge, located south of Highway 20 between Williams and Colusa, and the Delevan National Wildlife Refuge, located east of Interstate 5 near Maxwell. The southern tip of the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge is located in Colusa County, east of Interstate 5. The remainder of the Sacramento Refuge is in Glenn County.

The wildlife refuges were established in part to provide a feeding and resting place to the millions of birds that travel south for the winter from Alaska and western Canada; the path traveled by these birds is known as the Pacific Flyway. Much of the acreage on the refuges is used for growing agricultural crops, especially rice. Fields in the refuges are flooded and left unharvested so that birds may eat and nest. By providing food for the ducks and geese, the refuges also aid local farmers by keeping waterfowl from feeding on neighboring farm crops.

Riparian Communities

The term "riparian" describes the land adjacent to the bank of a river or other fresh water course. These areas are composed of soils with a significantly high moisture content and typically support plant species with very shallow root systems or plants which are capable of surviving with their roots completely submerged in water. A concentration of riparian vegetation is called a riparian community, a term that describes the relationship among plants within a geographically definable area (a riparian zone). These zones occur as corridors extending about 50 feet on either side of the river or streambank.

By nature of their diversity, riparian communities play a key role in maintaining environmental stability. Riparian communities protect water quality through natural filtration processes, facilitate ground water recharge, protect riverbanks from erosion, and provide habitat for numerous plant and animal species. In Colusa County, the largest riparian communities are located along the Sacramento River. In addition, a riparian area along Salt Creek contains the only known native grasslands in the Sacramento Valley.

The cumulative impacts of intensive human activities along riparian corridors can be detrimental to their survival and should be restricted. The main problem has been the rapid conversion of high terrace vegetation lands to orchards and other croplands, according to a Department of Water Resources Riparian Zone Study in 1975. The purchase of riparian zoned land by public agencies to increase public access to the river may also have the negative side effect of greatly reducing wildlife populations as people trample plants and scare wildlife away. Land uses which do not threaten riparian community integrity, such as grazing and low intensity recreation, are more acceptable uses within riparian corridors.

Mendocino National Forest

The Mendocino National Forest occupies 884,000 acres of the northern Coast Range and includes parts of six California counties. Less than one-tenth of the forest, or 72,000 acres, is in Colusa County. For planning purposes, the U.S. Forest Service has divided the forest into 37 geographic units, called management areas. Six of these areas lie partially or entirely in Colusa County. Within each of these management areas, the Forest Service has proposed various "management prescriptions" which state the mix of integrated management practices and activities to be applied to specific land areas.

Table OS-1 lists the management prescriptions and number of acres affected within the Colusa County portion of the Mendocino National Forest.¹

The National Forest lands are divided into "management areas," three of which -- Sullivan, Frenzel Creek Research Natural Area, and Letts Lake -- are entirely contained within Colusa County. Cedar/Sanborn is primarily within Colusa County and the Snow Mountain Wilderness is partially within the County.

For each management area several "management prescriptions" are assigned. A large proportion of the National Forest land within Colusa County is designated for chaparral management and minimal management. Chaparral management provides for forage production, watershed management and fire management. Minimal management policies are primarily applied to non-productive, non-economical or unstable land, as well as land with scenic, ecologic, geologic or cultural resource values.

Another significant land management prescription is for wildlife. The emphasis is on maintaining or increasing habitat capability for specific wildlife species that the Forest Service calls "management indicators." These indicators gauge the viability of all other indigenous species in the forest. The wildlife management emphasis applies to 9,569 acres of presently existing annual and perennial grasslands, hardwood

¹For a detailed review of management prescriptions, see the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan for the Mendocino National Forest, by the U.S. Forest Service, Chapter 4.

Table OS-I: Management Prescriptions for Mendocino Forest Lands

| <u>Management Prescription</u> | <u>Acreage</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Wildlife | 9,569 | 13.3 |
| Chapparal | 13,043 | 18.2 |
| Range | 1,490 | 2.1 |
| Minimal | 19,344 | 26.9 |
| Recreation | 809 | 1.1 |
| Spotted Owl Habitat | 1,604 | 2.2 |
| Timber-Modified | 7,543 | 10.4 |
| Timber-Intensive | 7,243 | 10.0 |
| Research Natural Area | 4,539 | 6.3 |
| Wilderness | <u>6,660</u> | <u>9.3</u> |
| Total | 71,844 | 100% |

Note: Approximately 156 acres of a management area which is primarily located in Glenn County is not included; therefore, total acreage does not match up to total forest land in Colusa County.

Savannah, hardwoods, and riparian areas in Colusa County. The key wildlife include Spotted Owl, Deer, Bald Eagle, Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Quail, and Raptors.

A portion of the National Forest land is designated for intensive timber harvest, managed for optimum timber yields (discussed further in the next section). Another portion is designated for modified wildlife purposes, visual quality objectives, or streamside management.

Snow Mountain Wilderness Area

Snow Mountain was designated a wilderness area in 1984 in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Colusa County portion of the area consists of approximately 6,660 acres with elevations ranging from 1,800 feet in the gorge of the Middle Fork of Stony Creek to 7,056 feet on the summit of Snow Mountain East. According to the Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, management activities and permitted uses will be regulated to ensure that there are no unnecessary impacts on the wilderness characteristics of the area, and to develop specific management plans.

Bureau of Land Management

There are about 21,700 acres of public land in the County administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These areas primarily lie along the Cortina Ridge and Walker Ridge in the western part of the County, and in High Valley in the northwestern part of the County. Much of the BLM land is designated for "protective withdrawals" which means that it is managed to protect wildlife species and habitat. Figure OS-1 shows publicly owned or administered land within Colusa County.

MANAGED PRODUCTION OF RESOURCES

Introduction

Forest, range, and agricultural land uses comprise three-quarters of the County's total acreage and characterize the bulk of Colusa County's open space. These areas contain finite natural resources which may be depleted over time. Thus, these land resources need to be properly managed. It is the purpose of this section to recognize that open space is a limited and valuable resource which must be conserved wherever possible. More detail on these resources is contained in the Conservation Element.

The management prescription for **timber-modified land**, as defined by the Forest Service for the Mendocino National Forest, provides a dual emphasis on timber harvesting and other resource objectives including wildlife, viewshed, and watershed protection. Such timberlands have been assigned to "reduced yield" and "marginal yield" regulation classes. Reduced timber yields are expected within key deer habitat areas, within streamside management zones, on areas with slope stability concerns, and in areas with outstanding visual quality. The management prescription for **timber-intensive land** is to obtain optimum timber yields from productive forest land; this class applies to all timberlands not constrained by other resource objectives. The **range land** prescription promotes intensified range management to increase forage production and utilization by domestic livestock.

The Forest Service uses a bidding process to permit the public to use forest lands for range, timber, and mining purposes. The Forest Service is obligated to pay the county 25 percent of the fees collected. In fiscal year 1986, Colusa County received \$183,156 in payments from the Mendocino National Forest receipts.

Bureau of Reclamation

Until recently, The Bureau of Reclamation administered approximately 6,660 acres of land around the East Park Reservoir and the Funks Creek Reservoir. Jurisdiction over the reservoir has recently been passed to the U.S. Forest Service. There is public access to East Park Reservoir from Lodoga and Stonyford for camping, fishing, and boating recreation. Recreation management is important in the watershed in order to preserve the water quality.

Agriculture

Farming in the Sacramento Valley and smaller upland valleys, and cattle or sheep herding in the foothills comprise the largest land uses and managed open spaces in the County. There are approximately 235,000 acres of active farmland and 200,000 acres of range land, totaling about 60 percent of the County's land area. The California Land Conservation Act (also known as the Williamson Act) allows the county to establish agricultural preserves and offer contracts to landowners for the purpose of protecting agricultural land from premature conversion to other uses. Landowners agree to keep land in agriculture or open space, and in return the county assesses the property at its agricultural rather than market value. The effect is to lessen the pressure for development on agricultural lands.

Colusa County is unique in the state in that most of its arable land is excluded from the Act. About 95 percent of the land which is under contract under the Williamson Act is grazing and ranchland in the foothills. The Williamson Act has been useful in preventing subdivision of these areas for rural residential development. The remaining 5 percent of contracted lands are concentrated in the western part of the valley. Although the valley floor is not imminently threatened by urban development there has been some interest expressed in extending the Act to include some of the county's prime farmland.

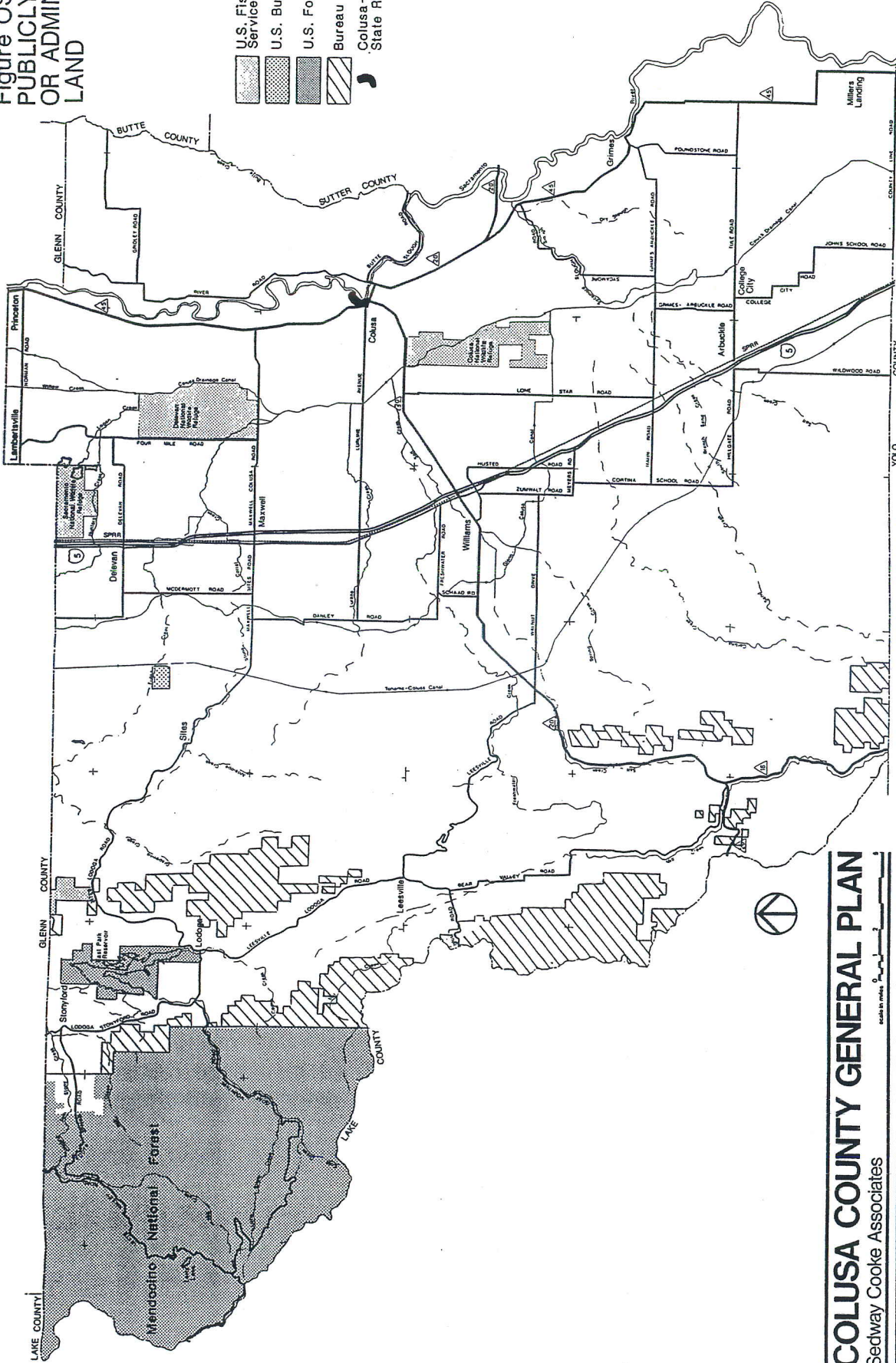
Proposition 13 has reduced the financial advantages associated with Williamson Act contracts, particularly on lands experiencing urbanization pressure. A broader application to lands on the valley floor would become more attractive to landowners if the taxation limits of Proposition 13 were to change in the future. An extension of lands covered might lower the tax burden on some of the county's farmers but could have a detrimental effect on county revenues. The fiscal impact of extending Williamson Act lands must be ascertained before such action is taken.

Groundwater Recharge

An underground geologic formation--strata of earth, gravel, or porous stone, containing water--is called an aquifer. A region of aquifers is known as a

**Figure OS-1
PUBLICLY OWNED
OR ADMINISTERED
LAND**

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area



COLUSA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
Sedway Cooke Associates

Open Space-7

groundwater basin. The groundwater basin and water bearing soils are replenished by percolation, a natural process whereby rainwater is returned to the groundwater basin by filtration through the soils. As more areas are urbanized and covered by impervious surfaces, more water drains to streams and gullies rather than percolating through the soil. Extensive urbanization can limit the recharge of an aquifer and also affect the quality of the subsurface water.

Natural features are essential to ground water recharge, particularly floodplains and streams which pass over gravel or other porous materials. The flat agricultural lands of the Sacramento River Valley and the Sacramento River floodplains are the most significant areas for this process in Colusa County. It is important that these types of features are preserved in their present state as much as possible so that water transfer to the groundwater basin is maintained.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Introduction

This part of the Open Space Element addresses those lands which are held as open space to protect the public's health and safety. These areas are subject to hazards associated with flood plains, slope instability, wildfire, and groundwater recharge areas. The Safety Element of the General Plan reviews more extensively the issues and policies dealing with public safety.

Flood Plain Zones

The Sacramento River and adjacent creeks between the river and the Colusa Canal are subject to flooding during the rainy season. The soils in this area are silty clay and adobe, creating seepage problems during periods when the river is high. For a more detailed review of flood plain hazards and policies, see the Safety Element of the plan.

Slope Stability

The only area with a risk of landslide potential is in the Coast Range foothills on the western side of the County. The area is poorly suited for development, and roadways and homes could collapse in the event of a slide. Presently, the population is very low in the foothills, with the largest concentration of people in the Indian Valley.

Wildfire

The threat of wildfire in the County is mainly in the Coast Range mountains and foothills. Areas of high wildfire risk, particularly those on steep slopes or with difficult access, should be kept in open space. Fire hazards are mapped and discussed more thoroughly in the Safety Element.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

One important aspect of open space which is frequently ignored is its role in the definition of community character. This role cannot be ignored in Colusa County: when citizens were asked what qualities made Colusa County special, two-thirds replied "open space." The combination of small towns, open fields, and hillsides untouched by development are the essence of the county's rural quality. The county's lifestyle depends heavily upon the maintenance of open space.

This role of open space really occurs on two levels: on a county-wide level, maintaining open space becomes important to preserve particular views, such as the Sutter Buttes or Snow Mountain, and to maintain the integrity of the landscape. The undulating foothills of the Coast Range, the riparian corridors of the Sacramento River, the agricultural uses along the freeway, and the expansive upland valleys combine to create a landscape that is uniquely Colusa County. On a smaller scale, open space in the county helps to delineate the differences between communities, as well as each community's absolute boundaries. Designated open space areas around a community can encourage infill development and reduce urban sprawl.

By recognizing the important role that open space plays in Colusa County and developing policies to preserve its key aspects, future development can be encouraged to "fit" the existing landscape without disturbing unique features. For instance, industrial development should not occur in ribbons along the freeway between towns. Likewise, views of the foothills should not be cluttered by five to ten-acre ranchettes.

OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Introduction

This section of the Open Space Element identifies park and recreational areas in the county. Parks and natural areas are of important cultural, educational, aesthetic, ecological, and social value. They are the foundation of the county's recreation system. As the population grows, park and recreational facilities need to be planned, acquired, and developed.

Regional Recreational Areas

The largest designated recreation area in Colusa County is the Mendocino National Forest, managed by the U.S. Forest Service. A variety of recreational opportunities exist within the forest: primitive and developed camping, picnic areas, organizational camps, second homes, hang-gliding, off-road vehicle trails, hiking and horseback riding trails, fishing, and hunting. It is the Forest Service's goal to manage these varied uses without conflict, and to ensure the preservation of the forest's natural resources.

Letts Lake in Upper Letts Valley is a popular recreation area which has eight campsites around the lake, a few summer homes, and numerous hiking trails. The lake is stocked with trout and bass, and boating is limited to rowboats, canoes, and rafts.

A well-known place for off-road vehicle (ORV) use in the forest is Davis Flat, located near Letts Lake. It is noted for endurance races; an "Enduro Weekend" may attract 2,000-3,000 people. On particularly big weekends, there may be 4,000-5,000 people, with up to 500 vehicles entered. The facilities at Davis Flat include a campground and special trails marked for various levels of driving skill. Organized ORV events are managed under special use permits that require bonding to guarantee cleanup and trail maintenance after the event. Events are scheduled so as not to conflict with hunting seasons or major holidays.

According to the Mendocino National Forest Resource Management Plan, ORV use has been the fastest growing recreation activity in the forest over the past 30 years. It began after World War II in conjunction with hunting and fishing. Motorcycles are the most popular ORV used today, while four-wheel drives are still primarily identified with hunting. By 1970, ORV use had developed into a sport, and conflicts between this use, other uses, and forest resources became pronounced. In the late 1970s, ORV "zoning" began by designating areas and trails available to ORV users. More trails are being planned for ORVs, including a corridor system similar to the Pacific Crest Trail.

The Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area provides 60 acres of riverfront recreation near the City of Colusa. The park is located at the north end of town where the river makes a wide easterly bend. Its key features are boat ramps, picnic sites, nature walks, and camp sites with piped water. Because of the river's width at the park--between 200 and 400 feet for a one-half-mile stretch--there is plenty of room for a variety of water activities, including fishing, boating, and water skiing.

Wilbur Hot Springs Health Sanctuary is located in the southwest portion of Colusa County, an area which contained several hot-spring resorts at the turn of the century. Its naturally hot mineral water flows through four baths in temperatures varying from 98° to 120° Fahrenheit.

Sacramento River Access

Public access to the Sacramento River in Colusa County is quite limited. The Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area is the only public boat launch and landing facility in the County. However, people do enter the river at several private sites. Most of the land adjacent to the river is privately owned agricultural land.

Boating is a popular activity on the Sacramento River. The season begins in April and lasts until the winter rains. A cleared navigational channel is maintained between the City of Colusa and Sacramento, so boats up to 40 feet in length can make the trip. There are several places along the river for camping and houseboat rental which are located outside of the County's jurisdiction. A river cruise from the mouth of the Sacramento River near Antioch to Colusa (145 miles) can be made in 10-12 hours. Traveling along the river, with its tree-lined banks, wild grapevines, and overhanging foliage, is a picturesque experience.

The river generally is not visible to motorists on Highway 45, which parallels the river, due to the levees. However, there are segments of Butte Slough and River Roads that are on top of the levees, offering panoramic views of the river. There is presently no organized trail system along the river.

Fishing

Fishing is good in the Sacramento River between Grimes and Princeton, particularly for salmon, steelhead trout, and striped bass. People fish from boats and along the banks of the river. The Mendocino National Forest in Colusa County offers 85 miles of trout streams, principally Big Stony and Little Stony Creeks and their tributaries. From time to time, the streams are stocked with trout by the California Department of Fish and Game, but "natives" can still be caught. A very popular fishing place is Letts Lake, a 35-acre lake stocked with trout and bass.

Hunting

More ducks and geese winter in the Sacramento Valley than in any other area of the Pacific Flyway. The wildlife refuges were established to sustain the birds in Colusa County through the fall and winter by providing an abundance of food and a place to rest. Ducks arrive in August, and geese arrive in large numbers around Thanksgiving. Public hunting is permitted on portions of the wildlife refuges during duck and pheasant seasons. To hunt on the refuges one must obtain a permit from one of the hunt check stations.

In addition to providing habitat for ducks and geese, the refuges attract swans, marsh and shore birds, upland birds and a number of small mammals. Nearly 200 different species of birds have been recorded, making the County a popular location for bird watching.

There also are a number of commercial hunting clubs and cooperatives operated by community organizations throughout the County. These "hunting camps" are operated on private agricultural land by special use permit. Lambertsville has a large congregation of mobile homes and trailers used by hunters on a seasonal basis.

In the western foothills of Colusa County in the Walker Ridge Public Hunting Area, hunting for quail and deer has become more popular as the habitat for these animals has been improved by the Bureau of Land Management.

Local Recreation Areas

Table OS-2 contains an inventory of local parks in the county listed by city or town. The table describes the location and features of each park area.

The City of Colusa offers the most complete set of local park facilities in the County, with areas for picnicking, walking, sitting under shade trees, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and playgrounds for children. About 18 acres within the city limits have been developed as community or neighborhood parks. The city has about 4 acres of community or neighborhood park per 1,000 residents; this is comparable with national standards and with standards used by neighboring counties. The proximity of the Sacramento River State Park puts Colusa in a much better position than most other communities in the country in terms of park amenities.

The City of Williams has two city parks; the larger park contains the Sacramento Valley Museum and a large area for barbecues or picnics. With about 9 acres of parkland, Williams has about 5 acres of park per 1,000 residents, comparable with national standards and with the city of Colusa.

Table OS-2: Inventory of Local Parks

| <u>City/Town</u> | <u>Name/Location</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|------------------|--|--|
| Colusa | Colusa Levee Scenic Park --10th & Levee Streets adjacent to Sacramento River State Recreation Area | 2.19 acres; built upon river levee; grass, trees, paved walking/jogging/ biking trail; picnic tables |
| Colusa | Memorial Park --10th & Market Streets | 2.35 acres; shady, tree- filled; children's play area with swings and slide; pic- nic tables; restroom |
| Colusa | A. B. Davison Park --10th Street between Webster & Parkhill | 2.35 acres; grassy, tree- filled; paved walking paths go through it |
| Colusa | Municipal Swimming Pool --9th Street between Webster and Parkhill | between A. B. Davison Park and Will S. Green Park |
| Colusa | Will S. Green Park --8th Street between Webster and Parkhill | 2.88 acres; Boy Scout cabin; barbecue facilities, picnic tables, horseshoe pit, child- ren's play area with swings, slide, jungle gym, and glider swings for tots |
| Colusa | Sankey/Elmwood Park --between Webster & Parkhill, 3rd & 4th Streets | 2.35 acres; 2 lighted tennis courts and children's play area; lots of shade trees |
| Colusa | Jennifer Rew Memorial Play Area--corner of Webster & 5th Streets | 0.58 acre; kindergarten playground with slide, swings, drinking fountain |
| Colusa | C. D. Semple Park | 1.87 acres; picnic tables, play area, shade trees |
| Colusa | Little League Ball Park --5th Avenue | baseball fields |
| Colusa | Lewis Tennant Ballfield Complex--Colusa Avenue across from high school | 3.21 acres; site of Colusa Softball Association games and tournaments |
| Colusa | King's Vale Park --3rd Street | Tot lot play area scaled to toddlers; sand surface |

cont'd..

| <u>City/Town</u> | <u>Name/Location</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|------------------|--|---|
| Williams | Reddinger Park --9th & "F" Streets | 1/2 of a city block; tree-filled, with children's play area and horseshoe pit |
| Williams | Museum/Venice Park --Venice & "E" Streets | Sacramento Valley Museum of area's early history; picnic tables; barbecue facilities; tennis courts; combination rugby/soccer/baseball field; horseshoe pits; children's play area; public or private rental of facility for weddings, quinceaneras, antique shows, dinners, meetings, etc. |
| Williams | School District properties | playground areas; athletic track and field area; football and baseball fields; Little League baseball diamond; exterior basketball courts; exterior handball court; all accessible to public when school is not in session |
| Maxwell | School District property | swimming pool |
| Arbuckle | Hall Street | approximately 6 acres; baseball fields |
| Sites | Sites Park --Maxwell Sites Road | |
| Stonyford | Rodeo Grounds and East Park Reservoir | camping/recreational area |
| Lodoga | East Park Reservoir | camping/recreational area |

Arbuckle has one 6-acre park with ballfields, providing about 4 acres per 1,000 residents. Princeton, and Grimes have no community park facilities. In the past, the school playfields have served these towns' recreational needs. Since these communities are small, their proximity to open space has not made the lack of parkspace a particularly serious problem.

The Maxwell Recreation and Parks District was formed to manage the town pool and provide for the recreation needs of the community. There is a strong sentiment in Maxwell that a full-service park is needed, possibly on surplus land held by the Southern Pacific Railroad. This sentiment is likely to grow stronger as the town develops.

The foothill and upland valley areas are surrounded by outdoor recreational areas. Their sparse population does not justify the development of large community or neighborhood parks at this time. A small park serves residents of Sites, while the Rodeo Grounds and East Park Reservoir serve Stonyford-Lodoga residents. The Stonyford Recreation District has plans to improve the camping area behind the rodeo grounds and has recently completed improvements to the town baseball field. The District is continuing to look for financial assistance to create improved recreational facilities for the Stonyford-Lodoga area.

Private Recreation Areas

There are two public 9-hole golf courses in Colusa County. One is the Arbuckle Golf Course located on Hillgate Road west of Arbuckle. The other is the Colusa Golf Course located on Highway 20 southeast of Colusa.

Publicly-owned open space land and privately-owned, undeveloped lands contribute significantly to Colusa County's open space resources. Because of its relatively low population and rural location, developed parks are not needed as much as they would be in an urban area.

Future Recreation Needs

Local Needs. The need for developed neighborhood and community parks will increase with the growth of Arbuckle, Colusa, Maxwell, and Williams. Recommended allowances for community, neighborhood, and miniparks are shown in Table OS-3. While residents of Grimes, Princeton, Stonyford, and College City are encouraged to establish parks in their communities, their projected population will probably not be great enough to justify major public investment in parks.

Using a standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents, about 57 acres of new community or neighborhood parks will be needed by the year 2010. A community park should be developed in Maxwell and neighborhood parks should be developed in Arbuckle, Colusa, and Williams. The neighborhood parks should generally be located within growth areas.

The accepted means of acquiring neighborhood parkland is to pass the responsibility on to the development that generates the demand for the park. In many communities, a development over a certain threshold (such as 50 dwelling units) may be required to reserve land within the project for a neighborhood park. Since Colusa County developments are rarely that large, an in-lieu fee for parks can be

Table OS-3: Recommended Allowances for Parks

| <u>Use</u> | <u>Service Area</u> | <u>Desirable Size</u> | <u>Ac/1,000 Population</u> | <u>Desirable Site Characteristics</u> | <u>Threshold Population Size</u> |
|--|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <u>Mini-Park</u> | | | | | |
| Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens. | Less than 1/4-mile radius | 5,000 sf to 1 ac | 0.25 to 0.5 ac | Within neighborhoods | 250 |
| <u>Neighborhood Park/Playground</u> | | | | | |
| Area for intensive recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc. May also include natural areas for picnicking, viewing, etc. | 1/4- to 1/2-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 (a neighborhood) | 2-5 ac | 1.0 to 3.0 ac | Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population, geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school-park facility. May include picnic sites and a vista point. | 500-1,000 |
| <u>Community Park</u> | | | | | |
| Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of above, depending upon site suitability and community need. | Several neighborhoods, 1- to 2-mile radius | 5-10 ac | 2.0 to 5.0 ac | May include natural features, such as water bodies, and areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood served. | 2,000-5,000 |

established based on the number of dwelling units to be built in a project. The fees are placed in a fund which is eventually used by the city, county, or service district for park acquisition and development.

In the absence of development, the community may choose to form a recreation service district and tax themselves for the cost of developing and operating parks. Donation of land and volunteer contributions of materials and labor can also be very effective in developing small neighborhood or community parks.

Regional Needs. The need for regional recreation facilities in the future should be focused on natural areas which can serve the multiple purpose of providing recreation, preserving natural resources and scenic beauty, and ensuring protection from flood hazards. Recreational trails will be especially important in the western foothills and mountains, as will provision of additional camping, swimming, and boat launching facilities.

At this time, acquisition of private land for county parks does not appear financially feasible. Donation of private land to the county or state for public use is encouraged. Due to the high cost of operating park facilities, such land should remain undeveloped and relatively maintenance-free. Colusa County does not appear ready to enter the "recreation business" at this time and the demand for income-generating parks in the county is very limited.

As an alternative, the county might consider establishing a countywide recreation district charged with the development and operation of county parks. Because such a measure would probably involve a property tax hike, and because there is no perceived shortage in regional recreational amenities, this alternative is probably not feasible at this time.

OPEN SPACE POLICIES

MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

General Policies

- OS-1 Land designated as Resource Conservation (R-C), Agriculture-General (A-G), and Agriculture-Upland (A-U) in the Land Use Element should be preserved in open space uses for the duration of the planning period unless development of these areas is consistent with applicable community plans or land use policies.
- OS-2 Land use policies should recognize the importance of open space in the County. Land use categories should be defined so that open space may be preserved through the planning period.
- OS-3 Publicly owned lands currently used for recreational purposes or as undeveloped open space should be retained in their present use, unless designated for an alternate use by the Land Use Element.

Natural Resource Preservation

- OS-4 The native perennial grasslands in Colusa County (located 6 miles west of Williams near Salt Creek; see Figure CO-3) should be preserved as open space.
- OS-5 The Mendocino National Forest Plan for Colusa County should be supported.
- OS-6 The National Wildlife Refuges in Colusa County should remain in their present use. Efforts to improve the conditions of the refuges for wildlife should be supported.

Managed Production of Resources

- OS-7 The conversion of agricultural land to urban use should occur only where the land adjoins an existing community. Where feasible, land that is poorly suited for agriculture due to soil or drainage conditions, urban encroachment, or small parcel size should be developed first.
- OS-8 The Sacramento Valley agricultural lands should be preserved to the maximum extent possible to ensure recharge of the Sacramento River ground water basin and water-bearing soils.

Public Health and Safety

- OS-9 Urban development should be prohibited in the designated floodway of the Sacramento River, Colusa Drainage Canal and the Sutter Bypass.
- OS-10 Development on highly unstable slopes or in areas with high wildfire risk and limited access should be prohibited in the absence of adequate mitigation measures.

Community Character

- OS-11 Urban growth should occur contiguous to existing communities within designated service areas. Infill of urban land should be encouraged.
- OS-12 The county should ensure that areas of permanent open space, as defined in Policy OS-1, are retained between the communities of Colusa County. Linear development patterns in which separate towns "grow together" should be discouraged.
- OS-13 Views of regional focal points, such as the Sutter Buttes, the Sacramento River, Snow Mountain, and St. John Mountain should be preserved wherever possible.
- OS-14 To the maximum extent possible, the significant open space resources in Colusa County, such as the foothills, Indian Valley, and Bear Valley, should remain visually undisturbed.

- OS-15 Where possible, new development within Community Plan Areas should be designed to capture view opportunities of the surrounding natural landmarks.
- OS-16 Expansion of rural residential development outside the designated Community Plan Areas should be discouraged.
- OS-17 All resource extraction activities should include mitigating measures which ensure that their effect on scenic views is minimized.

Outdoor Recreation

- OS-18 Colusa County should, through its land development regulations, ensure that adequate park space is provided to serve new development.
- OS-19 Sufficient land should be acquired and held in the public domain to satisfy the recreational needs of current and future residents. Advance, willing seller, acquisition is recommended to ensure the protection and availability of future park and open space land.
- OS-20 Park and recreation system planning, acquisition, development and operation should be coordinated among Colusa, Williams, the county, state and federal governments, school districts, and special districts, and should take advantage of opportunities for linkages between adjacent publicly owned parks, school facilities and open space lands.
- OS-21 Transportation improvements, such as road widening and bridge construction, should be designed to facilitate eventual provision of pedestrian and bicycling paths. Safe crossings should be provided through busy intersections.
- OS-22 Use of off-road vehicles on bicycling, hiking, or horseback riding trails should be prohibited.
- OS-23 A clear, coordinated system of signage should be developed for any new equestrian, hiking, or bicycling trail, with priority given to well-used or linked trail systems.
- OS-24 The county should discourage the conversion of existing privately operated outdoor recreational facilities, such as hunting camps and organizational camps, into year-round residential developments.
- OS-25 Private commercial recreation enterprises within existing communities should be encouraged.
- OS-26 Colusa County should support efforts of citizens and non-profit groups to establish trails or to improve parks within the Community Plan Areas.
- OS-27 Private landowners should continue to have the right to offer hunters access to their land during the official hunting seasons.
- OS-28 Before the horizon year of this plan (2010), the communities of Arbuckle, Colusa, Maxwell, and Williams should acquire and develop neighborhood

parks to meet current and future recreational demand. The scale of these parks and types of facilities provided should be based upon the size of the town, its financial resources, existing park facilities, and the desires of local residents.

- OS-29 Where feasible, future water development projects should include provisions for public access to the water and shoreline areas.

OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

- OS-30 The county should consider establishing local recreation service districts, especially in Arbuckle, for the establishment and improvement of public park and open space lands.
- OS-31 The county should adopt development standards which require dedication of parkland or in-lieu fees for development. Thresholds for dedication and the amount of the fee should be determined after the adoption of this plan. The county should generally strive to maintain a standard of providing 5 acres of community or neighborhood parkland per 1,000 population. The incorporated cities should be encouraged to adopt similar guidelines.
- OS-32 Where non-residential development will generate significant demand for new park facilities (due to induced population growth), modified in-lieu fees or park dedication requirements should also be considered.
- OS-33 The zoning ordinance should be revised to reflect the identification of appropriate sites for community parks and open space.