

Part III: Park System Components

This master plan is directed toward a County-wide *system* of park and open space properties, which begins with the existing park units currently under County management and extends to future components. To facilitate the management of this system of existing and future County park properties, this plan has identified several tools, including a set of Park Classification categories, a set of Use Designations that may be applied in subsequent planning for each park property, and elements related to system identity and design.

9 Existing Park & Open Space Properties

Much of the information in this section is summarized from the “Existing Conditions and Resources Assessment,” a background report prepared as part of this planning effort (Appendix D). Additional park-specific information is also provided in Part IV of this plan.

9.1 Park & Recreation Resources

9.1.1 Land Inventory

The set of 13 parks and open space areas addressed in this plan are a diverse collection of properties. Most are owned and operated by Yolo County; several are owned by the state but managed by the County under inter-agency agreements.¹

There is a total of approximately 1,820 acres of parks and open space lands in the entire current (2005) inventory. Of this total, approximately 250 acres are considered to be “developed” areas. The park properties range in size from 1 acre or less (Esparto, Dunnigan) to nearly 700 acres (Cache Creek Canyon). Six of the County park properties are under 12 acres in size, four are between 40 and 100 acres, and three are larger than 100 acres in size.

¹ For three of the current County park properties, the County is responsible for providing maintenance and operations under contractual agreements with the State (Department of Fish and Game): Clarksburg River Access & Boat Launch, the Putah Creek Access Sites, and Knights Landing Day Use Area & Boat Launch.

9.1.2 Recreation Activity Inventory

Various Yolo County parks and open space areas provide primarily natural resource-dependant opportunities such as stream and river fishing, boating, paddling, hiking, picnicking and barbecues, swimming and wading, bird-watching, and nature enjoyment. The Middle Site at Cache Creek Regional Park is currently the only County park property that provides overnight camping. Grasslands Park provides a venue for specialty recreational uses such as archery, horseshoe playing, and model plane flying and soaring. One of Esparto Community Park’s main functions is as an outdoor gathering place for community events.

Collectively, however, the current set of properties owned or managed by the County provides for a somewhat limited range of active and passive recreation opportunities for its residents and visitors. The overall set of available recreational venues within current County parklands accommodates certain types of recreational activities; however, for a number of other recreational activities, including those that are of comparatively

high importance state-wide,² the current set of County park properties provide few if any opportunities.

Recreation opportunities in the County are compared with state-wide preferences in the table on the following pages. It is not entirely a fair comparison: not all of the activities available state-wide – such as snow sports and ocean beaches – are physically available in Yolo County. Other activities – hunting and shooting sports, for example – while popular in Yolo County, are prohibited in County parks.³ An activity like archery, which does occur at a Yolo County park, may be low on the state list, but it is still practiced here by a dedicated group.

Nevertheless, the comparison suggests that there may be potential latent demand in the County for some activities, such as walking for exercise, developed and primitive camping, horseback riding, off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, and field sports.

9.2 Environmental Resources

The environmental setting of a park or open space area is a significant part of the users’ experience. Equally important, environmental resources in themselves also have intrinsic values. Issues related to environmental resource protection, enhancement opportunities, sensitivities, and constraints are a vital part of the overall management of County parks and open space areas.

The environmental resource values of the current County parks properties cover a

wide range. Some parks, such as Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park, Camp Haswell, and Elkhorn Regional Park, possess substantial resource values. Other locations, such as the more “urban” and developed park sites, possess limited environmental resource values. In some County park locations, such as Capay Open Space Park, currently limited natural values can be expected to improve over time as a result of ongoing environmental restoration efforts.

Table III-1. Yolo County Parks & Open Space Master Plan – Existing Units

Park or Open Space Area	Approx. Area (acres)
Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park	697
Camp Haswell Park	7.3
Capay Open Space Park	41
Clarksburg River Access Facility	4
Dunnigan Community Park	0.5
Elkhorn Regional Park	49
Esparto Community Park	1.1
Grasslands Regional Park	313
Helvetia Oak Grove	11.7
Knights Landing Day Use Area	3.5
Otis Ranch Open Space Park	587
Putah Creek Access Parks	87
Vernon A Nichols Park	21

Many special-status or sensitive species are known to occur in Yolo County, including some in the vicinity of the County parks. The County is home for more than 86 “special status” species, as identified under state, federal, or other criteria – some 39 plants, 37 animals, and 10 fish. Yolo County harbors critical habitat for Colusa grass, Solano grass, fairy shrimp, tadpole shrimp, winter-run Chinook salmon, and delta smelt. Sensitive species are one indicator of biological diversity and ecological health.

² User preference surveys, California Department of Parks and Recreation.

³ Yolo County Code, Sec. 5-10.02 and Sec. 9-3.520.

Table III-2. Recreational Opportunities in Yolo County Park Units Compared with Statewide Preferences

Type of Recreation Activity	County Park & Open Space Units														
	Participation Percentage ¹	Rank	Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park	Camp Haswell Park ⁵	Capay Open Space Park	Clarksburg Boat Launch /Access	Dunnigan Community Park	Elkhorn Regional Park	Esparto Community Park	Grasslands Regional Park ⁵	Helvetia Oak Grove	Knights Landing Boat Launch	Otis Ranch Open Space Park	Putah Creek Access Parks	Vernon A. Nichols Park
Walking (near home) ²	91%	1													
Driving for pleasure	90%	2													
Visiting museums & historic sites	86%	3													
Attending outdoor cultural events	83%	4					X		X	X					
Beach activities ³	82%	5	X	X											
Visiting zoos	80%	6													
Picnicking (developed sites)	77%	7	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Nature study / Wildlife viewing	75%	8	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Trail hiking	69%	9	X		X				X			X			
Open grass / Turf use	66%	10	X						X	X					X
Swimming pools	60%	11													
Camping (developed)	50%	12	X												
Swimming – freshwater	47%	13	X												X
Bicycling	46%	14													
Walking pet	44%	15	X						X						
Tot lot / Play equipment	39%	16	X				X		X						
Swim – saltwater (snorkel, scuba)	38%	17													
Jogging	36%	18													
Freshwater fishing	34%	19	X	X		X		X			X		X		
Power boating	29%	20				X		X			X				
Camping (primitive)	28%	21													
Softball / Baseball	27%	22													
Basketball	25%	23					X								
Mountain biking	24%	24													
Soccer / Football / Rugby	23%	25													
Golf	23%	26													
Kayaking, rowing, canoeing	23%	27		X							X	X	X		
Sledding / Snow play	23%	28													
Backpack camping	20%	29													
Camping in trailer or RV	20%	30	X												

Table III-2. Recreational Opportunities in Yolo County Park Units Compared with Statewide Preferences

Type of Recreation Activity	County Park & Open Space Units														
	Participation Percentage ¹	Rank	Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park	Camp Haswell Park ⁵	Capay Open Space Park	Clarksburg Boat Launch /Access	Dunnigan Community Park	Elkhorn Regional Park	Esparto Community Park	Grasslands Regional Park ⁵	Helvetia Oak Grove	Knights Landing Boat Launch	Otis Ranch Open Space Park	Putah Creek Access Parks	Vernon A. Nichols Park
4-wheel OHV	20%	31													
Horseback riding	19%	32													
Tennis	19%	33													
Skiing (alpine)	18%	34													
Saltwater fishing	18%	35													
Volleyball	18%	36													
Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.	17%	37	X		X								X	X	
Motorcycles, ATVs	17%	38													
Target shooting	17%	39													
Rock-climbing	15%	40													
Personal watercraft	14%	41				X		X							
Other activities ⁴	13%	42													
In-line skating	13%	43													
Surfing	12%	44													
Waterskiing	11%	45													
Sailing	10%	46													
Snowboarding	10%	47													
Skateboarding	9%	48													
Hunting	9%	49													
Wakeboarding	8%	50													
Skiing (cross-country)	7%	51													
Archery	6%	52							X						

1. Percentage of Californians who participated in activity at least once in 2002 survey period.
 2. This activity is a generic "walking for exercise" category that may occur in many locations, including public rights of way.
 3. Beach activities are defined broadly and occur where there are lake, stream, or ocean beach conditions and associated activities like sunbathing.
 4. Non-specific survey response.
 5. As anticipated, under the approved park master plan for that park.

Source of State date: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2003; Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California 2002.

Throughout the County, there have been and continue to be many conservation efforts on both private and public lands. These conservation efforts cover a wide range of purposes, including the protection and enhancement of farmland, wildlife habitat, creeks, watershed areas, riparian corridors, water quality, flood control, and habitat for sensitive plant and animal species.

In terms of overall species richness, habitat structural diversity, and conservation linkages, areas in Yolo County with particularly high value include the western mountain and foothill chaparral and woodlands, Cache Creek and Putah Creek riparian corridors, and the Sacramento River riparian and floodway corridor.⁴

The Sacramento River and the Cache Creek watershed are also regionally important native fish habitats. Fisheries and riparian habitat are important environmental considerations in park units along County waterways. Parklands and open space areas can also serve direct or indirect roles in maintaining fisheries and fish habitat, including native species of anadromous or resident fish.

Other sensitive environmental resources within County parks include vernal pools and wetlands. In Grasslands Park, as in other parts of the Central Valley, soil and hydrological conditions combine to create vernal pools, which are seasonally inundated depressions that may contain specially adapted plants and animal species.

A problem in a number of parks is the widespread proliferation of non-native, invasive species, such as tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), salt-cedar (or tamarisk, *Tamarix aphylla*), and giant reed (*Arundo donax*). Invasive species are problematic for several reasons. They displace native plant species and reduce habitat value; they may impede access, such as adjacent to water bodies; and, in some cases, they may present a higher wildfire risk than native species. This plan supports continued efforts to eradicate and prevent the spread of these species.

Beyond the various considerations mentioned above are broader issues that are sometimes considered under the aegis of conservation biology. In terms of parks and open space planning – particularly in the implementation of an acquisition strategy – conservation biology can play an important role in helping to identify resource areas, biotic communities, and habitats that should be protected in order to maintain species or genetic diversity, or to provide critical linkages among ecosystem components, such as migratory routes and wildlife habitat corridors.

Conservation biology considerations can help to ensure protection of wild lands, watersheds, and landscapes. In this light, conservation biologists at the regional, state, and federal levels seek to protect significant ecological regions and habitat types that are under-protected, as well as unique natural resource areas. A County park system can be part of that strategy, for example through the County's participation in the Yolo County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan program, as discussed in Part I, section 2.

⁴ See, for example, California Department of Fish and Game, 2003: Atlas of Biodiversity of California.

10 Creating a County Park System

This master plan provides a framework for a unified park system for Yolo County. The first steps are reflected in the issues, vision, and guiding principles presented in Part II of this plan. Further steps in creating a park system involve system-wide organization. For this purpose, three planning tools are described below: Parks & Recreation Planning Sub-Areas, Park Classifications, and Park Management Designations.

10.1 Park & Recreation Planning Sub-Areas

For parks and recreation planning purposes, the County can be subdivided into sub-areas, as shown in Figure III-1 (page III-8) and described below. These sub-areas provide context for considering the distribution, functions, and accessibility of County parks, open space, and recreation resources, both now and in the future. To a large extent, these sub-areas are based on the characterizations and maps in Part I that depict ecological subregions, the County-wide population-access model, and the existing recreation and open space framework.

10.1.1 Sacramento River Edge

This sub-area consists of a riverside corridor along the eastern edge of the County, west of the Sacramento River. It includes Elkhorn Regional Park and two boat launch facilities – Knights Landing to the north and Clarksburg to the south.

The central portion, near the City of West Sacramento, is moderately to highly accessible to most County residents. The City of West Sacramento area is growing rapidly and expected to become the largest city in the County in the next 20 years.

Northern portions of the river edge near Knights Landing and southern portions near Clarksburg are moderately accessible. Along the river to the south,

the area around the north Delta community of Clarksburg is a burgeoning grape-growing and wine-making region, with its own wine appellation.

**Yolo County
Park System Language**

COUNTY RECREATION SUB-AREAS

- Western Foothills
- Dunnigan Hills
- Yolo Flatlands & Urban Areas
- Yolo Bypass
- Sacramento River Edge

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

- Open Space Areas
- Regional Parks
- Community Parks
- Park Resource Bank Sites

MANAGEMENT DESIGNATIONS

- Recreation Area
- Natural Area
- Protected Area

10.1.2 Yolo Bypass

The Yolo Bypass west of the River Edge Sub-area, has certain functions and management characteristics that suggest it should be considered as a separate sub-area for planning purposes. This swath of

land contains the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, managed by the Department of Fish and Game, just south of Interstate 80. No County parks are located in this sub-area. The Bypass is used mainly for flood control, agriculture, and wildlife habitat. A very limited permanent population lives in or directly adjacent to this floodway; the area is moderately to highly accessible to most County residents.

10.1.3 Yolo Flatlands, Creeks, & Urban Areas

This is the central part of Yolo County, containing large, open agricultural areas, as well as high population concentrations, primarily in Davis and Woodland. The growth areas of the community of Esparto and the City of Winters are on the western side of this sub-area.

In terms of population, this sub-area has the highest concentration of residents; yet, in terms of existing County parks and open space facilities, this sub-area is low in total acres. Grasslands Regional Park, Dunnigan Community Park, and Esparto Community park are located in this sub-area. Containing the County's two Interstate highways, this sub-area is the most accessible in the County to most residents.

10.1.4 Dunnigan Hills

This part of the County is not only its own wine appellation, but also distinct in terms of geography and ecological

characteristics. This sub-area is moderately accessible to most County residents and has a relatively low population. No County parks are currently located in this sub-area.

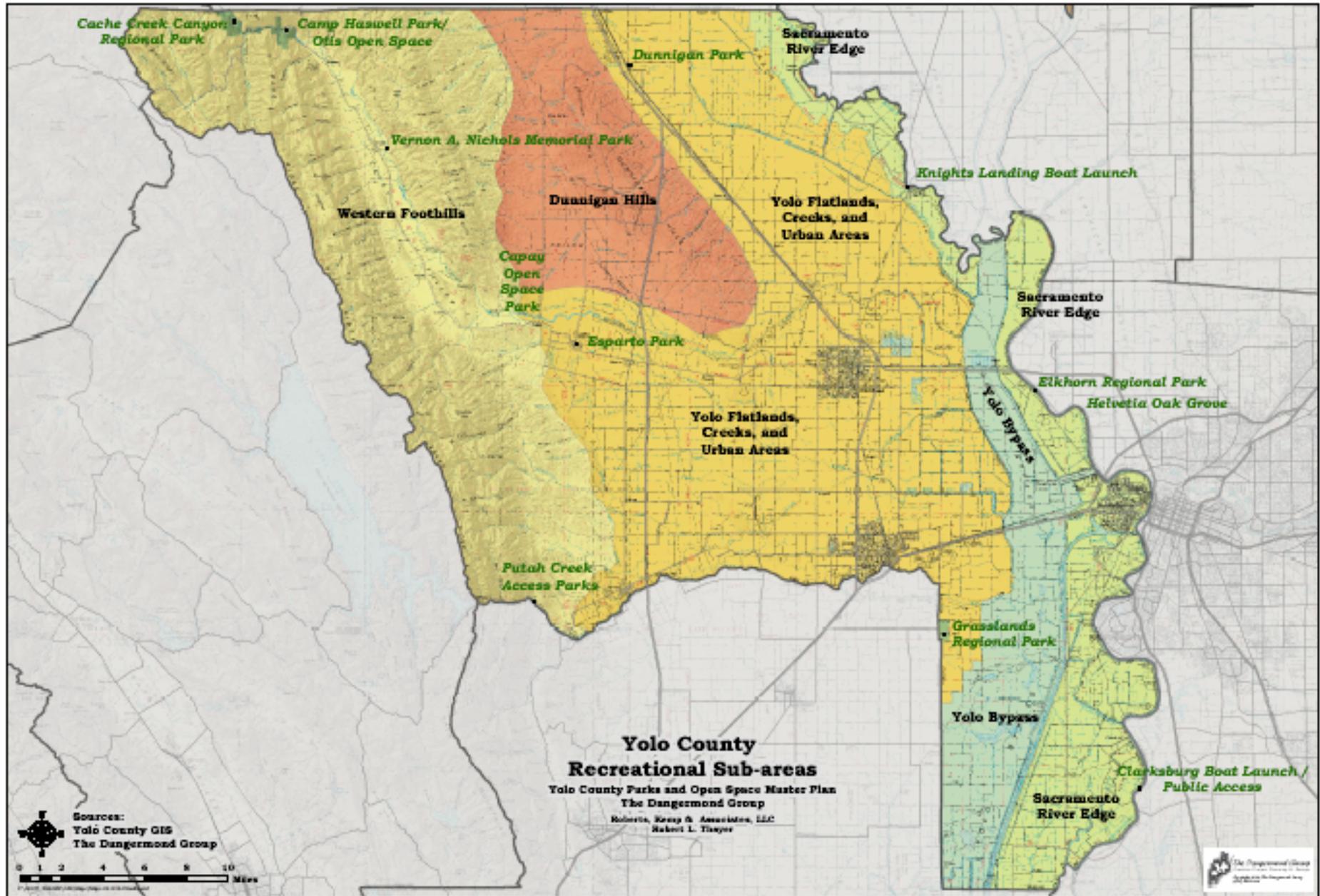
Under some future land use planning scenarios, the unincorporated community of Dunnigan is projected to experience considerable growth in the coming decades.

10.1.5 Western Foothills

This sub-area largely coincides with the Western Foothills and Winters Terraces ecological regions. From a population-access standpoint, this sub-area contains most of the least accessible areas in the County.

With canyon and mountain landscapes, this sub-area offers some of the most scenic areas in the County, including the Capay Valley, which is achieving brand recognition for its organic produce.

While the Western Foothills Sub-Area is among the least populated, it also contains the highest percentage of the current park acres, including Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park, Otis Ranch and Camp Haswell, and Vernon Nichols Park.



10.2 Park Classifications

For system management purposes, it is useful to classify County parks and open space facilities and other related properties by general category. The following classifications were devised to serve for both current and potential future park units. (The County Park and Open Space System Map in Part IV shows the distribution of the County park units.)

10.2.1 Open Space Areas

Park units in this classification are generally large areas with few improvements. They are largely retained in, or restored to, a natural condition for the purposes of visual quality, buffer areas, possible agricultural activities if compatible, and passive recreation. Otis Ranch Open Space Area is an example of this kind of park unit.

10.2.2 Regional Parks

Park units in this classification are moderately large areas with defined and developed, or partially developed, areas for active recreation. Portions of the park

may be retained in, or restored to, a natural condition. Cache Creek Regional Park is an example of this kind of park.

10.2.3 County Parks

These park units are medium-sized areas with multiple functions, including substantial areas for designated, active recreation activities. Vernon A. Nichols Park and Capay Open Space Park are examples of this category.

10.2.4 Gateway Parks

This classification identifies usually small, strategically located, County-managed areas that provide access to other public lands, including lands managed by state and federal agencies. The gateway approach “leverages” the recreation value of other public lands.

Gateways may also be a designated part of a larger site, such as a trailhead or boat ramp. Parking and a trailhead – or a staging area for equestrians or a small craft boat ramp – would occupy much of the gateway park area.

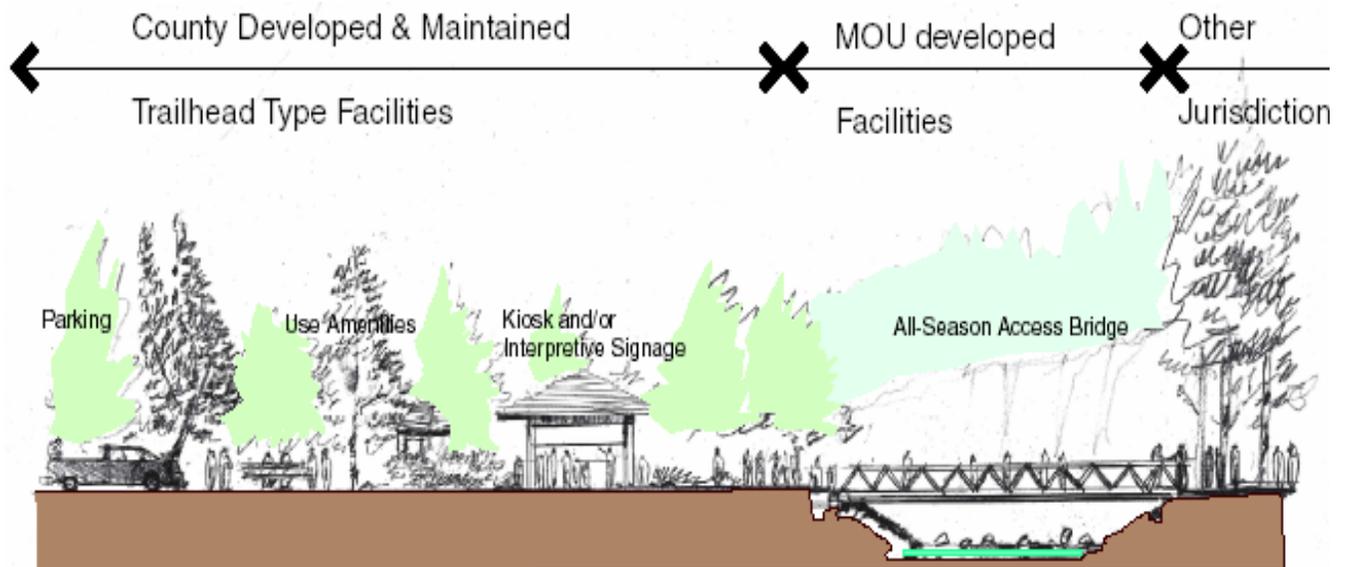


Figure III-2. “Gateway” Park Concept

10.2.5 Park Resource Bank Sites

This category identifies properties that may be acquired by, donated to, or otherwise come under the management of the County, where the future use is likely to be for park or open space functions but the uses remain temporarily unspecified.

In some cases, after being held by the County without finding any suitable function, these sites may be determined by the County to be surplus property and sold or otherwise transferred to other parties.

10.2.6 Community Parks

These parks are small in area, usually located in or near small population centers, and developed for a variety of community uses, recreational activities, gatherings, and events. Esparto Community Park and Dunnigan Community Park are examples of this category. These parks may be created by the County through exactions or in-lieu fees under the subdivision review process.

10.3 Management Designations

This Master Plan envisions planning and management on a more site-specific basis for individual County park properties, as may be needed in the future. It is recommended that specific park plans or “mini-plans” be prepared consistent with this Master Plan to further prescribe uses and management activities for individual County park units, particularly for multi-purpose park units (see below). Selected park units are identified for site-specific management plans in Part III and in the Site-Specific Actions in Part VI.

To promote consistency, the following management designations have been identified for application within County parks. As needed, these designations may be subdivided into sub-categories. As discussed further below, multiple designations would be used in multi-purpose parks and open space facilities.

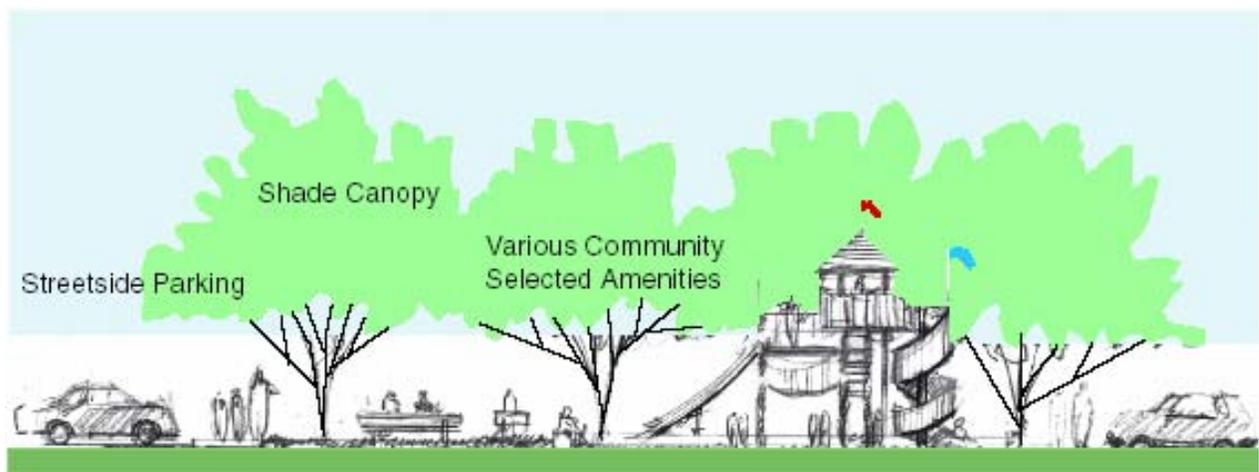


Figure III-3. Community Park Concept

10.3.1 Recreation Area

This designation is intended to be applied to areas within County parks and open space areas where the County has determined that the appropriate primary uses are for public outdoor recreation.

“Recreation Areas” would include, but not be limited to, portions of park units with developed facilities and structures, developed campgrounds, play areas, parking areas, picnic areas, and similar higher-intensity uses.

10.3.2 Natural Area

This designation is intended to be applied to areas within County parks and open space areas where public outdoor recreational use is generally of low-impact and secondary to the retention or restoration of natural vegetation, habitat, and processes. Allowable primary public uses in these areas would include, but not be limited to, walking and hiking; trails; fishing; nature appreciation, interpretation, and study; and primitive

camping. Natural Areas may also serve as buffers between more active areas and adjacent properties.

10.3.3 Protected Area

This designation is intended to be applied to areas within County parks and open space areas where the County has determined that natural and cultural resources require protection and public outdoor recreational use is restricted or prohibited.

10.4 Multi-Purpose Facilities

In many cases, it is expected that parks and open space areas would be managed for multiple functions, as shown in the conceptual illustration below.

Under this concept, portions of a site (designated a “Recreation Area”) may be used for active recreation, while other areas may be used for resource protection (designated a “Protected Area”). (Also see section 11.3.3.)

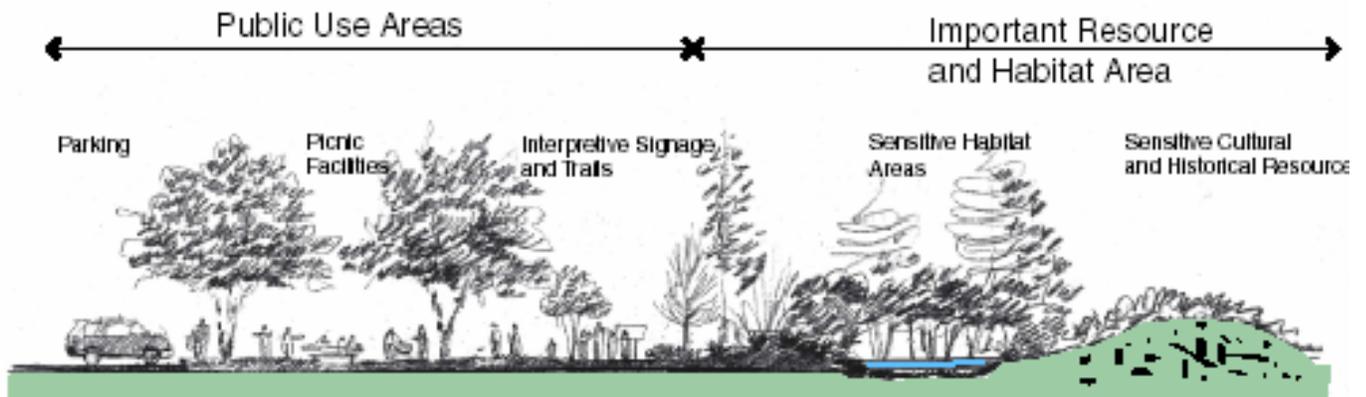


Figure III-4. Parks may serve as Multi-Purpose Facilities

11 Identity Elements

A park system also needs a recognizable identity, as part of making Yolo County parks more attractive for residents and visitors. Further development of this identity will be needed; however, this plan provides ideas on themes and designs that may be used in developing the Yolo County style.

11.1 A Sense of Where We Are

Yolo County parks and open space areas provide settings for appreciating the unique “landscape stories” of Yolo County. These stories are found in the region’s geology, climate, plants, animals, events, and people – the alluvial valleys and grasslands, foothills and mountains, the working landscapes.

County parks provide places to learn about County’s agricultural practices and history, waterways and floodplains, biodiversity and wildlife, Native American heritage, Euroamerican history, and other characteristic features. Parks provide places where visitors can develop appreciation for sensitive species and habitats, the winged migrations, the returning salmon.



Yolo County parks have a great wealth of resources and landscape stories to tell and interpret.

Park places provide opportunities to interpret regional geological processes; what an undisturbed, natural soil profile looks like; the cultural history of the Native People of this area; or the biological diversity of a native grassland.

County parks provide places to contemplate how the Sacramento Valley was transformed over eons of time from seabed to grasslands and tule marshes – when the Native People called these lands “a place abounding in rushes” – to the agricultural mosaic, natural areas, and urban communities that we see today.

11.2 Themes for Interpretation

During this planning process, a number of potential ideas emerged regarding possible interpretation “stories” for County parks and open spaces facilities, both individually and system-wide. Some of these ideas are summarized below as possible starting points for future interpretation efforts.

- Regional Native American culture, history, and lifeways;
- Euroamerican settlement and early agriculture;
- The Sacramento River:
 - Taming an “inland sea,”
 - River commerce,
 - Birds, fish, and habitat.
- Agricultural heritage:
 - Early lifestyles on farms & ranches,
 - Bringing water to the land,
 - Central Valley soils, some of the richest in the world.
 - Organic farming.
- Early Black, Chinese, and Hispanic communities in the region;

- German POWs as farm laborers during WWII;
- Farming practices in the Pacific Flyway;
- Fluvial processes and streambank management techniques;
- Restoration of native plants and natural communities;
- Surface mining and reclamation.

11.3 Design Considerations

This section addresses some general design considerations for the County Park System. “Design” in this context means: a consistent County-wide concept or character that all can imagine; a consistent image or treatment in terms of materials, colors, surfaces, plants; consistency in graphic and text formats; and design in the sense of actual configuration and character of the park units themselves.

11.3.1 Comprehensible and Consistent County-wide Image

One purpose of this master plan is to begin to create a system of parks that people can readily recognize as Yolo County places and resources. This “image-ability” helps foster a sense of pride and ownership. It can also reinforce the stewardship of public lands for their recreation, open space, and conservation values.

Creating a County-wide image also involves a consistent presentation of written and graphic material. Wherever it is displayed – on signs, in printed formats, on the County’s website – information concerning County parks and open space areas should contain a recognizable and consistent style and image, accentuated by a Yolo County Parks icon or logo.

The main purpose of a County image or logo identity is to help define and reinforce the unique character of place and accentuate the cohesion of the County’s multiple resources. “Branding” anything, however, including a park system, takes time, creativity, and typically a number of iterations and “buy-in” from various parties.

Further efforts will be required to develop a signature identity for Yolo County’s park system. Once this identifiable concept is developed, though, it can be expected to help in making park-related signs and materials more attractive, as well as to create a positive image for public outreach and marketing campaigns.



The head of a sunflower – a colorful image generally associated with positive feelings, as well as local agriculture – could be used as an icon for the Yolo County parks and open space system.

11.3.2 Context-Sensitive Development

In the design of park and open space properties, designated areas and uses should conform as closely as possible to the context. Recreation use and environmental conservation or restoration activities at each park and open space area should be “context sensitive” and adapted to the site’s intrinsic resource values.

A context-sensitive approach develops parks infrastructure and recreational facilities carefully, respecting the natural setting, surrounding land uses, onsite

sensitive resources, and existing topographic contours. For example, improvements associated with active uses – such as parking lots, restrooms, and play areas – should be located away from sensitive habitat, such as riparian areas. Use of reclaimed areas (e.g., from gravel extraction) are preferable for the most intensive uses.⁵

Recreational facilities or improvements should be developed where they are needed, but in such ways as to blend in and be compatible with the surroundings. When the design is responsive to the existing setting, appropriate recreational uses can be accommodated, and areas with environmental, cultural, and scenic sensitivities may in this way be protected from major adverse effects. (Related discussions are presented in this plan at sections 10.4 and below section 11.3.3).

11.3.3 Multiple Use through Design

Open space and park planning involves various uses or potential uses within the particular property – a likely occurrence when resources (funding, land) are limited. Multiple use, or integrated use, recognizes the value of several co-existing uses and seeks to implement designs that promote compatibility.

Large public land areas may have value as habitat, recreation sites, flood storage areas, and other uses. Multiple, integrated use is possible through careful designation and control of public access points, designation of uses, and public education.

⁵ In this context, see the Cache Creek Resources Management Plan (Yolo County 2002), in particular Chapter 5.0, Open Space and Recreation Element.

11.3.4 Low Impact to the Environment

Design, operation, and management of the park system should be conducted in such ways as to have minimal impact on the environment. Park design and uses should conscientiously seek to minimize adverse effects on fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.

The intent of this plan is to integrate conservation values with recreation values, as much as possible. Park management – while meeting the recreational needs of County residents and visitors – should also help to accomplish other goals, such as regional conservation, water supply and replenishment, and floodplain management.

11.4 Signage Concepts

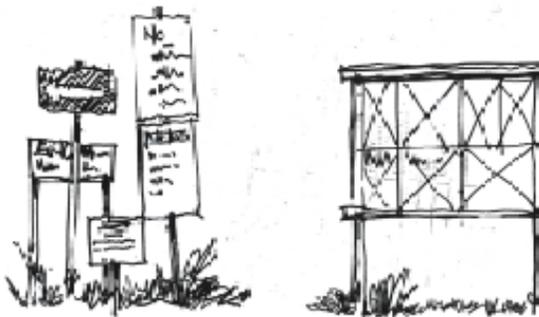
The County parks and open space system needs a well-designed, coherent signage system to identify park locations, direct the public to appropriate use areas, notify users of park rules, interpret County park resources, explain recreational opportunities, and encourage public participation in parks facility stewardship.

A County signage guidebook should be developed, which would include detailed specifications for sign design. Basic considerations may include the following.

- The signage program should include a unique logo or icon to represent the overall parks identity for Yolo County, as mentioned above. Under this main logo, the secondary identities of the individual parks could be developed. Signage in the Clarksburg-Delta area should be coordinated with regional efforts in the Delta.
- 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 visual clutter.
- Signs should be as unobtrusive as possible. Natural materials are generally preferred, such as sand-blasted wood; to improve resistance to vandalism, recycled plastic and metal graphics should also be considered.
- Signs should be designed for ease of production and replacement. Consideration should be given to use of materials and paints that would be resistant to color fading.



Reduce clutter (above left) by consolidating sign messages (above right).

- If signs include maps or aerial photos, the graphic should be oriented correctly (i.e., as seen from the viewer’s point of view, and with the north arrow on map pointing north).

- The signage program should consider achieving the fewest signs and be located in the most appropriate places. Where possible, signs should be clustered.
- Where appropriate, particularly for signs related to public health and safety, signs should include languages in addition to English.



This sign at Elkhorn Regional Park – with carved white letters on raised, dark brown panels with a light brown background -- could be the model for entrance and location signs system-wide.

- Whenever feasible and appropriate, signs should comply with universal access requirements (e.g., ADA ⁶). Raised characters and Braille for the visually impaired should be used where possible on onsite park maps and other essential graphic information.
- The existing signage should be gradually phased out and replaced to conform with these recommendations.

⁶ Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-336).

11.5 Park Furnishings & Structures

Built components in County parks – such as visitor-serving structures, pavilions, kiosks, benches, restrooms, footpaths, parking areas, and other furnishings and structures – are important parts of the overall character of a park system.

Accordingly, these components should reflect continuity in design to promote system-wide consistency, reduce material costs, promote efficiencies in construction, and help contribute to and reinforce a Yolo County signature identity.

A County design and construction guide should be developed to provide detailed County-wide design standards for structures and furnishings in County parks and open space areas. Basic guidelines may include the following.

- Park furnishings, structures, and amenities should be built with durable materials and kept simple.
- Built components should be compatible in terms of size and appearance with the site's scenic and natural setting, and not be obtrusive.
- New facilities should be sited to avoid visual impacts and not be conspicuous from scenic viewpoints. Screening such as planting, fencing, or berming should be provided to visually screen potentially obtrusive structures or uses such as restrooms and park host areas.
- Materials and design components should reflect styles appropriate to and compatible with the County's history and heritage, particularly through the use of rural and agricultural motifs (e.g., structural components designed to resemble agricultural buildings).
- Materials and colors should generally blend with nearby colors in nature.
- Function and identity can be reinforced by the redundant use of forms and colors to mark specific purposed facilities such as restrooms or kiosks. For example, structures serving the same functions could use the same color palette.
- Recycled materials, such as salvaged timbers, recycled plastic, and crumb rubber, should be considered for use where possible and appropriate.
- Exterior lighting at park facilities should be low-energy shielded lights; they should be directed downward to minimize nighttime glare.
- Earthwork and grading should be minimized. Balance cut to fill volumes in grading and earthwork, avoid tree drip-lines, and aim at achieving rounded grading transitions between disturbed and undisturbed areas.
- Visual screening with plant materials or topographic variation should be used to visually separate potentially intrusive structures such as restrooms and park host areas.
- Hardscape surfaces, such as concrete and asphalt paving, should be minimized and generally limited to intensive use areas.
- Permeable paving systems should be used where suitable and appropriate. Water-permeable materials such as gravel, crushed stone, open paving blocks, or pervious paving blocks can be used for access roads, parking areas, walkways, and trails to increase infiltration and minimize runoff.
- To the extent feasible, use biologically based slope and stream stabilization techniques and Best Management Practices, including erosion blankets, coir rolls, hydroseal with native plant mixes, mulching, grass and rock-lined

channels, vegetated gabions, wattles, and berm in-stream systems.

- Use regionally sourced native plant materials as feasible and practicable.

11.6 Plants for Landscaping & Restoration

This plan promotes the use of native plants in County park facilities where vegetation needs to be enhanced, restored, supplemented, or replaced. Native grasses, shrubs, and trees should be the primary palette for landscaping and restoration in County park resources, to the extent feasible. Appropriate use of native plants provides wildlife habitat, reduces maintenance requirements (e.g., water and fertilizer), enhances amenity values, and has educational value.

As described in Part I, Yolo County is a diverse geographic area with a variety of ecological subregions. Native plant associations vary according to location. The following preferred list of plant materials, or plant palette, is intended as a general starting point, rather than a comprehensive list.

Planting in existing vernal pools, functional wetlands, and other areas with existing and substantial habitat value should generally be avoided; if conducted, vegetation treatments should be conducted for specified objectives under a plan approved by public resource agencies and land managers.

Table III-3. Suggested Native Plant Species for Landscaping & Restoration, Yolo County Parks & Open Space Areas by General Setting

Common Name	Scientific Name	Landscaped Areas	Riparian Channel Edge	Riparian Floodplain	Wetlands	Upland Grassland	Upland Woodland	Foothills, Mountains
Trees								
Box elder	<i>Acer negundo</i> ssp. <i>californicum</i>	X	X	X				
California buckeye	<i>Aesculus californica</i>	X					X	X
White alder	<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	X	X	X				
Oregon ash	<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	X	X	X				
California black walnut	<i>Juglans californica</i>	X	X	X				
Foothill (grey) pine	<i>Pinus sabiniana</i>						X	X
California sycamore	<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	X	X	X				
Fremont cottonwood	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	X	X	X				
Blue oak	<i>Quercus douglasii</i>	X					X	X
Interior live oak	<i>Quercus wislizenii</i>	X				X	X	X
Valley oak	<i>Quercus lobata</i>	X		X		X	X	
California black oak	<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>							X
Arroyo willow	<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	X	X	X				
Black willow	<i>Salix gooddingii</i>	X	X	X				
Red willow	<i>Salix laevigata</i>	X	X	X				
Pacific willow	<i>Salix lucida</i>		X	X				
Sandbar willow	<i>Salix exigua</i> , <i>S. hindsiana</i>		X					
California bay	<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	X	X					X
Shrubs & Vines								
Chamise	<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>							X
Coyote brush	<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	X	X	X				
Mulefat	<i>Baccharis viminea</i> , <i>B. salicifolia</i>		X	X				

Table III-3. Suggested Native Plant Species for Landscaping & Restoration, Yolo County Parks & Open Space Areas by General Setting

Common Name	Scientific Name	Landscaped Areas	Riparian Channel Edge	Riparian Floodplain	Wetlands	Upland Grassland	Upland Woodland	Foothills, Mountains
Buckbrush	<i>Ceanothus</i> sp., incl. <i>C. cuneatus</i>	X				X	X	X
Buttonbush, button willow	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>		X	X				
Western redbud	<i>Cercis occidentalis</i>	X	X	X				
Mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus betuloides</i>	X					X	X
Brown dogwood	<i>Cornus glabrata</i>	X		X				
California fuchsia	<i>Epilobium canum</i>	X						
Yerba Santa	<i>Eriodictyon californicum</i>	X					X	X
Toyon	<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	X					X	X
Whiteleaf manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos manzanita</i> ; <i>A. viscida</i>	X						X
Coffeeberry	<i>Rhamnus californica</i>	X	X			X	X	X
Squaw bush	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>	X						X
California wild rose	<i>Rosa californica</i>	X	X	X				
California blackberry	<i>Rubus ursinus</i>		X	X		X	X	
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	X	X	X		X	X	
California grape	<i>Vitis californicus</i>		X	X				
Grasses & Forbs								
Bent grass, spike redbud	<i>Agrostis exarata</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Deergrass	<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dogbane	<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	X					X	X
Penstemon	<i>Penstemon</i> sp.	X						
Blue-eyed grass	<i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i>	X				X	X	
California barley	<i>Hodeum californicum</i>	X		X		X		
California brome	<i>Bromus carinatus</i>	X		X		X		
California buckwheat	<i>Erigonum californicum</i>	X				X	X	
California poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	X				X		
Bird's-eye gilia	<i>Gilia tricolor</i>	X				X		
Owl's clover	<i>Castilleja exserta</i>	X				X		
Saltgrass	<i>Distichlis spicata</i>			X				
Blue wildrye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>						X	X
Yolo slender wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>			X	X	X		
Tarplant	<i>Hemizonia</i> sp.			X	X	X	X	
Yellowray goldfields	<i>Lasthenia</i> sp., incl. <i>L. glabrata</i>				X			
Creeping wildrye	<i>Leymus triticoides</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X
Meadowfoam	<i>Limnanthes douglasii</i>	X			X	X		
California oniongrass	<i>Melica californica</i>	X		X	X	X	X	
Monkeyflower	<i>Mimulus</i> sp.	X	X		X			
Nodding needlegrass	<i>Nassella cernua</i>	X		X	X	X	X	
Purple needlegrass	<i>Nassella pulchra</i>	X		X	X	X		
Great Valley phacelia	<i>Phacelia ciliata</i>	X		X		X		
Sedges, Rushes								
Valley sedge	<i>Carex barbarae</i>		X	X	X			
Slough sedge	<i>Carex obnupta</i>		X	X	X			
Clustered field sedge	<i>Carex praegracilis</i>		X	X	X			
Creeping spikerush	<i>Eleocharis radicans</i>		X	X	X			
Scouring rush	<i>Equisetum hyemale</i> ssp. <i>affine</i>		X		X			
Baltic rush	<i>Juncus balticus</i>		X	X	X			
Common rush	<i>Juncus patens</i>		X	X	X			
Tule, bulrush	<i>Scirpus americanus</i>		X		X			

Table III-4. Undesirable Plants That Should Not Be Used in County Parks & Open Space Areas	
Common name	Scientific Name
Acacia	<i>Acacia</i> sp.
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Giant reed	<i>Arundo donax</i>
Red brome	<i>Bromus madritensis</i> ssp. <i>rubens</i>
Cheat grass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>
Iceplant	<i>Carpobrotus</i> s sp.
Yellow star thistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>
Bindweed or orchard morning glory	<i>Convolvulus avensis</i>
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.
Pampas grass	<i>Cortaderia jubata</i> , <i>C. selloana</i>
Bermuda grass	<i>Cynodon dactylan</i>
French or Scotch broom	<i>Cytisus</i> sp., incl. <i>C. monspessulanus</i> , <i>C. scoparius</i>
German ivy (Cape ivy)	<i>Delairia odorata</i> , syn. <i>Senecio mikanioides</i>
Water hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>
Eucalyptus, gum tree	<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp., incl. <i>E. globulus</i>
Fig	<i>Ficus</i> sp., incl. <i>F. carica</i>
English ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Privet	<i>Ligustrum</i> sp., incl. <i>L. lucidum</i>
Japanese honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>
Pennyroyal	<i>Mentha pulegium</i>
Fountain grass	<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>
Chinese pistache	<i>Pistachia chinensis</i>
Lombardy & hybrid poplar	<i>Populus</i> sp.
Pyracantha	<i>Pyracantha</i> sp.
Himalayan blackberry	<i>Rubus discolor</i>
Bamboo	<i>Sasa</i> , <i>Bambusa</i> , <i>Aruninaria</i> sp.
Chinese tallow	<i>Sapium sebiferum</i>
Red sesbania (scarlet wisteria)	<i>Sesbania punicea</i>
Tamarisk (salt cedar)	<i>Tamarix</i> sp., incl. <i>T. chinensis</i>
Medusa-head	<i>Taeniatherum caput-medusae</i>
Periwinkle	<i>Vinca</i> sp.

