

# MOUNTAIN GATE PARK

## *Recreation and Revitalization Project*



## Master Plan

Draft March 3, 2023

Prepared by Mono County with assistance from  
the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program





# Thank you and credits

Any future improvements to Mountain Gate Park resulting from this planning process and document will ultimately be thanks to dedicated community members and the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee, who have advocated for and maintained this site for many years. Special thanks to the members of RPAC's Mountain Gate Working Group, particularly Katy Buell and Bruce Woodworth, who persisted through the many twists and turns of the development of this plan.

The document was prepared by Mono County Public Works and Community Development, with support from a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program.

This project was led by the Sustainable Recreation Coordinator, a position that was originally jointly funded by Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and hosted by the nonprofit organization Mammoth Lakes Recreation. In fall of 2020, it transitioned to a full-time Mono County position.

DRAFT



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This document captures community ideas and stakeholder advice on further development of Mountain Gate Park adjacent to Walker, California, gathered in 2020 and 2021. Its purpose is to enable Mono County, with the support of the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee and other partners, to implement these ideas in a coordinated way.

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# Project Overview and Background

This document captures community ideas and stakeholder advice on further development of Mountain Gate Park adjacent to Walker, California, gathered in 2020 and 2021. Its purpose is to enable Mono County, with the support of the Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee and other partners, to implement these ideas in a coordinated way.

## Creation of Mountain Gate Park and Need for Subsequent Planning

Following the flooding of Walker Canyon and parts of US 395 (December 31, 1996 – January 5, 1997), several private lands were deeded to Mono County by process of FEMA acquisition for the purpose of open space preservation and public access as identified in the Mono County General Plan<sup>1</sup> and consistent with federal requirements of the Stafford Act<sup>2</sup>. Mountain Gate Park was conceptualized and constructed by Mono County over the course of several years with significant contribution from the Antelope Valley RPAC and local community members, led by Arden Gerbig. The park was formally dedicated in 2015 and includes a parking area, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible fishing pier, public restroom, picnic tables, amphitheater, and par course of outdoor exercise equipment. New trees and shrubs were planted at that time, and along with the other park amenities, have been cared for and maintained over time by County staff and community volunteers. The park is used primarily by area locals, recreational anglers, and as a rest area by travelers of US 395.

In 2016 the Antelope Valley RPAC provided recommendations to improve and expand amenities at Mountain Gate Park including community trails connecting to downtown Walker. In 2019, Antelope Valley community members and County staff began working with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program to begin formal planning and public outreach of desired improvements. The RTCA program supports

<sup>1</sup> The Open Space designation is intended to protect and retain open space for future generations. These lands may be valuable for resource preservation (e.g., visual open space, botanical habitat, stream environment zones, etc.), low-intensity recreational uses, mineral resources, or other reasons. <https://monocounty.ca.gov/planning/page/general-plan>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/stafford-act_2019.pdf)

community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects and their national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities. To date, the RTCA program has assisted Mono County in identifying existing planning documents and inventoried concepts, coordinating with pertinent state and federal agencies, creating a framework for community engagement, and providing technical assistance in the development of this planning document.

Beginning on November 17, 2020, the Mountain View Fire burned more than 20,000 acres in the area. In its first hours it passed through Walker, killing one local resident, destroying numerous homes, and burning an undeveloped part of the park. This event had an enormous impact on the local community, affecting housing, local business, and quality of life, as well as normal governmental operations and planning. This event also provided further impetus to improve and restore local ecology, beautify the project area, and invigorate the local economy.

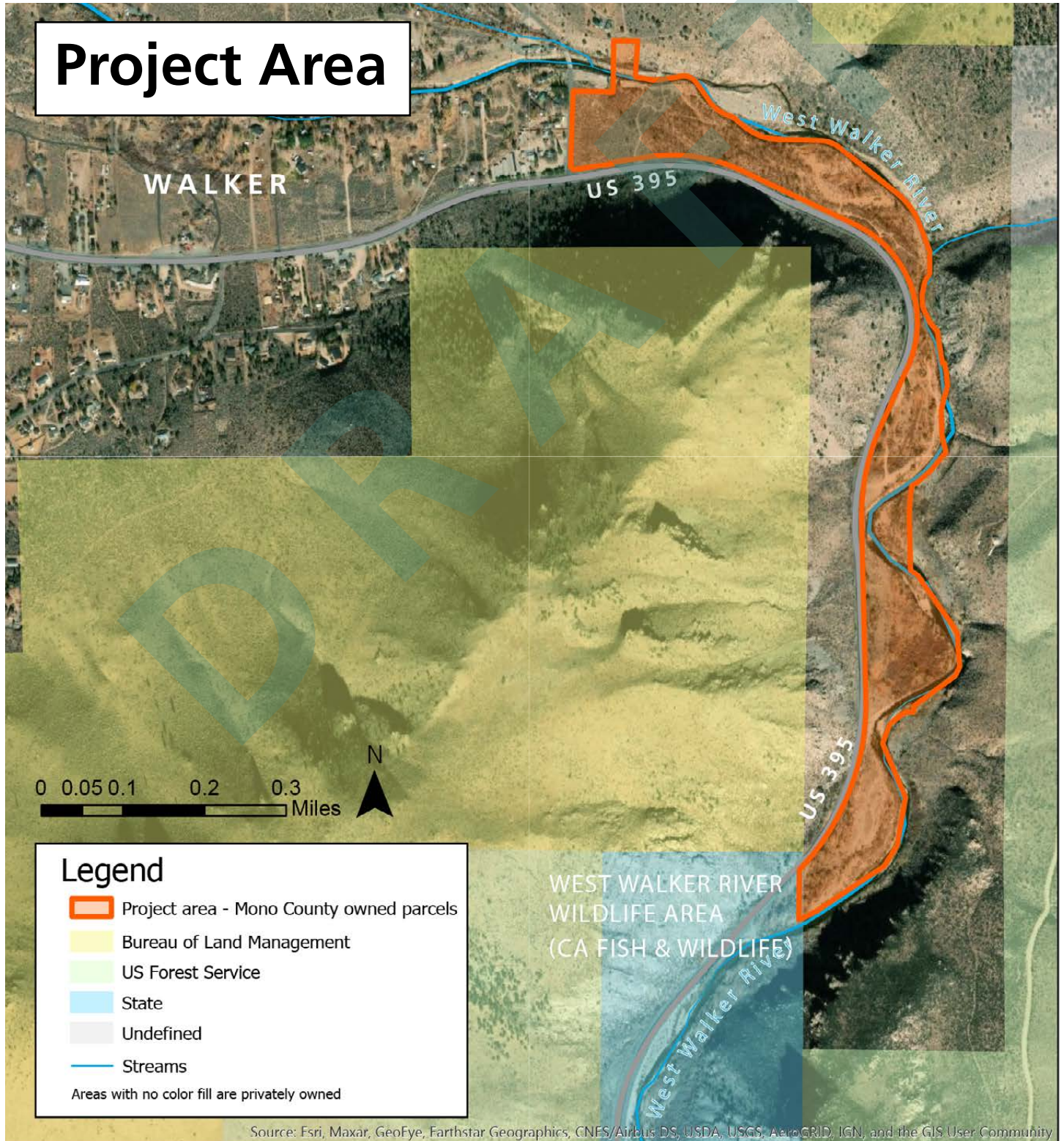
## Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of this project includes parcels deeded to Mono County along the West Walker River, southeast of the unincorporated town of Walker, and just north of a reach of the river owned by the State of California, managed by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). There is a single private inholding directly adjoining the County-owned parcels at the northwest corner of the project area. Aside from this private parcel and the CDFW lands, the project area is enclosed by the West Walker River and US 395. Beyond those barriers, there are private properties between the park and other public lands managed by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. One of the

County-owned parcels considered part of the project area does extend to the other (northeast) side of the West Walker River, but the part of that parcel that lies north of the river is surrounded by private properties with no road access, and was not directly considered in park planning. In addition, there are several other County-owned properties along the West Walker River to the north and west that are not contiguous with the project area, so also were not included in this planning

effort. In practice, possibly due to proximity to Walker, most community input and park planning focused on the northern part of the park, between the currently developed park and Eastside Lane.

The currently developed portions of Mountain Gate Park are located approximately ¾ mile upstream from Walker, near the center of the project area.



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

## Existing conditions

### Existing park infrastructure

Earlier community efforts led to the development of recreational facilities roughly in the center of the project area, which opened in 2015. This part of the park is typically accessed by vehicle from US 395, and includes a loop road, gravel parking areas, a pit toilet, par course with exercise equipment, small amphitheater with benches, fishing pier designed for ADA accessibility, picnic tables, native plants, and an informational kiosk. These facilities are generally in good condition, although some issues with use of the fishing platform have been identified, including challenges associated with parking nearby and the tendency of vegetation to grow where the platform meets the water, obstructing access for those attempting to fish from the pier. Maintenance by the County has been limited, with most major upkeep being completed by local volunteers. A major challenge has been irrigation of new plantings, as there is no water source available on site. Community members have irrigated by bringing water to the site in a truck when needed in the warmer half of the year.

As of early 2023, the restroom is open and garbage is collected year-round, and plans are in the works to replace the garbage bin(s) with more bear-resistant versions. This is one of very few public restrooms available along the US 395 corridor in Mono County, which could be an opportunity to help reduce the demand on nearby businesses to provide these facilities for the public.



ADA accessible fishing platform, informational signage, picnic table



Restroom, informational kiosk, picnic area



Par course exercise equipment, this image and top



Gravel loop road adjacent to river channel

### Access points and US 395

The site is located adjacent to the town of Walker, extending from Eastside Lane east and south along US 395. Vehicular access to and designated parking for the park is currently available at the developed center of the site around 3/4 of a mile from Eastside Lane, with fishing access signage directing to it from US 395. Although the site is not fenced, no parking or defined pedestrian access exists at Eastside Lane, so people hoping to enter the park or reach the river from this end must park informally along the road shoulder or elsewhere nearby. This has at times caused issues for adjacent property owners, including blockage of driveways, parking on or crossing through private property, and lack of safe turn space between US 395 and Eastside Lane.

It was also noted in site visits and public input that while highway signage to the developed part of the park does exist, it doesn't communicate the range of services and recreational opportunities already available in the park.

There are a few locations within the park where the bends of the river closely approach the US 395 corridor, which may require special consideration for trail construction because of very limited right-of-way and proximity to high-speed traffic.



Narrow point between US 395 corridor and river, with informal trail



Eastside Lane (looking north) with limited shoulder - taken in 2020, before Mountain View fire



US 395 northbound shoulder with fishing access sign



Existing sign at entrance to Mountain Gate Park

### Natural environment and river condition

The site is located between US 395 and the West Walker River in a narrow canyon, offering approximately a mile and a half of river access. The West Walker River is a California Wild and Scenic River, known for its excellent fishing. The project site also abuts the West Walker River Wildlife Area (managed by CDFW) to the south/upstream. As described in the 2022 preliminary assessment of resources for the project area completed by Resource Concepts Inc (RCI)<sup>3</sup> :

*“The Project Area lies between elevations of 5,535 and 5,515 feet and is situated at the bottom of a relatively steep walled canyon. The climate is characterized as semi-arid temperate climate with cold, wet winters and springs, and warm, dry summers. Precipitation is variable, ranging from eight to ten inches of precipitation annually (NRCS 2020).*

*The site consists primarily of dry floodplain and upland terrace adjacent to the West Walker River. The river channel and much of the floodplain within the Project Area have been modified by natural and anthropogenic events that have influenced the composition of the existing vegetation and suitable wildlife habitat.”*

3 See Appendix I



River flow in park, April 2020

Flooding has occurred historically in this area and can be expected to occur again in the future. One flood event with particularly significant impacts on the project area and community of Walker is described in the RCI document:

*“A flood of record for the Project Area occurred on January 2, 1997, at 12,500 cfs. This flood spanned from December 31, 1996 through January 5, 1997, due to an unusually large rain-on-snow event. As a result, large portions of Highway US 395 were washed downstream. After the devastating flood, Caltrans rebuilt the highway, stabilized the hill slopes, and reconstructed approximately nine miles of the West Walker River channel through West Walker Canyon (Otis Bay Ecological Consultants, 2009), including the river channel and floodplain within the Project Area.*



River flow in park, July 2021 (south of burned area)



*These river modifications and channelization are evident within the Project Area. Large berms composed of loose boulder, cobble, and gravel materials have been constructed adjacent to the active channel in several locations. These raised berms disconnect the channel from its original floodplain. The reconstruction also created unnaturally uneven topography adjacent to the river and within some of the small overflow channels.”*

A key point for this project is that highway repair after the 1997 flood damaged the historic fishery conditions that were a major attraction in the community, and continues to impact river function significantly.

The wetlands delineation completed in May 2022 identified one emergent wetland within the project area, which is a factor in the siting of any future park elements or improvements (see Appendix I and map on following page.)

For more information about the environmental setting, hydrology, soils, vegetation and wildlife in the project area, please see the resource study included in Appendix I. This report includes a number of specific recommendations or guidelines with regard to protection of natural resources and species that can be used to define future process and detailed design and development of elements of this project.



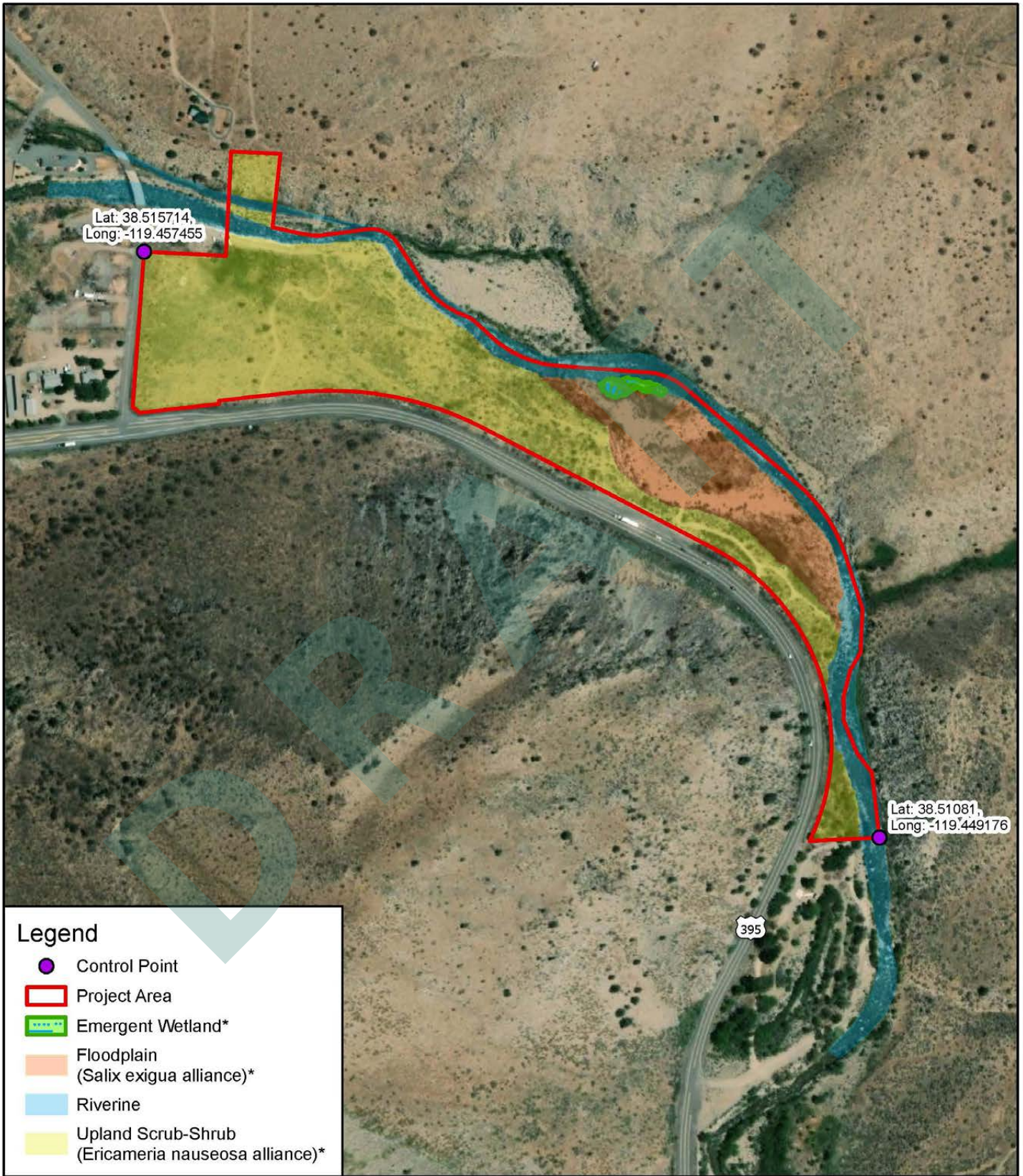
Modifications to river bank from 1997 post-flood repair to US 395



Modifications to river bank from 1997 post-flood repair to US 395



Cottonwoods with upland shrubs in southern area of park

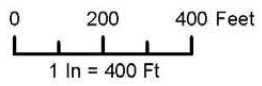


**Legend**

- Control Point
- Project Area
- Emergent Wetland\*
- Floodplain  
(*Salix exigua* alliance)\*
- Riverine
- Upland Scrub-Shrub  
(*Ericameria nauseosa* alliance)\*

Project: Mono County Community  
 Development – Mountain Gate  
 County: Mono County, Ca  
 Surveyors: JoAnne Michael, Erin Smith  
 Date: 4/27, 6/16, & 6/20/2022  
 Source: ESRI Imagery Services  
 Vivid Maxar 7/15/2021  
 \*Manual of California Vegetation

**Figure 5**  
**Mountain Gate**  
 Preliminary Environmental Assessment  
 Vegetation Communities Map



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## Mountain View Fire

In November 2020, approximately 10 acres at the north end of the site burned in the Mountain View Fire incident. On park lands the most immediate impact was destruction of established upland vegetation and some cottonwoods or other shade trees, with some loss of aesthetic quality, wildlife habitat, and both ecological and recreational value. In a vegetation survey completed in 2022, the fire was described as having

*“changed the current composition of the vegetation communities [within the burned area]. The majority of the on-site riparian corridor remain as standing dead, burned black cottonwood (Populus trichocarpa). The riparian community is currently in recovery and dominated by dense stands of young cottonwood saplings, thin-leaved*

*willow (Salix exigua), and Wood’s rose (Rosa woodsii).”<sup>4</sup>*

The recent loss of this mature landscape was a factor in local priorities for ecological restoration within the park. Prior to the fire, the most pressing restoration need within the park was likely related to impacts to the channel and flood plain from past flood events and highway construction/reconstruction, but in summer of 2021 revegetation of this area—to avoid erosion, limit incursion of invasive species, and/or make it a hospitable and attractive place for humans and animals again—was a frequently mentioned topic in public input.

As noted in the Project Overview and Background section of this document, the impacts of the fire to the Walker area community were and are extensive, which also has had an effect on when and how community members are prepared to focus on park planning.

In this context – local climate conditions and vegetation types, proximity to extensive public lands, and increasingly intense fire seasons in the region – wildfire is a persistent threat.

4 See Appendix I



Fire damage near Rock Creek in the park, July 2021



Fire damage with annual/post fire vegetation, July 2021



Standing burned riparian trees, July 2021

# Planning Process

The planning process focused on collecting and refining ideas for further development of Mountain Gate Park by seeking guidance from Antelope Valley/Walker area residents, agencies and organizations with a stake in the process, to ensure that future investment in the site by Mono County is focused on community interests and incorporates stakeholder guidance.

## Mountain Gate Park Working Group

In 2019, Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC)<sup>5</sup> members requested assistance from County staff to formally plan improvements to Mountain Gate Park including opportunities for multi-use trails and stream enhancements to benefit recreation users, natural fisheries, bird, and wildlife habitat. Mono County successfully competed for assistance from the RTCA program, which specializes in community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. A core working group comprised of Mono County staff, RPAC members, and NPS staff worked to first identify pertinent stakeholders to the project and to provide a framework for public planning and community outreach with the objective of adopting a formal planning document within the Mono County General Plan and Mono County Trails Plan.<sup>6</sup> This working group provided regular updates to the Antelope Valley RPAC. The RPAC also hosted

<sup>5</sup> Mono County RPACs have a formal advisory role in the county planning processes. Their meetings are open to the public and follow Brown Act requirements. For more information about RPACs, see Appendix B.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix G in the Regional Transportation Plan

community planning meetings and provided input on outreach strategy and materials.

## Outreach Strategy

### Community Participation

The main purpose of public outreach for this project was to gain understanding of the local community's interests and concerns related to future park development. Public outreach strategy was prioritized and vetted by the Antelope Valley RPAC and Mountain Gate Park working group, culminating in a total of three dedicated planning meetings and combination of digital/traditional public surveys, advertising methods, and materials.

### Public Meetings

Antelope Valley RPAC Special Planning Meeting #1 – Thursday, July 15, 2021

- Public meeting to discuss planning process, solicit desired concepts, and plan park amenities (held outdoors)

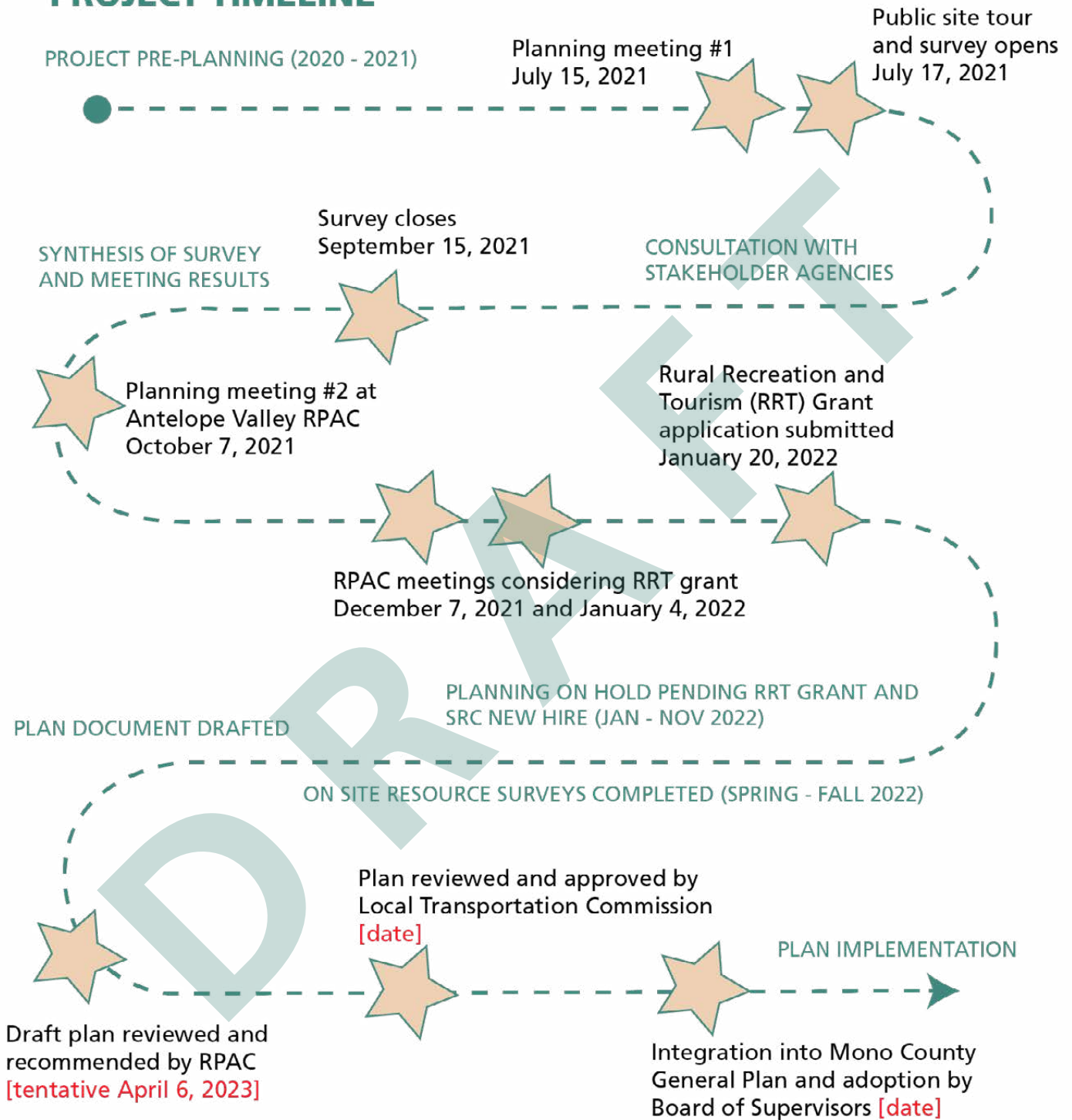


Sticky dot exercise on park improvement idea list, July 15, 2021



Site visit start up, July 17, 2021

# PROJECT TIMELINE



Public Site Visit and Planning Meeting – Saturday, July 17, 2021

- County staff and community members met outdoors, on-site to visualize concepts and walk the project area

Antelope Valley RPAC Special Planning Meeting #2 – Thursday, October 7, 2021

- Public meeting to discuss and refine park planning concepts
- Summaries of meeting and survey input were shared as part of the RPAC agenda packet and as a presentation during the meeting, see Appendix G
- Held virtually on Zoom as part of Antelope Valley RPAC’s standard practice for COVID-19 safety at that time

## Survey (Appendix C)

- Digital survey hosted on dedicated park planning webpage (<https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/plan-park>)
- 400+ paper surveys were mailed to Walker/Coleville area residences and made available for pick up/ drop off at the Walker General Store
- The survey was distributed following the public meetings in July of 2021 and was open through Sep-tember 15, 2021

## Outreach

- Posters providing details including project description, meeting dates, and staff contact information were displayed on site and in local businesses and governmental buildings (e.g. post office, community center, general store, etc.) – Appendix D
- Mailers were sent to 400+ local area residences
- A dedicated webpage was hosted on the Antelope Valley RPAC website at <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/plan-park>
- Updates provided to volunteer-managed Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/201046428812516674>
- All public meetings were officially noticed 72 hours in advance via normal governmental procedures

Overall participation in the July meetings and survey was moderate, in the rural and low population density context.<sup>7</sup> Ten to fifteen people participated in each of the July 15 meeting and July 17 site visit, and 28 total responses were received to the survey, including both the online and paper versions. The October 7, 2021, meeting was primarily attended by RPAC members and a handful of other interested community members or organizational stakeholders.

Across the comments and advice provided, there were some meaningful areas of agreement about the priorities for the park, and a lot of input and ideas about specific amenities or improvements wanted in the park. This feedback was used to begin developing a proposal for the overall plan for park development, with recognition that some elements may be implementable sooner or later, dependent on further feasibility studies, planning or design criteria, funding or regulatory limitations. Some details and specific

<sup>7</sup> The 2020 US Census estimated the population of the Walker Census Designated Place (CDP) at just over 700 people, and the combined population of Walker-Coleville-Topaz CDPs at 1273.

ideas were discussed with the RPAC at their December 2021 and January 2022 regular meetings. At that time, Mono County staff were also preparing an application for funding from California State Parks' Proposition 68 funded Rural Recreation and Tourism program (RRT grant)<sup>8</sup> for initial core park improvements based on this feedback, which was also an agenda item discussed at each of these RPAC meetings.

## Consultation with Agencies, Organizations, and Tribal Governments

A range of other agency or organizational stakeholders and tribal communities were notified of the project because of their role in management of adjacent lands, or other potential interest in future plans for the project area. This mainly occurred early in the process and was limited to notification, with the intent to follow up with specific stakeholders once the needs and questions about the project were further defined through community participation. Additional follow up with and guidance from stakeholder organizations will be a component of review and implementation of this plan.

Due to the direct connection between the project area and the West Walker River Wildlife Area just upstream, and the possible overlap between agency and community interests related to river-based recreation, CDFW was consulted early in the process and provided a letter of support to apply for RTCA assistance in planning improvements for public access and recreational angling.

<sup>8</sup> Rural Recreation and Tourism Program. For more information about Mono County's application for this grant, which was ultimately not awarded, see Appendix H.



Site visit, July 17, 2021

# Park Concept and Proposed Improvements

In the survey responses and meeting input, participants valued the natural qualities of the river and wanted to see them enhanced or protected. The future park they envisioned would be a clean, shaded, well-cared for place to be outside, and an excellent place to access the river for fishing and other recreation. It would also be more regularly used both by local residents and, to a lesser extent, out of town visitors, and be an asset to the community both for enjoyment and economic vitality. See October 7 community input summary in Appendix G for more details.

## Four Key Priorities

Community input suggested four key priorities for the future park:

- ★ **A trail for walking and biking throughout the park**
- ★ **Easier access to the river, and fewer barriers to the water**
- ★ **Safe non-motorized access to the park from Walker**
- ★ **A healthy natural landscape including native plants and wildlife habitat**

## Group A, B and C Elements

In addition, various specific ideas about how to accomplish these core items, as well as other recreational amenities that could be included in the park, were shared as part of survey responses and meeting participation. This input informed the following list of proposed improvements to the park. They are organized into three groups:

- Top priority improvements broadly supported in responses and serving one or more of the four priorities above
- Improvements with some community support and no major obstacles to their implementation
- Elements with some community support, but which will need further feasibility study or community input before being implemented

Group B items are not necessarily higher priority than Group C elements, but do require less additional investigation to be ready for implementation, and less or no community concern or opposition was expressed about them. Each item includes a brief description and,

where applicable, notes about any further planning that is needed.

There were a few items or uses that were clearly not wanted within the park:

- Camping, particularly car or RV camping
- Loud or large group activities
- Crowds
- Shooting sports
- Motorized/ATV use within the park

A short list of ideas for uses or amenities that were raised in meetings or survey responses, but are not included here due to lack of support beyond the individual who raised each topic, is included in the community input summary in Appendix G. A version of the list of elements below was also included in the RPAC agenda packet for October 7, 2021.

## A: Core Park Elements – High Priority Due to Broad Support

### *Well-designed and Sustainable Trail System for Walking and Bicycling*

This should:

- Access the entire length of the park
- Connect to Eastside Lane
- Be designed to increase or simplify access to the water for all users
- Include segments of trail designed to encourage use by individuals with limited mobility, with priority on those segments that simplify access to site highlights or the water<sup>9</sup>
- Use a surface type or types and physical layout which accommodates various use types including pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using accessibility devices, where practical and fundable
- Be designed to balance aesthetics, including community preference for soft surface/natural appearance trails made of on-site materials; function, particularly in areas designed for accessibility; and durability/minimal maintenance with special consideration of periodic flooding within the park and the need to avoid contributing to debris flows

9 Community interest related to trail accessibility focused on ease of use and offering options for people with a range of physical capacities. Given site conditions and cost considerations, improvements focused on accessibility including accessible trail segments should be prioritized to provide access to site highlights, rather than attempting to provide ADA-level access to the entire park.



It may include:

- Branches or loops for different purposes/users, such as through route for bicycles, walking near the water
- Seating and shade along route

### *Access Point at Eastside Lane*

This should:

- Be designed primarily for walkers and bicyclists
- Be set back and buffered and/or screened from Eastside Lane and private parcel at northwest corner of site
- Include informational signage and a park map

It may include:

- Limited vehicular parking, particularly to facilitate access to the trail for those with limited mobility – depending on feasibility and cost (see Group C)
- Shade, picnic tables and seating

### *Natural Landscape and River/Fisheries Improvements\**

This should include:

- Planting of native vegetation and shade trees
- Removal of invasive species where necessary
- Revegetation as needed, including in areas burned by the Mountain View Fire

It may include:

- Improvements to river function and fishery sustainability through more intensive riparian restoration (see Group C)

\*The amount and locations of new planting will be limited by water availability for irrigation. See Group C.

Word cloud of “Mountain Gate Future” responses from 2021 survey and public meeting



## **B: Elements with Some Community Support and No Opposition, No Major Additional Study Needed**

### ***Seating Along Trail***

- In shaded locations
- Along segments of trail designed for accessibility
- Near the water

### ***Improvements to Existing ADA Fishing Platform and Adjacent Parking to Improve Function***

- A specific list of desired improvements will need to be developed, based on input from current users

### ***Interpretive or Educational Signage***

- Locations and topics to be determined, ideally by a community committee

### ***Clearer Directional Signage off US 395 to Existing Parking***

- Exact content to be determined, but signage should communicate the amenities available (restrooms, picnic tables, etc.) in addition to fishing access
- Will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans

## **C: Elements with Some Community Support, Further Feasibility Study and/or Community Input Needed Before Implementing**

These Group C elements, with the exception of some very limited parking at Eastside Lane, are not included in the projects section below because of remaining need to establish feasibility or demonstrate community need and interest before adoption and implementation. They have not been eliminated as possibilities for future park development, but in the short term the plan is to focus on simpler and more broadly desired elements in Groups A and or B, instead of waiting on those items work while completing vetting for Group C, some of which may be time-consuming, costly, or require additional advocacy or support from the community before it can become a priority for the County. For more information about the additional study or needs to be addressed before each of these items can be implemented, see Implementation section [p#]

### ***Drinking Water***

### ***Dog Park/Fenced Area for Off Leash Dogs***

### ***Put-in/Take-out for Non-Motorized Boats and Kayaks***

### ***Extensive Fisheries Improvement or Riparian Restoration, Including New Channels and Ponds Where Feasible***

### ***Disc Golf Course***

### ***Parking at New Eastside Lane Access Point***

# Projects

The elements described in the Park Concept and Proposed Improvements section are grouped into a “Core Park Project” and two “Stand Alone Projects,” each described below.

## Core Park Project

The main park improvement project to be pursued following adoption of this document includes the elements listed below. These were included based on a combination of high level of community interest and agreement, based on public input in 2021; and each element’s readiness to proceed to detailed design, funding search, and construction.

### *All Group A Elements as Described Above*

#### *Group B Elements*

- Seating along trail: type, number and locations to be determined based on final location of trail, availability of existing or newly planned shade, proximity to water, and other factors. At minimum, some seating will be included at the Eastside Lane access point.
- Interpretive signage: at minimum some informational and interpretive signage will be included at the new Eastside Lane access point. Additional new interpretive materials at other locations along to the new trail may also be included as appropriate.

Note: the other two Group B elements can be completed independent of the main plan, see “Stand Alone Projects” below. Also, directional signage to the new Eastside Lane access point is specifically not included in the Core Project, as the focus of that access point is local and non-motorized use. Parking at that location will be very limited and intended to support accessibility rather than general parking, see below.

#### *Group C*

- Limited parking at Eastside Lane. Although agreement about this topic was not reached in the scope of the public process and RPAC meetings, for the purpose of ensuring accessibility to the new trail a small amount of parking is recommended at the Eastside Lane access point (2 spaces, marked as ADA use only, inset from Eastside Lane). Future expansions or other actions related to parking will be planned based on actual use of this area and feedback from local residents after the Core Project is in place.

#### *Due Diligence or Logistical Elements (Not Separate Elements in Community Input Lists)*

- Buffer space, fencing, screening and/or signage between park facilities and private parcel at northwest corner of site. This need was also raised at least a few times in the 2021 public process.
- Maintenance related elements at new access point: gate, fencing and/or barriers to prevent motorized access or camping; garbage receptacles.

# Conceptual Site Plan



## CORE PARK PROJECT

- Accessible trail, <math><3\%</math> slope
- Soft surface footpath
- Access point with 2 spaces accessible parking
- Landscape restoration area - burned 2020
- Vegetative buffer (or other screening)

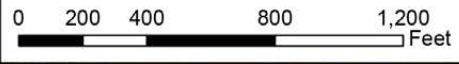
Other items not shown in detail on plan, locations to be determined: seating, shade, interpretive signage

## Stand Alone Project

Directional Signage Off of US 395 to Existing Park Facilities (replace existing signs)

## Stand Alone Project

Improvements to Existing ADA Fishing Platform and Adjacent Parking



WEST WALKER RIVER WILDLIFE AREA (CDFW)

Source: Eric Malar, GeoBye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

## Stand Alone Projects

These projects are presented separately from the Core Project because they are improvements to the existing facilities at the center of the park, and so can be completed independently of the Core Project if opportunities arise. More information about the proposed implementation process for these projects is in the following section.

### *Improvements to Existing ADA Fishing Platform and Adjacent Parking to Improve Function*

While some specific issues with the current functioning of this platform were identified in site visits and public input—including growth of vegetation at the base of the platform, obstructing access to the water and challenges with the parking options immediately adjacent to the platform—more information is needed to define an exact scope for these improvements. See implementation section for more information about next steps.

### *Clearer Directional Signage Off US 395 to Existing Parking*

Directional signage from US 395 to existing parking and facilities at the center of site will be focused on improving visibility of the range of opportunities available in the park. In addition to fishing access, new signage could communicate the availability of restrooms, the par course, picnic tables, and area information. This could be accomplished by adding a larger collection of graphic icons to current signs on more substantial posts (see images below), but there may be other sign design options, and community input would be useful in determining a preferred design.



### Conceptual array of recreation information signs

See Caltrans sign charts: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/sign-charts>



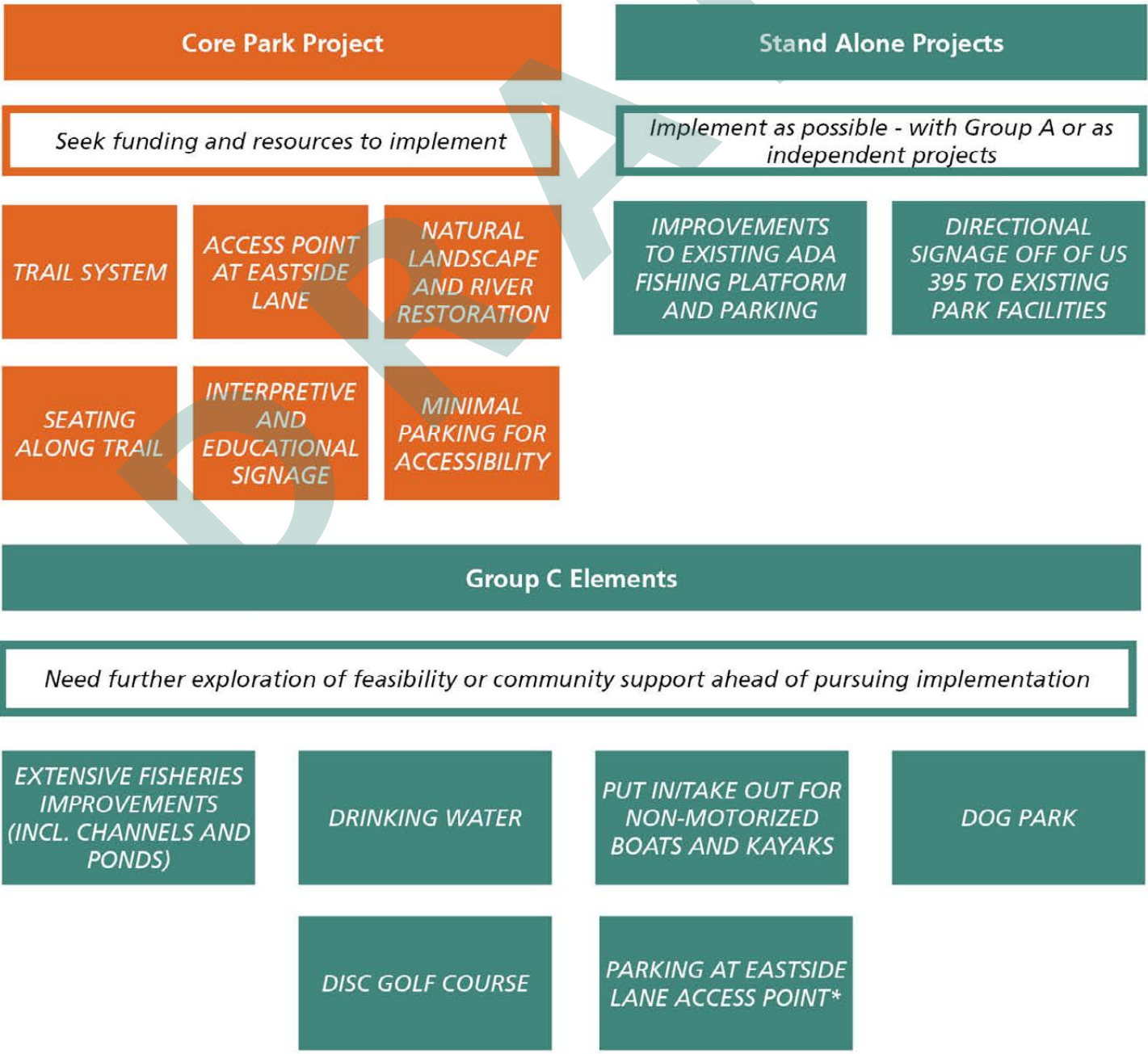
Some panels that could be applicable to current park amenities. Other panels related to walking or interpretation may apply after completion of Core Park Project.



# Implementation

## Overall Approach

The overall strategy for implementation is based on focusing effort and resources on the Core Park Project, seeking opportunities to implement the Stand Alone Projects when possible (including ahead of the Core Project if resources are available), and refining Group C elements as feasible. A grant application was submitted by Mono County in January of 2022 to fund Group A and some supporting or related elements from Groups B and C—roughly approximating the Core Project in this document—which was not successful, although the process of preparing the application did contribute to refinements of the plan outlined in this document. See Appendix H for more information about this grant application process. No funding has yet been secured for any part of this plan.



## Core Park Project

Following review and adoption of this plan, Mono County will continue seek resources to implement the Core Project as the highest priority for park improvements. This will likely include a combination of County existing resources and grant funds. Identifying these funds and refining the exact plan and timeframe for implementation will be an ongoing process. When new opportunities to apply for grant funds or other resources arise, the Sustainable Recreation Coordinator (SRC) will bring the proposed scope and key considerations the RPAC for review and advice ahead of submitting an application when possible.

- Seek funding or resources to implement these elements as soon as possible, as the highest priority for park development.
- Funding ideally will support both construction and any remaining planning, design, or compliance needs to make the project shovel-ready. Resource studies completed in summer 2022 using other County resources are a component of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance process, see “Initial Implementation Actions” in Appendix H.
- As part of the funding search, continue to refine the details of how those elements will be implemented to maximize value to the community, minimize maintenance, and meet community and visitor needs and expectations.
- Completion of any remaining resource surveys or documentation, and of CEQA process.

There are also some remaining steps necessary to further define specifics of the elements in the priority plan before they can be constructed or implemented.

### *Trail System and Eastside Lane Access Point*

- Identification of a desired surface type for the accessible trail segments, and reflagging in the field by a qualified professional. Accessibility needs likely require professional construction of this part of the trail.
- For other trail segments: selection of a surface type and width standard, and an expected construction method or combination of methods (e.g. contracted to a professional trail builder; completion by seasonal trail crews; volunteer projects), and reflagging in the field with this method in mind.
- Detailed design of trailhead and supporting elements (informational kiosk, seating, shade, barriers and parking if applicable).
- Once final trail routes are identified, selection of locations for seating, shade tree planting, and/or additional interpretive signage as applicable.
- Community feedback and advice on detailed designs.

### *Natural Landscape and River/Fisheries Improvements*

- Determination of irrigation water availability and source. May include well, non-consumptive use of surface water, other, and/or none (natural precipitation only). This will impact feasible scope and timeline for revegetation work.
- A note about water well option: a well, if feasible and fundable, would not only provide on-site irrigation for plantings and water for any improvements to restore the historic fishery conditions (pre-1996/1997 flood) but also could serve other Group C elements, see below.
- Detailed design of revegetation plan by an ecological restoration professional.
- Well construction, if applicable.

## Stand Alone Projects

These were elements with some community support and no opposition, and which required only a small amount of additional community input or participation for guidance, and identification of a funding source. Two of the four— interpretive signage and seating— are included in the Core Park Project as inherently linked to the construction of the new trail and access point. See below for more details of what remains to be done to implement the remaining two items as independent projects. For both the strategy is:

- Identify opportunities to implement Group B elements where possible.
- These items are not dependent on completion of the Core Park Project, so may be implemented on their own schedule, or included in larger funding requests for the Core Project elements as applicable.
- Although neither requires substantial future study, some community member support or involvement will be needed to ensure that what is implemented best reflects community interests.

### *Improvements to ADA Fishing Platform and Parking*

More information is needed to fully understand the needs for this project, so implementation steps are non-specific.

- Additional input from current users about desired improvements and barriers to use
- Define project scope and elements included based on this input
- Seek funding appropriate to project need
- As needed, complete detailed design
- Construct or implement

### *Clearer Directional Signage Off US 395 to Existing Parking*

- Determine sign design option(s) to accomplish purpose and comply with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and any other applicable Caltrans sign standards (including RPAC Mountain Gate Working Group review)
- Seek funding for sign fabrication and installation
- Prepare materials for Caltrans encroachment permit application – or alternate process if applicable for replacement of existing signs – and obtain permit<sup>10</sup>
- Fabricate and install

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<sup>10</sup> Caltrans Encroachment Permits <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>

## Options for Future Implementation of Other Elements (Group C)

These elements had some community support or interest but require further feasibility study and/or more targeted community input before implementing. Some are technical or dependent on more information about on-site environmental conditions or legal frameworks; others were identified by the RPAC as potentially having negative impact on some area residents and/or negative perception within the local community, so although not eliminated from consideration, would need to be vetted in more detail with at least some

community members before they could proceed. Some had the added complexity of being high cost without yet having a clear mandate from area residents, or where the level of ecological or recreational benefits that would result is unclear. See table and full list below for more details. In recognition of the remaining uncertainty about when and how these elements may be implemented, they are not currently included in the Core Park Project – but if or when vetted for implementation they may be added to a future iteration of the plan.

Group C Elements		
<i>Need further exploration of feasibility or community support ahead of pursuing implementation</i>		
Proposed element	Key areas in need of more investigation	Possible next steps
<b>DRINKING WATER</b>	Technical feasibility, legal/permit requirements, installation cost, maintenance cost	Technical feasibility study with cost estimates
<b>DOG PARK</b>	Community interest/need, maintenance cost; also linked to drinking water availability	Additional community input
<b>PUT INTAKE OUT FOR NON-MOTORIZED BOATS AND KAYAKS</b>	Stakeholder interest/need, community interest/need, potential opposition	Input from regional river recreation stakeholders
<b>EXTENSIVE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENTS</b>	Technical feasibility, legal/permit requirements, installation cost, maintenance cost	Site assessment by ecological restoration specialist; technical feasibility study with cost estimates
<b>DISC GOLF COURSE</b>	Technical feasibility, stakeholder interest/need, community interest/need	Evaluation by disc golf course designer, and additional community input
<b>PARKING AT EASTSIDE LANE ACCESS POINT*</b>	Community interest/need, potential opposition	No immediate action beyond minimal parking for accessibility included in core project



As of completion of this document Mono County efforts remain focused on implementing the highest priority items in this document. Pursuing refinement of and resources for Group C items will be contingent on County staff time and community interest in engaging in further planning for this site. Given recent challenges, including ongoing Mountain View Fire recovery, it remains to be seen if and when these elements will become a community focus again.

Overall strategy:

- Refine these elements when possible.
- Refinement likely includes consulting specialists to check technical feasibility of some elements and further exploring community interest in others.
- After these refinements, funding could be pursued for any group C elements that have been shown to be a community priority as well as technically feasible and appropriate for Mountain Gate Park.

If or when these elements are taken up again, some potential next steps and key considerations for each element are listed below.

### ***Drinking Water***

As there is no municipal water system in Walker, providing drinking water on site would require installing and maintaining a well. Some exploration of likely well costs was done at the time of RRT grant application but was not conclusive.

*Key questions or considerations to address*

- Is drilling a well legally and technically feasible on site?
- What will be the costs to install and maintain a well, and can the County support them?

*Next steps*

- Technical feasibility study with cost estimates

### ***Dog Park/Fenced Area for Off Leash Dogs***

*Key questions or considerations to address*

- Is there sufficient interest and likely use in the local community to justify the expense of construction and maintenance?
- If community interest level is low, is it practical to add this use primarily for visitors and US 395 travelers?
- Further community input will be needed to determine the preferred location for a dog park, if this idea is pursued.

- Drinking water would be an important component of a dog park, so this element is linked to the feasibility of a well project. See Core Park Project, Natural Landscape and River/Fisheries Improvements section.
- Mono County Animal Services should be consulted about this proposal ahead of implementation.

*Next steps:*

- Additional community input

### ***Put-In/Take-Out for Non-Motorized Boats and Kayaks***

*Key questions or considerations to address*

- Is there a known need for an access point here?
- How does it connect to current boating use and existing facilities up and downstream?
- Is there significant interest in this use by local community members?
- What are the potential impacts or perceived impacts for downstream landowners?

*Next steps*

- Outreach to regional river recreation stakeholders for input

### ***Extensive Riparian Restoration Including New Channels and Ponds Where Feasible***

*Key questions or considerations to address*

- Are extensive constructed features—such as the channels and ponds proposed/discussed in public input—compatible with current and desired riparian condition?
- Are they a feasible option to accomplish the stated objectives of improving fishery health and increasing wildlife habitat?
- If the answer to either of the above is no, are there other recommended actions to improve fishery and habitat health within the project area?
- Is non-consumptive use of surface water applicable and legal in this situation? If so, what are the steps required to permit or formalize this use? (Use of well water may also be an option, if a well project is pursued - see Core Park Project, Natural Landscape and River/Fisheries Improvements section)
- What will be the costs to install and maintain these elements, and can the County support them?

### *Next steps*

- Assessment of the site by a professional ecological restoration and/or fisheries specialist to provide more details about which kinds of interventions or projects are feasible or most likely to be effective in this location.
- Technical feasibility study with cost estimates

### ***Disc Golf Course***

#### *Key questions or considerations to address*

- Is this use a good fit for this site (i.e. could it make a desirable course)?
- Is there enough of a user base locally, regionally, and/or among visitors to justify impacts and cost?
- What are the expected visual and natural resource impacts of installing a course?

### *Next steps*

- Evaluation by a disc golf course designer to determine if this project is feasible, and if so, the appropriate scope for a course
- If determined to be feasible, additional community input

### ***Parking at New Eastside Lane Access Point***

Very limited parking is proposed as part of the Core Park Project to meet basic accessibility standards. For now, no further action on this topic is recommended beyond what is included in the Core Project. In the future, the parking question may need to be revisited, but at that time actual use of the limited parking provided, and feedback from the community on changed needs and impacts, can inform any future additions or modifications.

If further action is pursued on parking at some point in the future, some key questions would be:

- What is current community sentiment about the idea of additional parking here?
- How do potential benefits (reduction in unsafe/informal parking on the road way or private properties) for nearby residents compare with the potential impacts?

## **Other Implementation Factors**

### ***Private Land Adjacent to County-Owned Park Parcels***

During the public input part of this planning process in 2021, there was recognition of the potential impact of increased public use of the north end of the park on the private parcel along the river and Eastside Lane at the northwest corner of the site. As Group A plans are implemented, they will also include elements to clarify the boundary between public and private space for the public—through use of fences and signage—as well as elements to attempt to reduce any noise or visual impacts, such as berming, screening vegetation, and choices related to final placement of trails and other park infrastructure.

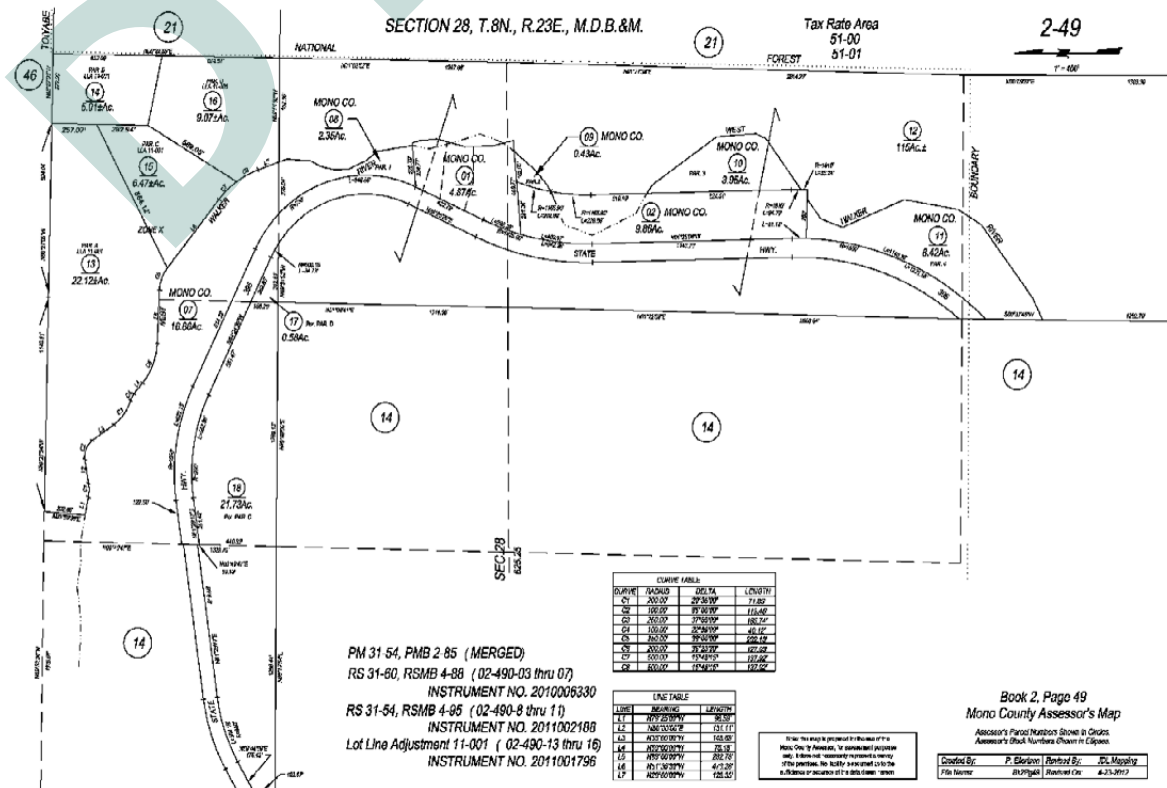
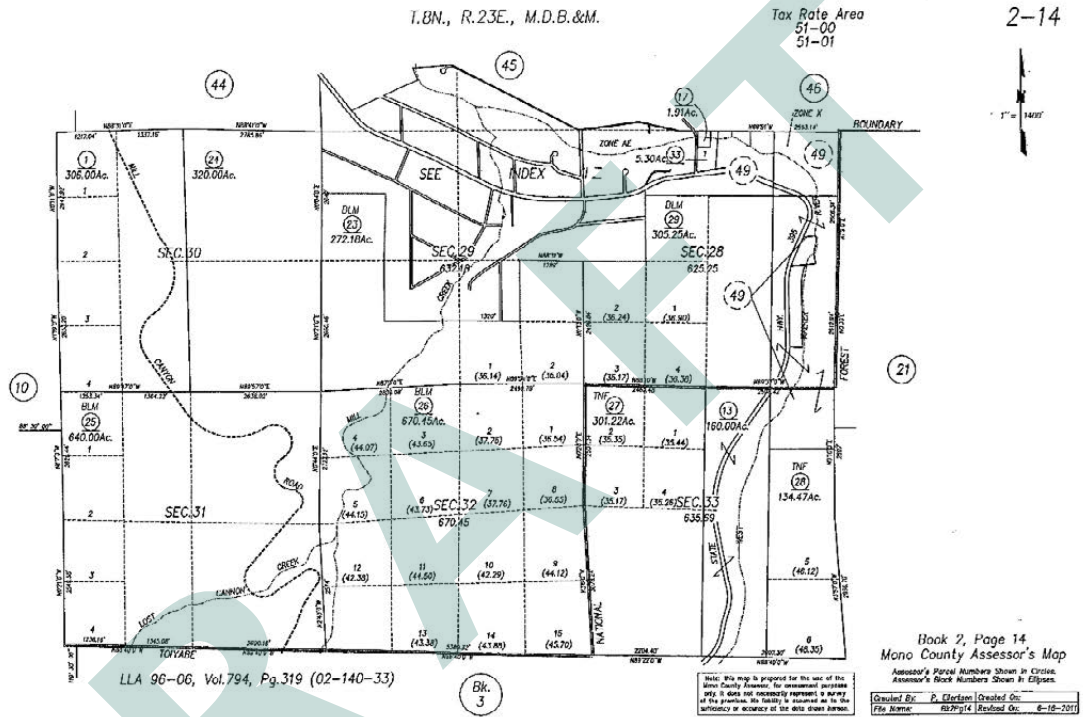
In 2021, there was also discussion of the possibility of a land trade between the County and the owners of this parcel. This idea is entirely dependent on a) those owners' willingness to engage in a transfer and b) identification of an appropriate County-owned parcel or parcels for trade that would be acceptable to the landowners. As of writing of this document, this option has not been fully explored, but could be further pursued through discussion with the landowners and by County staff and decision-makers.

### ***Future Maintenance***

***[Placeholder]***

# Appendices

## A: Mono County Assessors maps



## B: Mono County Regional Planning Advisory Committees

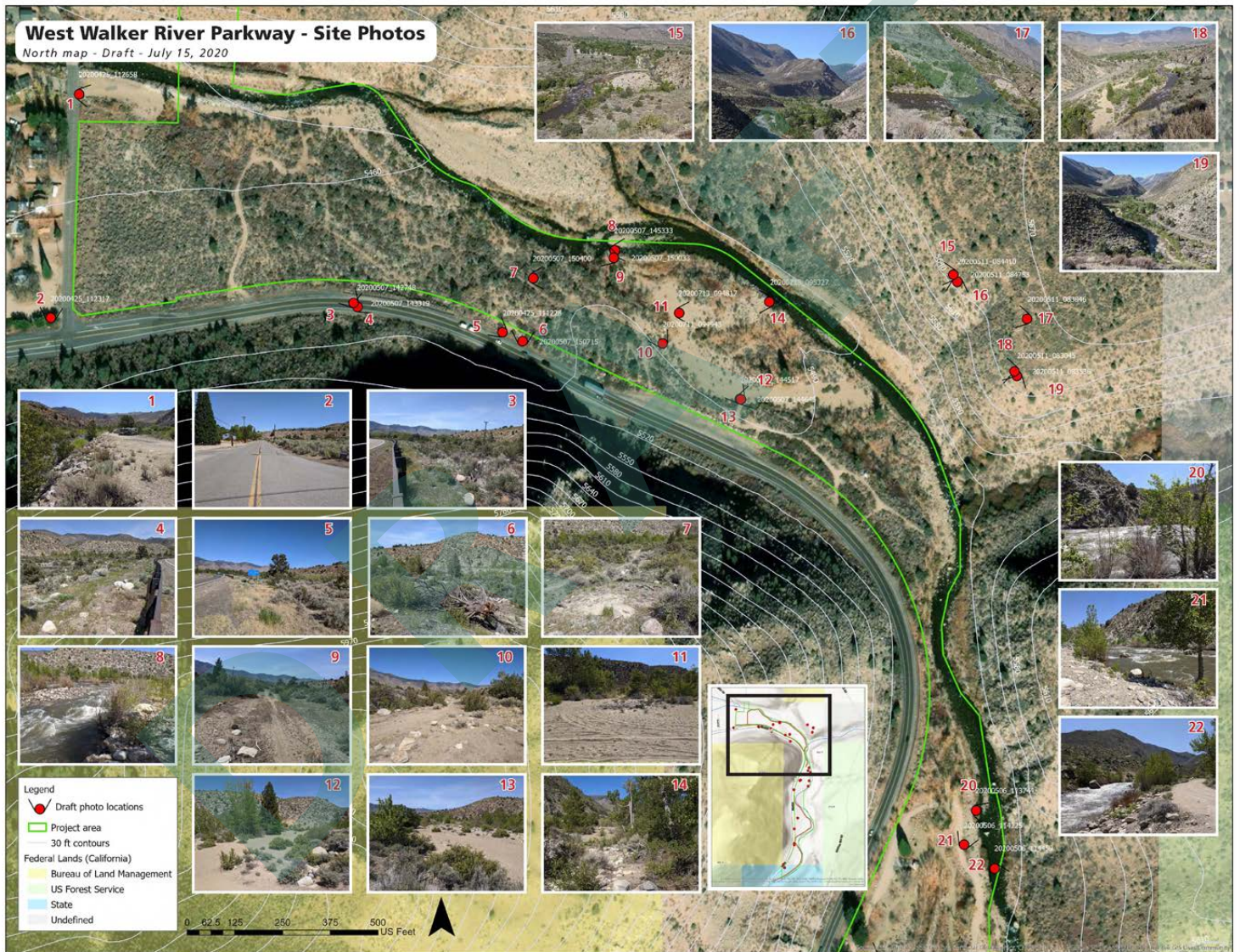
The purpose of Mono County's Regional Planning Advisory Committees is to advise the Mono County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Planning Division on the development, review, implementation and update of the Mono County General Plan and associated Area / Community Plans. In order to accomplish this purpose, RPACs may:

1. Conduct and facilitate community planning meetings.
2. Provide assistance to the Planning Division and other County staff in identifying local planning issues, including community development constraints and opportunities.
3. Assist in preparing, reviewing and commenting on proposed community vision statements, planning policy and implementing ordinances affecting the local area, including proposals of Mono County, the Mono County Local Transportation Commission, the Mono County Collaborative Planning Team, and other requesting agencies.
4. Review at least once a year the adequacy and applicability of local General Plan policies.
5. Assist County staff to conduct planning studies in support of community planning efforts and plan implementation, including rezoning studies.
6. Review and comment on proposed plans and environmental studies prepared by other agencies that may impact the local area or conflict with existing community plans.
7. Assist in the development and review of capital improvement plans for Mono County, the Local Transportation Commission, and other requesting agencies.
8. Serve as a community forum and information clearinghouse on community planning issues.

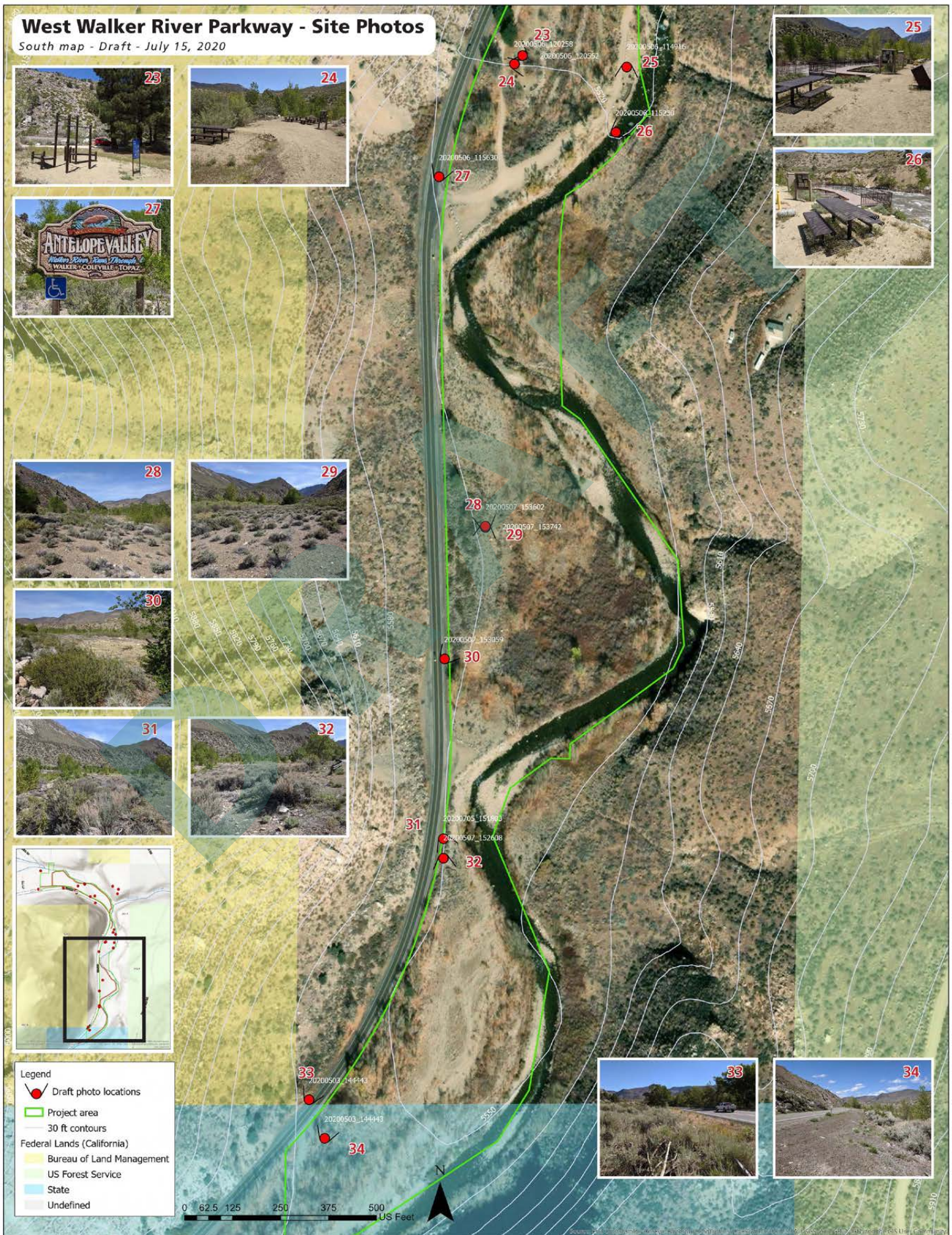
## C: Photo Maps

These photos were mostly taken and compiled in spring and summer of 2020, so in some places represent conditions that have since changed significantly due to the Mountain View Fire.

Full sized versions of these maps with images (22"x17") are on file with Mono County and are available online at [https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/antelope\\_valley\\_rpac/page/31604/wwrp\\_photo-maps\\_draft\\_20210713a.pdf](https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/antelope_valley_rpac/page/31604/wwrp_photo-maps_draft_20210713a.pdf)



# C: Photo Maps - continued



**D: Public Survey**

Digital Survey: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/plan-park>



Your help is needed to plan the future of Mountain Gate Park! The Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee and Mono County are seeking community and visitor input to plan improvements for sustainable public access along the West Walker River waterfront and Mountain Gate Park. How this will happen and what the future expanded park will include is up to you.

**Please share your ideas by answering a few questions**

Mountain Gate Park extends south along Highway 395 from Eastside Lane for 1 1/2 miles and is generally between the Highway and West Walker River.

Please feel free to answer as much or little of this survey as you would like - the questions are meant to spark creative ideas about the future of the park. For other ways to share your ideas about the park, including an online version of this survey, please visit <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/plan-park>.

Please return by August 31, 2021. Surveys may be dropped off at the Walker General Store (106651 US Hwy 395, Walker, CA 96107) or mailed to the Mono County Community Development Department, P.O. Box 8, Bridgeport, CA 93517.

**I live in the greater Antelope Valley/Walker/Topaz/Coleville area:**

- Full time
- Part time
- Visiting
- Choose not to answer

**What is your age?**

- Under 16 years
- 16 - 25 years
- 26 - 49 years
- 50 - 65 years
- Over 65 years
- Choose not to answer

**List three words that describe Mountain Gate Park now:**

[Empty text input box for listing three words describing Mountain Gate Park now]

**List three words that describe how it should be in the future (can be the same words, if you'd like):**

[Empty text input box for listing three words describing how the park should be in the future]

How important are the following when it comes to park design?	Not important	Neutral	Important
Park reflects needs and interests of Walker community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park attracts visitors to the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park prioritizes nature and passive recreation opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park offers a mix of nature, passive recreation, and active recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park prioritizes active recreation opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park offers many kinds of recreational facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park supports wildlife and native plants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## D: Public Survey - continued

How important are the following when it comes to the park?	Not important	Neutral	Important
River access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural landscape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy ecosystems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife habitat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solitude, quiet, tranquility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gathering with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Active recreation [hiking, biking, fishing, running, group sports, etc.]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Passive recreation [wildlife watching, picnicking, sunbathing, etc.]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you visit the park now? If yes, how do you use it? Mark all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walk                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Gather with friends and family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain bike                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time alone               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch birds or other wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> Use the parcourse              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Use the restroom               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>   |   |

What could be added to the park that would improve your experience or support the things you'd like to do there? (e.g. trails, disc golf course, benches, ponds for fish/bird habitat, vegetation, etc.) Please write in as many options as you'd like, and use the "other ideas" space below or add another sheet if needed.

What uses or activities would be inappropriate, or would make it difficult for you to enjoy the park?

In the future, I'd like to get to Mountain Gate Park by \_\_\_\_ (e.g. car, bike, walking etc.) List all that apply.

Do you have any other thoughts, ideas, or suggestions about the park? Please also feel free to add another sheet or send an email to [mparuolo@mono.ca.gov](mailto:mparuolo@mono.ca.gov).







# Plan the Park!

## Mountain Gate Park - Recreation and Revitalization

Your help is needed to plan the future of Mountain Gate Park! The Antelope Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee and Mono County are **seeking community and visitor input** to plan improvements for sustainable public access along the West Walker River waterfront and Mountain Gate Park.

**This project aims to enhance the recreational opportunities and ecological features of Mountain Gate Park and West Walker waterfront through the development of sustainable trail system(s) and watershed improvements that promote fish nurseries, bird habitat, and public access. Returning the West Walker River's vitality will benefit the communities of Walker and Coleville, the local economy, and the traveling public.**

How this will happen and what the future expanded park will include is up to you.

## Please share your ideas!

### Join a community meeting

Thursday, July 15, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Antelope Valley Community Center, 442 Mule Deer Road, Walker CA 96107. Under California COVID-19 guidance, masks are required for unvaccinated individuals.<sup>1</sup>

### Design the park on-site

Saturday, July 17, 9 am - 12 pm, at Mountain Gate Park. Light refreshments will be served.

### Complete a survey

Survey will be available in paper and digital formats by July 15.

### Get in touch

[mparuolo@mono.ca.gov](mailto:mparuolo@mono.ca.gov)

For more information, including past planning and development in this part of the West Walker River Parkway, example project ideas, and project timeline, see:

Web: <https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/plan-park>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1046428812516674>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
EDDM Retail

Local  
Postal Customer

## Please share your ideas!

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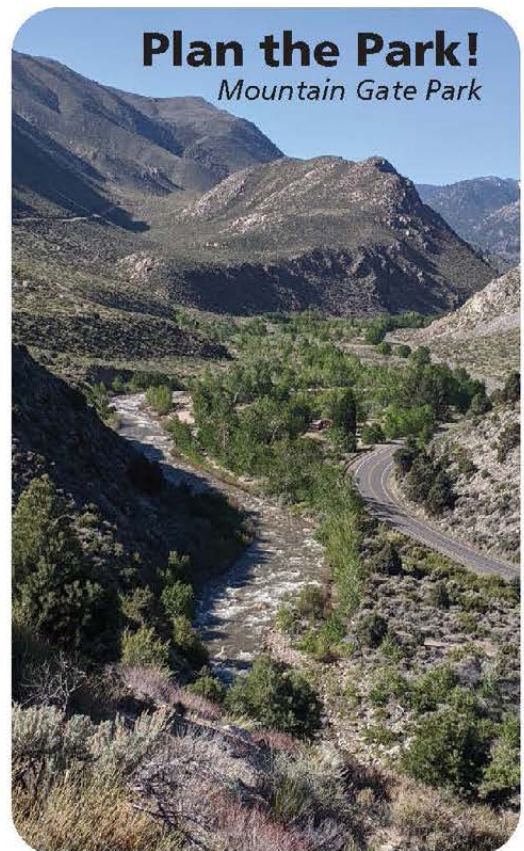
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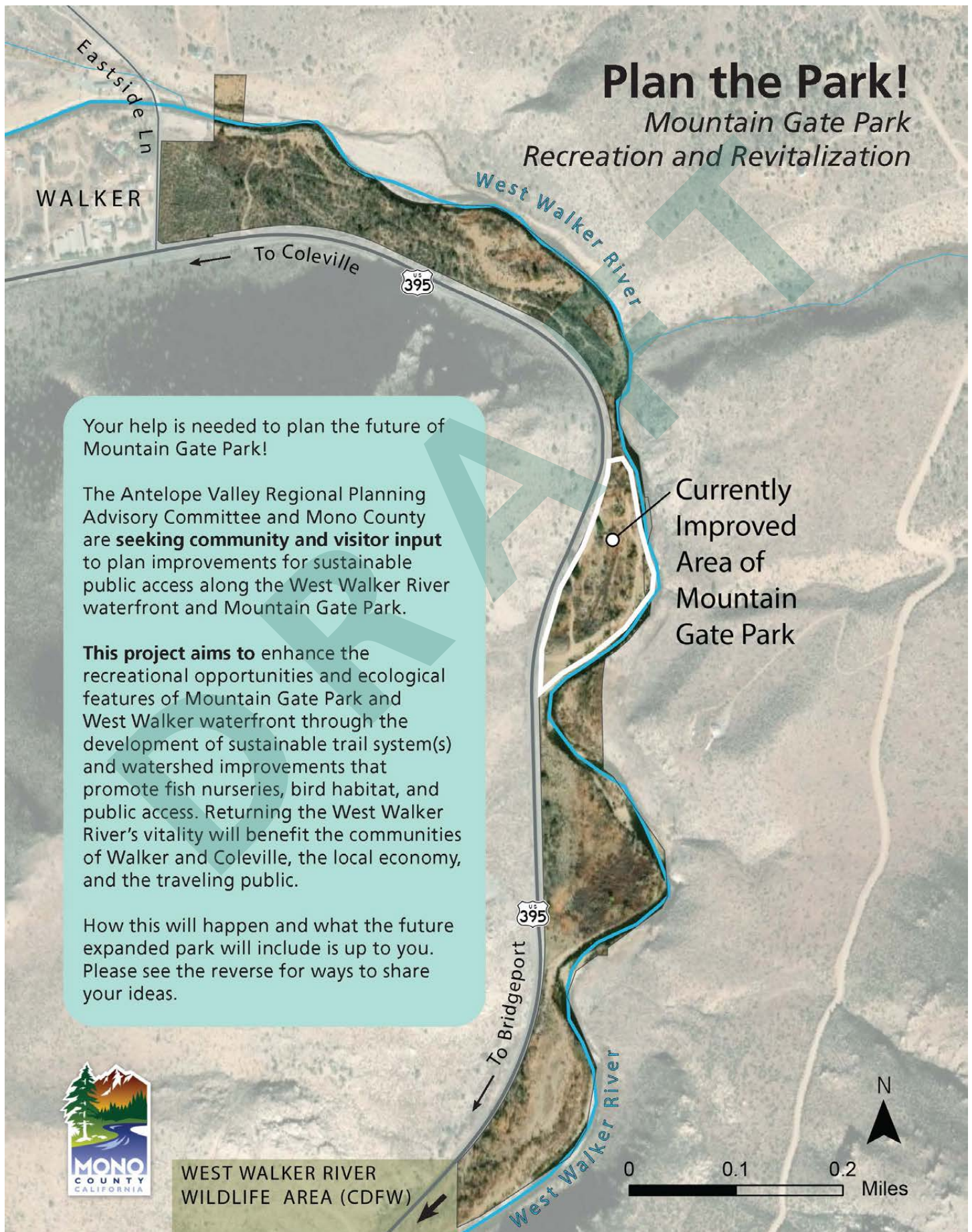
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## Plan the Park!

### Mountain Gate Park – Community Feedback Summary

Draft 10/06/21

#### Mountain Gate Now

- Some positives: natural landscape, access to the river, birds, fishing, water
- Potential not realized
- Negatives: hot/exposed; river access not easy/not as good as other locations; trash/messiness/lack of maintenance; underutilized

#### Mountain Gate Future

- Improved river access & fishing
- Walkability, shade, peaceful/relaxing, physical comfort
- Natural, beautiful, clean, well maintained

#### General agreement & a lot of interest

##### *Trail for walking and biking throughout park*

- In survey responses, people also frequently mentioned wanting to be able to walk along the water or have trail access to the water
- This was the highest valued improvement at the July 15 meeting (“Extension of walking trails (longer distance to walk)”) based on sticky dot voting
- 23 of 28 survey responses listed trails in some form as something that they would like to see added to the park to improve their experience

##### *Easier access to the river & fewer barriers to the water*

- River access was considered important by most survey respondents, and ease of access to the river was mentioned repeatedly in added comments to survey questions. In the post-it exercise asking what people value about the park at the July 15 meeting, fishing access and interaction with water were two themes.
- In the surveys there were also several mentions of an area suitable for take-out of kayaks & boats, and swimming/wading access.
- See also ADA improvements topic below.

##### *Safe non-motorized access to the park from Walker*

- In the survey, walking was the most desired way to access the park (followed closely by driving and biking.)
- Many survey respondents specifically mentioned the connection to Walker or Eastside Lane, and safety from traffic on 395, as important in park development. A few comments also requested sidewalks or traffic calming measures like speed bumps (presumably in town/along 395 or other roads.)
- “Connection to Walker” was also near the top of the list of ideas discussed at the July 15 meeting (based on sticky dot votes).

## G: Summaries of public input prepared for October 7 2021 Antelope Valley RPAC meeting - continued

### *Prioritizing natural landscape, native plants and wildlife habitat*

- In survey responses there were some specific requests for native plants, habitat restoration, or other park improvements related to plants or wildlife. On questions relating to what was important to people in park design, most respondents rated the following statements or qualities as important: “Park supports wildlife and native plants,” (22 of 28) “Natural landscape” (25 of 28) and “Healthy ecosystem” (23 of 28).
- “Revegetation” received a lot of sticky dot votes at the July 15 meeting (although also one “no” vote.)
- Tree planting for shade also came up in several survey responses.
- Several survey responses also specifically mentioned ponds as an element they would like to see added to the park. Discussion during the site visit included new/re-opened side channels for riparian restoration.

### Other topics – some support + no opposition

#### *ADA-specific improvements*

- In survey responses, ideas included improved functionality for existing ADA fishing platform; identifying/improving other locations that could be made accessible (level ground at river’s edge and clear routes to the water); and small amounts of accessible parking elsewhere in the park.
- Improved ADA parking received a significant amount of support in sticky dot voting at the July 15 meeting (as did “Improved/more formalized parking” as a separate item.)

#### *Shade, particularly trees*

#### *Drinking water on site*

- At the July 15 meeting there was some discussion about exploring the feasibility of a well on site as a way to provide drinking water and support new plantings, shade trees, and other restoration work.

#### *Buffering/screening from private property at NW corner of the park*

- At least one survey response suggested screening or separation from the private property at the northwest corner of the park. The owners of that parcel have also expressed concerns about possible impacts to their use of that property from changes in recreational use of the park.

#### *Benches and rest spots*

- Many survey respondents suggested benches and picnic tables, particularly in the shade and along a trail system, as an element they’d like to see added to the park.

#### *Interpretation and signage*

- Interpretive signage & the park as an opportunity for education came up in several survey responses, although not directly at the July 15 meeting. At the meeting, the group highlighted a need for improved signage along 395 to communicate what is available at the park beyond fishing, as well as discussing the site’s potential as a rest stop for visitors. These were two distinct topics but could have some overlap in implementation.

## G: Summaries of public input prepared for October 7 2021 Antelope Valley RPAC meeting - continued

### *Dog park/dogs*

- At the July 15 meeting, the idea of a fenced area for dogs where they could be off leash but safe from 395 traffic was raised and received a significant number of sticky dot votes.
- A handful of survey responses also suggested a dog park as something they'd like to see added to the park.
- Several surveys identified dogs off leash as something that would interfere with their enjoyment of the park.
- There were a few mentions in surveys of the need for more or different types of dog waste receptacles.
- One survey response was strongly against dogs being "prohibited" from the park – but wording wasn't entirely clear as whether requiring dogs to be on leash would qualify as a prohibition ("If dogs are prohibited (even on leash) I will not have any reason to use the park")

### Other topics/areas of mixed input

#### *Higher priority for passive recreation than active in the survey results, but interest in both*

- In questions about what survey respondents valued in the design of the park, more people classified passive recreation as important than active recreation, but both elements were valued by most respondents (passive/natural 14/28, active 5/28, mix of both 16/28)
- Several respondents mentioned that they thought it would be possible to include both active and passive recreation within the park without conflict

#### *"City park" uses and developed recreation*

- At least one survey respondent was strongly for some kind of constructed course (or varying routes for different skill levels) for bicycles, while a few others specifically mentioned feeling that this use was not appropriate & would interfere with their enjoyment of the park.
- At least 3 survey respondents said that "city park" or highly developed uses in general (group sports, bike course, etc) would interfere with their enjoyment of the park. One mentioned not wanting disc golf or group sports specifically; another referenced BMX as something they thought would be a negative impact.
- At the July 15 meeting, the active recreation elements that received the most votes were disc golf and addition of a put-in/take out location for boats and kayaks. However, they fell roughly in the middle of the priority list after sticky-dot voting, below trails, revegetation, a connection to Walker, and a dog park.
- In the survey responses, disc golf and a boat/kayak take out were each listed by several people as a new element they would like to see in the park.
- Beyond the above items (disc golf, boat/kayak take out, bicycle course) and one survey response which suggested a sprinkle/splash park, no additional active recreation facilities were suggested in the surveys
- Other active recreation elements suggested at the July 15 meeting received few or no votes – mini golf and a skate park received no votes, and beach volleyball received one yes vote and two nos. None of these were suggested in the survey responses.

## G: Summaries of public input prepared for October 7 2021 Antelope Valley RPAC meeting - continued

### Parking

- In the survey, many people noted that they would like to access the park by car or other motorized vehicle (ATV/dirt bike), often in addition to walking or biking. Parking as a need came up in a few places in the survey responses, mainly in the context of a) ADA accessibility and b) a desire to access the park by vehicle at other points beside the existing location.
- At the July 15 meeting, “Better, more formalized parking” received four high priority yes votes (ones or twos) but also one no vote – which placed it quite high relative to other ideas considered.
- At the meeting, “ADA parking - particularly at the ADA fishing platform” as a separate item also received several yes votes.

### Things that are clearly not wanted:

- Camping – particularly car or RV camping
  - One survey mentioned this as a possible camping location for cyclists, but the overall trend of the surveys was strongly against including camping in the park.
- Loud or large group activities
- Crowds
- Shooting sports
- Motorized/ATV use within the park
  - This topic received 7 no votes and 0 yes votes at the July 15 meeting
  - However, several survey respondents mentioned wanting to be able to get to the park by ATV or dirt bike. One respondent suggested a place to park ATVs near the river with access from Burcham Flat Road.

### Other concerns expressed

- There were several mentions of garbage on site & community members needing to clean up the park on a regular basis, frustration at garbage and human and/or dog waste being left behind in the park. There were also one or two comments about the need for the County to maintain the park.
- There were a few surveys that had specific concerns about flooding, and in particular park infrastructure washing downstream in a flood and obstructing water flow at the Eastside Lane bridge.

The original pdf versions of both this document and the list on the following page are also available online at the Antelope Valley RPAC website: <https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-antelope-valley/page/antelope-valley-rpac-meeting-5>

## G: Summaries of public input prepared for October 7 2021 Antelope Valley RPAC meeting - continued

### Plan the Park!

#### Mountain Gate Park plan element lists based on community feedback

Draft 10/6/21

#### Core park elements – included due to broad support

*Well-designed & sustainable trail system for walking and bicycling*

- Branches or loops for different purposes – through route for bikes, walking near the water, etc.

*Access point at Eastside Lane near 395*

- Primarily for walkers and bicyclists
- Set back and buffered and/or screened from Eastside Lane and private parcel

*Natural landscape & river/fisheries improvements*

- Native plantings, shade trees
- Removal of invasive species and revegetation where necessary
- River function & fishery sustainability

#### Other potential improvements: some support + no specific opposition

- Seating along trail – shaded locations and where it could be used for ADA fishing access
- Improvements to ADA fishing platform and adjacent parking to improve function
- Limited new parking for accessibility and new entry points
- Interpretive/educational signage
- Clearer directional signage off 395
- Dog park/fenced area for off leash dogs
- Drinking water – consider feasibility of a well on site
- Put-in/take-out for boats and kayaks
- Inclusion of new channels, ponds if feasible. Water source must be determined (well, non-consumptive use of river water, etc.)
- Disc golf

#### Not included due to lack of support:

- Beach volleyball
- Mini golf
- Skate park
- Bicycle skills course/pump track
- Sprinkler/splash park

#### Not included due to general opposition:

- Camping – particularly car or RV camping
- Loud or large group activities
- Shooting sports
- Motorized/ATV use within the park



## H. Implementation actions by Mono County before plan finalization (2022)

### *Rural Recreation and Tourism Grant application*

As the outcomes from the original public and stakeholder input were being summarized and shared back with the RPAC in October 2021, Mono County staff learned of the opportunity to apply for the State of California's Rural Recreation and Tourism (RRT) grant. This was seen as an important opportunity for the project because the grant was targeted toward rural communities, like Walker-Coleville, that met certain demographic and economic criteria, and did not require match funding. The items that were eligible for funding were also a good fit for the Group A highest priority elements identified in the community survey and meetings, and some funding for pre-construction costs like environmental compliance work could be included in the scope, which addressed a barrier to implementation that many grant programs do not cover. With advice from the RPAC and approval from the County Board of Supervisors, the County applied for this grant in January of 2022. A site plan illustrating the scope of what was included in the application is below.

There was some discussion at the December 2021 and January 2022 RPAC meetings about exactly what could and should be included in the grant application, as the overall conceptual plan for the site (this document) was not yet completed at that time. The advice from the RPAC was that it would be preferable to try to secure funding for some high priority park elements (Group A) and begin making improvements while this RRT grant opportunity was available, rather than waiting for all the more complex Group C elements to be fully vetted with technical experts or community members before proceeding with any parts of the project. The RPAC voted at the January 2022 meeting to support the County's application for the grant. See notes and records from fall-winter 2021-2022 RPAC meetings.

One area of major discussion at the two RPAC meetings that dealt with the scope of the RRT grant was the question of whether to include vehicular parking at the new Eastside Lane access point as part of the grant request. There was recognition in this discussion that inclusion of some parking with the access point had the potential to reduce the impact of unsafe informal parking along Eastside Lane on adjacent property owners and residents, and would be helpful in making any new trail in the north part of the park as accessible as possible. It was included as an element of that application for these reasons, and

this document also proposes a small amount of parking at Eastside Lane primarily for accessibility purposes. However, future action on this topic is contingent on community advice. See Implementation section of main document.

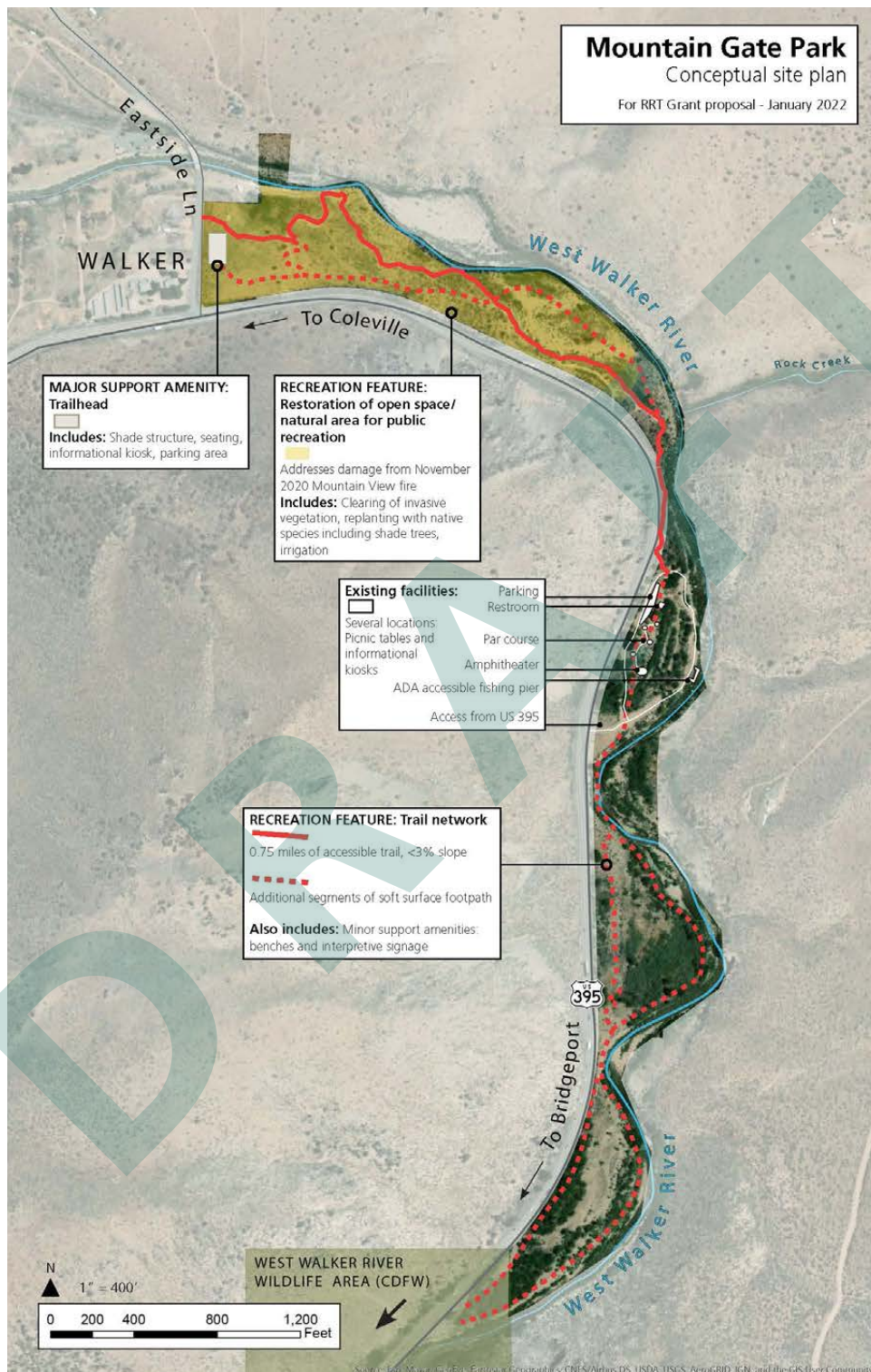
The RRT grant application was ultimately not successful. The awards for the program were announced in August of 2022.

### *Other actions*

In preparation for the RRT grant application and as part of working toward completion of this document the County also:

- Investigated appropriate construction materials and methods for the trail network, and a possible scope for restoration work within the grant time frame. This refinement of these elements can be applicable to future grant applications and/or scoping for contracted services as needed. The application also required development of a preliminary budget which can be adapted for future use.
- Completed an informal site survey to identify a tentative trail route, with the aims of a) providing increased accessibility to the northern end of the site, and b) ensuring trail sustainability and minimizing future maintenance. This included consideration of terrain, slope, potential runoff, and adjacent landownership. This trail alignment was included in the RRT grant application and is now included in this plan.
- Using other County resources, began resource studies and other pre-construction planning work for the scope included in the RRT grant application. Over spring and summer of 2022, a private firm completed a wetlands delineation and cultural and natural resources inventory on site. The resulting report produced identified no resource considerations that would require a significant change to the Group A plan as outlined in the RRT grant application. Elements of the report are referenced in the existing conditions section of this document, and the full document is included in Appendix I.
- Obtained conceptual cost estimates for a well project on site. This was relevant as part of grant scoping because if determined to be feasible it could expand the impact of habitat restoration efforts through more reliable access to water for irrigation, and support possible implementation

## H. Implementation actions by Mono County before plan finalization (2022) - continued



of several proposed Group C elements, including providing drinking water on site, more extensive riparian restoration possibly including channels and ponds, and addition of a developed dog park.

In June of 2022, Matthew Paruolo, who had been leading this planning project in the Sustainable Recreation Coordinator (SRC) role with Mono County

Public Works, left County employment. The SRC position was refilled in October of 2022 by Marcella Rose. In the July – October period, Mono County Community Development managed the ongoing contract for resource surveys on site, but planning efforts including work on this document were otherwise paused.

**DRAFT**

Placeholder for 49 page pdf document.