

## 6.9 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

### 6.9.1 Introduction

The Open Space Element is the broadest in scope, except for the Land Use Element, in the General Plan. As defined by Government Code Section 65560(b) "open space" includes any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and designated as such for any one of the following reasons:

- natural resource protection (such as fish and wildlife habitats, rivers, streams, and riparian corridors)
- managed production of natural resources (including agricultural and timberlands, recharge of groundwater basins, mineral extraction areas, and fish hatcheries)
- provision of outdoor recreation (camping, hiking, boating)
- assurance of public health and safety (open space along floodplains, steep slopes, or any other such area which threatens the safety of structural development).

The objectives of the Open Space Element have been clearly stated by the State Legislature and are included in Government Code Section 65561:

"... (a) That the preservation of open space land ... is necessary not only for the maintenance of the economy of the State, but also for the assurance of the continued availability of land for the production of food and fiber, for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, for recreation and for the use of natural resources; and

(b) That discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion of open space land to urban uses is a matter of public interest and will be of benefit to urban dwellers because it will discourage noncontiguous development patterns which unnecessarily increase the cost of community services to community residents..."

Because recreational opportunities in Shasta County are so numerous, the General Plan will approach their discussion in three different ways: (1) recreation as it relates to the County tourist industry, (2) recreation at the community level (local parks and playgrounds), and (3) recreation at the Countywide level.

For a discussion of recreation at the community level, the reader is referred to the Public Facilities Element included in the Community Development Group. The Open Space and Recreation Element deals with recreation at the Countywide level and recreation as it relates to the County tourist industry. The Element includes a discussion of the resources and facilities provided by Federal, State, and County governments as well as private interests, which are designed to accommodate users from the entire County.

Although the General Plan Guidelines allow for a separate recreation element, the discussion of Countywide recreational resources in Shasta County has been incorporated into the Open Space Element to emphasize the relationship between open space land and recreational uses. As defined by State statute and this General Plan, open space is a passive land use category, meaning that the use and enjoyment of open space is derived from the natural character of the land rather than from any man-made improvements to it. Recreation on the other hand, is an active use of open space land. Recreational areas are essentially open space lands which are designed to accommodate recreational

activities such as hiking, picnicking, or camping. The distinction between recreation and open space is often a cloudy one, as the two uses frequently overlap. For this reason, these two elements have been combined.

## 6.9.2 Findings

### Open Space Resources

As noted in the Economic Development Element of the General Plan, the economy of Shasta County is comprised of three major industries: (1) retail trade and services, (2) tourism, and (3) agriculture. Two of these categories - tourism and agriculture - require substantial open space resources, as defined by the Government Code, for their operation. In general terms, these resources may be described as follows:

- Tourism: Federal, State, and County Recreation Facilities; Private Recreation Facilities
- Agriculture: Grazing Lands; Croplands

Other major open space resources of Shasta County are its rivers and creeks and their associated riparian corridors and floodplains and critical wildlife habitats. The value and importance of these resources cannot be overemphasized and lies in their potential use for many different purposes, including:

- riparian and other habitat protection
- floodplain management
- community design, and
- recreation.

These multi-purpose uses are particularly valuable in the SCR planning area, but the anticipated urbanization of parts of this planning area presents a major threat to these resources. In the other planning areas, development presents far less of a threat to these resources, but their value is no less important. For these reasons, the major rivers and creeks of the County are symbolically designated on the General Plan maps to denote the application of policies specified in this and other Plan elements. With respect to this element, these policies address the scenic value of these resources and their recreation potential.

As provided by the Subdivision Map Act, subdivisions fronting along certain of these rivers and creeks must provide reasonable public access to the waterway and must dedicate a public easement along a portion of the bank of the river or creek lying within the subdivision (Government Code Sections 66478.4 and 66478.5). In Shasta County, these rivers and creeks are:

- Sacramento River between Keswick and the Shasta-Tehama County line.
- Battle Creek downstream of the Coleman Powerhouse (Fish and Game Code Section 1505).

An inventory of these open space resources is presented in Table OSR-1.

The basic composition of the economy of Shasta County may likely change as new residents move into this area. Therefore, the open space needs of County residents will need to be monitored to ensure that they will be adequately met in terms of the amount of the resources needed per capita. The central open space issue in Shasta County is the accessibility of these resources to residents of the urbanized portions of the SCR planning area. Within this area are privately-owned, undeveloped open space areas. As this area becomes more developed, a major portion of these close-in open space resources will be developed which will tend to eliminate methods of access other than a paved roadway.

One approach to providing better access is the development of a system of hiking, bicycle, and equestrian trails linking the urbanized areas with open space resources. The development of such a system is discussed under Recreation Resources.

Most of the open space resources of Shasta County are federally or State owned and their management is the responsibility of the appropriate government agency. Open space lands under the jurisdiction of the County are mostly privately-owned timber and agricultural lands. Their management for open space purposes will be indirectly accomplished by policies described in the Timber and Agricultural Elements and are primarily intended to maintain the economic value of these resources. Other major open space lands under County jurisdiction include floodplain areas which are subject to policies described in the Flood Protection Element and wildlife habitat areas which are subject to policies described in the Fish and Wildlife Element.

**TABLE OSR-1  
SHASTA COUNTY OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

<b>PUBLIC LAND</b>	<b>PRIVATE LAND</b>
<p><u>Federal</u></p> <p>Shasta-Trinity National Forest Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity- National Recreation Area Lassen National Park Lassen National Forest Bureau of Land Management holdings</p> <p><u>State</u></p> <p>Latour State Forest McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park Castle Crags State Park Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park Shasta Historic Park</p> <p><u>County</u></p> <p>Balls Ferry Fishing Access Battle Creek Fishing Access French Gulch Park Hat Creek Park Lake Britton Fishing Access (PG&amp;E) Lake McCumber (PG&amp;E) Pit River (PG&amp;E)</p> <p><u>Regional Serving City Parks</u></p> <p>Anderson River Park and Fishing Access (City of Anderson) Girl Scouts Park (City of Redding) Lake Redding - Caldwell Memorial Park (City of Redding) Turtle Bay Regional Park (City of Redding) Turtle Bay East (City of Redding)</p>	<p>Privately-owned and operated recreational facilities and open space resources such as resorts, campgrounds, recreational vehicle parks, boat and boating equipment facilities, geologic tours, hunting and fishing guides, and clubs provided by commercial enterprises. Privately owned open space also includes timber and agricultural lands, floodplains, and land designated for Natural Resource Protection.</p> <p align="center"><b>OTHER</b></p> <p><u>Heritage Resources</u></p> <p>Including National Historic Landmarks, State Points of Historic Interest, areas listed in the California Landmark Series and other areas of significant historic, cultural, or geologic value.</p> <p><u>The Pacific Crest Trail</u></p> <p>Under the auspices of the United States Forest Service, the Pacific Crest Trail provides access into areas of unique and pristine natural character. The trail winds its way along the Pacific Mountain Ranges from the Canada-Washington border, south to the Mexico-California border. The Pacific Crest Trail covers 154 miles in Shasta County, approximately 2/3 of which is on Forest Service land and the remainder on private land.</p> <p><u>Quasi-Public Land</u></p> <p>This category includes campgrounds, man-made lakes, day use areas, and fishing access points provided by PG&amp;E or other local utility districts.</p>

**Source:** Sedway/Cooke, 1981 (*updated 2004*)

## **Countywide Recreation Resources**

Table OSR-1 shows that Federal and State agencies and the private sector are major providers of Countywide recreation facilities in Shasta County, and the role of County government has correspondingly been a limited one.

In 1982, the County closed its Buckeye Landfill site located to the north of Redding on lands acquired from the Bureau of Land Management, on condition that the County would develop them as a park upon closing. Although the County has no definite plans for the use of this site, it is likely that its ultimate use will be for recreational purposes.

The proposed enlargement of Shasta Dam would also have recreation implications for County residents. If this project is developed, an as yet undetermined amount of stream side or riparian habitat area will be inundated and no longer available for use by County residents. One way of mitigating this impact would be to replace the riparian resources lost in this manner with improvements in the habitats along creeks in the SCR planning area. The proposed project is being reevaluated and it would be in the County's interest to request exploration of this impact and possible mitigations.

### **Trails**

In recognition of their different right-of-way surface requirements, trails are divided into two parts: (a) bicycle and (b) hiking and equestrian. In certain sections, the two elements would share the same right-of-way. Trails offer one means of increasing accessibility to the open space and recreation resources of Shasta County, and trails are themselves a recreational facility. During the planning process, a considerable amount of interest in multi-purpose trails was expressed by the following organizations located in the SCR Planning Area: Palo Cedro Trails Council, Mountain Gate Trail Riders, Shasta Horseman's United Council, Centerville Community Planning Advisory Committee, and Shasta Wonderland Elite Athletic Team. Given this expression of citizen interest and the very limited resources which County government may devote to recreation development, a practical approach to developing a trail system would be to rely on citizen effort. The organizations listed above could be united under the leadership of the County Recreation Commission to begin the process of developing the trail system.

It must be recognized that this process will be long-term and will require a tremendous amount of citizen involvement to be successful. Where new subdivision development incorporates a link in this system, the County should exercise its authority under Government Code Sections 66475.1 and 66477 to require the dedication of an easement in the trail right-of-way. In other privately owned areas securing the trail right-of-way would require a variety of techniques, including purchase, lease, or possibly gift. Public funds available for this purpose will be extremely limited, especially at the County level, although the possibility of passing a special tax to support trail system acquisition costs should not be discounted. Fewer problems would be encountered where the trail system utilizes an existing public right-of-way.

Acquisition and development of a trail system is one problem; maintenance of the system is another. Maintenance costs would be especially significant where the trail system would not use an existing public right-of-way. In the absence of support by its citizens, County government will be unable to make the necessary long-term commitment to maintain the system. The burden of securing support for this commitment will again rest with the citizen sponsors of the trails system.

The bicycle trail exclusively uses public roads. Where possible, it avoids Interstate 5. It is assumed that bicycles would use the paved, vehicular right-of-way. In the event that funding is available, a parallel bicycle path could be constructed along the links of the system experiencing heavy automobile traffic, such as Highway 273. The bicycle trail system is designed to connect all communities in the SCR planning area and to provide north-south and east-west circulation. A Bikeway Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1995. The Plan emphasizes improving safety for bicyclists and encourages greater use of the bicycle instead of the automobile to reduce air pollution, reduce traffic congestion, and also provide recreation and fitness benefits. The Plan is available from the Regional Transportation Agency. It identifies feasible links between populated areas and service centers and provides an implementation plan to provide bicycle facilities in accordance with the California Bicycle Transportation Act (California Streets and Highways Code, Chapter 517, Article 3, Section 891.2). Additional information regarding bikeways is also discussed in the Circulation Element.

### **Tourist Related Recreation Resources**

Undeveloped open space, or natural areas contained within national recreation areas, national parks, wilderness areas, and State parks represent the major tourist recreation resources of Shasta County and are extremely important to the County's tourist industry. Development of private and public lands within these resources could potentially visually impact the persons using these resources and, thus, their enjoyment.

Examples of adverse visual impacts include cases of poorly-sited homes or structures which have not been designed to blend with their surrounding landscape. Highly visible roads have been built on scenically-sensitive mountain sides to provide access to new homes sites or residential parcels. In still other cases, public agencies have undertaken construction with little sensitivity to the land or the conservation of natural resources.

In order to protect these tourist and recreation resources and their direct contribution to the County's economy, this Element contains policies addressing the development of private and public lands within the recreation areas. Privately-owned open space areas or natural features also provide important tourist recreation resources. Some of these areas and features have been developed for commercial recreation purposes; other areas and features could potentially be developed for this purpose. This element also provides policies which recognize the importance and value of these resources.

### **6.9.3 Objectives**

- OSR-1      Protection of the open space and recreation resources of Shasta County for the use and enjoyment by County residents both now and in the future.
- OSR-2      Provision of public access to open space and recreation resources consistent with the need to protect these resources and the rights of private property owners.

### **6.9.4 Policies**

- OSR-a      Protection of the open space resources under Shasta County jurisdiction shall be achieved primarily through policies recognizing the contributions of these resources to the economy of the County. Specifically, the Timber, Croplands, Grazing, and

Small-Scale Croplands/Grazing, and Natural Resource Protection-Habitat land use designations shall be used for this purpose. Other open space resources generally with no known economic value for timber, croplands, or grazing shall be classified as Natural Resource Protection- Open Space (N-O). The purpose of the N-O classification is to recognize open space values by permitting low density residential development along with the resource uses. Typically, lands classified as N-O are adjacent to major landforms, riparian corridors, habitat areas, etc. Residential densities that do not exceed one dwelling per twenty acres may be permitted. In recognition of their resource or open space value, federally-owned lands shall be classified as N-O. Land changed from public to private ownership shall remain in the N-O designation unless an approved General Plan amendment places the property in a more appropriate land use designation.

OSR-b Parks and recreation systems planning, acquisition, development, and operation should be coordinated among City, County, State, and Federal governments, as well as schools and special districts, and should take advantage of opportunities for linkages between publicly-owned parks and publicly-owned open space lands.

OSR-c The quality of the recreation resource values of national recreation areas, national parks, wilderness areas, and State parks shall be protected and maintained by the application of the Natural Resource Protection - Recreation Resource (N-R) land use designation to privately owned lands located within these resources.

When land within a recreation resource area is classified as Timber, Cropland, Grazing, or Mining, the N-R classification is not mapped but is expressed as a policy which overlays these other classifications.

The purpose of the N-R classification is to mitigate any visual impacts which may result from the use of the lands.

If lands so classified are within a rural community center, densities equivalent to Rural Residential A are permitted. Otherwise, residential densities equivalent to Rural Residential B are permitted except for areas that exceed 30% slope where the maximum residential density shall be 1 dwelling per 20 acres if within a rural community center and 1 dwelling per 80 acres if not within a rural community center. Residential uses are subject to standards addressing parcel size, siting of structures, removal of natural vegetation, location of access roads, placement of utilities, and other relevant factors designed to mitigate the visual impact of these structures as they are visible by persons using the recreation resources.

OSR-d Existing commercial recreation uses and known potential commercial recreational sites, based on open space and natural features, shall be permitted as shown on the General Plan maps by the symbol R. Other similar commercial recreation facilities, potential or existing, may also be conditionally permitted according to the criteria established in the Community Organization and Development Pattern Element.

OSR-e The significant river and creekside corridors of Shasta County shall be designated on General Plan maps except in those areas designed as A-C, A-G, T or NH. Public access and public easements along the corridors listed below shall be required as provided by the Subdivision Map Act:

- Sacramento River between Keswick and the Shasta-Tehama County line.
- Battle Creek downstream of the Coleman Powerhouse.

In all other cases, public access and easements for recreation purposes may be provided if:

- riparian habitat will not be significantly impacted;
- public access to the corridor is not available within a reasonable distance from the project. Public access includes, but is not limited to, public road access, hiking trails, and public land adjacent to the corridor; or
- the corridor is located in proximity to urban, town, and rural community centers.

The location and type of public access required shall take into consideration minimizing the likelihood of trespassing across private property and minimizing impacts on private property rights.

Footnote:

1. Shasta County Bikeway Plan, Shasta County Regional Transportation Agency, 1995.