



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Roads and trails are a key component of public recreation facilities at Trione-Annadel State Park (TASP or park) and are critical to fulfilling the mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks). State Parks is committed to providing the highest-quality trails to accommodate the recreational needs of diverse user groups by planning and developing trails pursuant to the State Parks Trails Policy:

The Department, through a public planning process, will strive to meet the recreational, educational, and interpretation needs of its diverse trail users by developing trails within state park units, consistent with unit classification, general plan directives, cultural and natural resource protection, public safety, accessibility, use compatibility, and other legal and policy mandates. Multi-use trails and trail connectivity with adjacent public trail systems will be considered in the development of trail plans or individual trails.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) is to provide a comprehensive plan for the long-term planning, design, construction, maintenance, and management of the road and trail system within the park. It examines the existing road and trail network, considers current and potential public use, park operations, and the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural resources to ensure recreational road and trail opportunities are made available to their fullest potential while protecting vital resources. This comprehensive plan also considers other regional recreational opportunities and connectivity to nearby public lands. Plan recommendations are informed by extensive public outreach and input. Specifically, this RTMP:

- Proposes new or modified trail connections to improve circulation and connectivity between park areas, enhance user experience, and reduce conflict between user groups;
- Makes determinations for the future adoption or removal and restoration of non-system routes;

- Makes recommendations to reroute, rebuild, or decommission system roads and trails that are unsustainable or have resource impacts;
- Identifies maintenance priorities and ongoing maintenance needs; and
- Identifies improvements and additions to road and trail facilities and amenities, such as trailheads, parking, restrooms, and other visitor serving facilities.

Developing an RTMP is paramount to ensuring that the park's road and trail system fulfills the needs of park users while protecting cultural and natural resources. Parkwide and regional trail system planning is the preferred and most effective method to comprehensively identify road and trail corridors to improve the entire road and trail system and to reduce construction and maintenance costs.



The RTMP considers additional trail-related facilities and amenities, such as trailheads, signage, parking, and restrooms.

1.2 PLANNING NEED

The roads and trails at TASP are the primary recreational opportunity for park visitors. Properly sited, designed, constructed, maintained, and managed roads and trails provide high-quality recreational opportunities and protect sensitive natural and cultural resources by focusing recreational activity on less-sensitive park lands.

The road and trail system at TASP evolved from trails and unpaved roads that were on the property when it was acquired. They were developed to meet the needs of the previous property owners

and may not fully serve the needs of the park or meet current trail standards in the State Parks Trails Handbook. Historical quarry activities and ranching operations within this park created a dense network of informal access routes that have since been adapted into today's trail system. Because these alignments were never engineered to sustainable trail standards, many suffer from erosion, poor drainage, and unstable tread.

The absence of a comprehensive, park-wide road and trail management plan has perpetuated reliance on these legacy routes rather than guiding new, sustainably designed alignments. Compounding the challenge, the State Parks Bay Area District staffing and funding constraints leave limited capacity for the thorough planning, design, and ongoing maintenance needed to ensure a resilient, ecologically sensitive trail network.

The existing legacy trail system also does not provide the full range of trail opportunities and connections that visitors seek. Visitors to TASP value the range of recreational opportunities provided by the trails. However, a substantial number of non-system routes have been created, many by users seeking additional trail opportunities or connections. Many of the non-system routes are highly developed, heavily utilized, and serve as informal access points connecting to adjacent properties. These non-system routes are often not sustainably designed, which may degrade sensitive resources and create safety concerns for visitors.

What are non-system routes?

Non-system routes are unofficial trails that are often user-created or from remnant historic uses. They are sometimes called "social," "volunteer," or "user-created" trails. See Chapter 4, "Designations and Classifications," for more information.

Current challenges also include managing conflicts between different trail uses and balancing recreational uses with protecting the undeveloped feel of the park.



Partner agencies and organizations in the Sonoma County region have pursued land acquisitions and easements adjacent to the park, providing opportunities for trail connectivity, wildlife corridors, and natural and cultural resource protection across jurisdictions.

In addition, TASP is in a wildland-urban interface (WUI), and longer, hotter, drier fire seasons will magnify management issues of the fire regime. Existing urban communities and development along park boundaries present added challenges to park management. The road and trail system must accommodate emergency access and evacuation, as well as administrative access needed for resource management and wildfire fuel reduction.

TASP has an extensive road and trail system with varying conditions and use designations (Figure 1-1). The park also features a high number of non-system routes. The RTMP provides a comprehensive strategy to develop and manage

the road and trail system to address contemporary challenges, provide high-quality recreation opportunities, and protect resources consistent with State Parks mission.

State Parks and many other land management agencies face challenges from the proliferation of non-system routes. State Parks is working to address these issues through planning efforts and projects, like this RTMP. This RTMP addresses issues specific to TASP and is not intended to establish precedent for addressing non-system routes or bike-optimized trails within other units of the state park system. Rather, it serves as a prototype to be monitored for both successes and failures, with the goal of informing and shaping future policies.

TASP is divided into five planning zones that provide structure for parkwide road and trail planning. An overview of the planning zones is shown in Figure 1-2.



TASP has an extensive road and trail system with varying conditions and use designations along with a high number of non-system routes.

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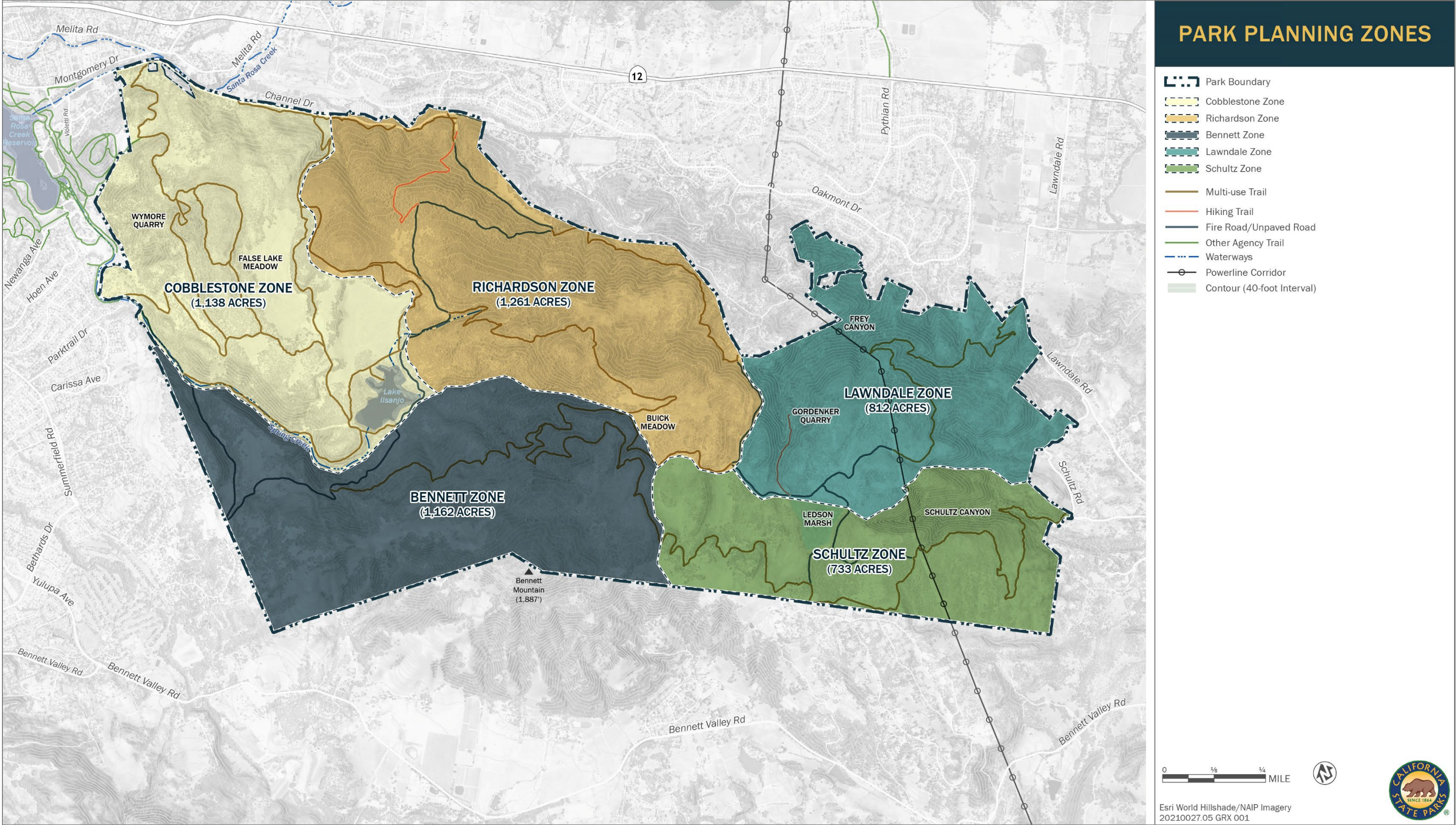
Figure 1-1 Trione-Annadel State Park Existing Conditions



Source: Data received from State Parks in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.



Figure 1-2 Park Planning Zones



Source: Data received from State Parks in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.



TASP is situated within the Valley of the Moon and contains large areas of oak woodlands.

1.3 PARK SETTING

TASP is located 60 miles north of San Francisco in Sonoma County as shown on Figure 3-1. The park sits in the Valley of the Moon, and is surrounded by small communities and suburbs. The park consists of approximately 5,500 acres and is bounded on the north by Melita Road and the community of Rincon Valley, on the east by the town of Kenwood and the City of Santa Rosa, on the south by Los Guillicos, Warm Springs, and Bennett Valley Roads, and on the west by the community of Bennett Valley.

Sonoma County, the northernmost county in the San Francisco Bay Area, is home to approximately half a million residents. TASP, situated near Santa Rosa, serves as a prominent recreational destination due to its accessibility and popularity among area residents. The park boasts one of Northern California's most extensive and renowned multi-use networks. Each month, up to 13,000 individuals visit the park to engage in a variety of recreational activities such as hiking, biking, running, horseback riding, and

birdwatching. With over 45 miles of designated trails, TASP is a major destination for trail users.

The planning zones each have a unique character based on natural resources, topography, and visitation patterns. More detail on each planning zone is provided in Chapter 3, "Park Conditions."

Park History

Different people have used, valued, and influenced the landscape and resources of the park over time. The lands within TASP are part of the larger ancestral territory of the Coastal Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples who used the area for thousands of years before the arrival of European people. Contemporary tribal people maintain traditional ties to the area and continue their stewardship of the land.

The history of TASP includes significant grassroots conservation efforts by residents. Prior to its designation as a state park, the land served as a site for recreational activities such as camping, hunting, and exploration, particularly through scouting programs. Public advocacy efforts were

instrumental in preventing the area from being developed into residential housing. State Parks acquired TASP in 1971, which was then named Annadel State Park.

The significance of community support was reaffirmed during the recession of the late 2000's, when budgetary challenges threatened closure of the park. The community and partner organizations rallied, and Sonoma County Regional Parks took over park operations for a year. In 2013, State Parks resumed operations and three years later the State of California ruled to officially change the name to Trione-Annadel State Park in recognition of Henry Trione's philanthropy and role in establishing the park.

Recreational Uses

TASP provides an easily accessible place for visitors to participate in a range of outdoor experiences in an undeveloped area. The limited facilities and development within the park are a large part of the park's appeal and provide a contrast and refuge from experiences living in an urban environment. The multi-use trails (hike/bike/horse) are the park's primary recreational opportunity and draw visitors seeking a range of trail experiences from mountain biking, hiking, trail running, and horseback riding to wildlife viewing.



Trail uses at TASP include mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

Natural Environment

TASP has a complex mosaic of plant communities, including northern oak and Douglas fir forests and the meadow-woodland complexes. The park also has one of the best examples of a unique Oregon oak/California fescue community in California. Lake Ilsanjo, a 26-acre artificial lake, is the heart of the park. The lake provides a permanent body of water in an otherwise arid landscape for nonmotorized boating and fishing. Ledson Marsh, a 30-acre freshwater wetland, is in the quieter southeast region of the park and supports numerous special-status species.