

# North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve Draft Alternatives for Master Plan Raw Comments Received September 15 – November 18, 2020

## Raw Comments Structure

As a note to readers, these comments are sorted by the way they were submitted, but with no other particular order. They are not edited, except that names and specific addresses embedded in the text are replaced with “Name” or “Address” as appropriate. As presented below they include the entire comment except beginning and closing salutations. Some of the letters may appear to be repeated; this is because multiple commenters submitted the same or similar comments.

## Letters, Emails, and Comment Cards

Hi there! My family votes for Alternative 1. We love this park and use it all the time. My daughters are already planning their thirteenth birthday in January 2022 for one of the new cabins. It is one of their very favorite places.

Thank you for allowing us to comment and vote!

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I can't believe that Sonoma County Parks would allow ANY campfires at wild land parks, including Sonoma Mountain Park. Please reconsider this idea and remove all such from the draft plans!

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I am a heavy user of the regional and other parks and I am grateful for the chance to comment on the future direction of this gem. I hike 20+ miles of trails a week year round, for fitness, meditation, and scenic enjoyment. Furthermore, I live very close to this park and so I have followed its creation closely from the beginning. N. Sonoma Mountain is a gorgeous collection of properties.

I welcome the addition of new trails, both to the summit ranch and within Cooper's Grove. I especially welcome loop trails. While I don't mind sharing with horses and bikes, I feel that fire road width trails are better suited for them than narrow switchback ones. My strongest opinion is that I want to see dogs allowed throughout!! My dog is the reason that I started hiking and quite frankly, I have seldom hiked this nearby park, because he is not welcome there. This, even though I was assured in 2014 that dogs were to be allowed "as soon as the processes can be worked out" and then again in 2017 that the majority of users wanted to see dog access. Sonoma County already lags far behind other nearby counties for dog trail hiking (mostly because of state park prohibitions) and the Regional Parks should

work to balance that out. In fact, I very strongly believe there should be off-leash access to some Regional parks even if not this one. In thousands of miles hiked I have never had an adverse encounter between my dog and anyone/anything else, and I always pack out our waste (though I realize there are lots of "bad humans" in this regard). I also prefer "wild and scenic" trails which are minimally developed and not heavily trodden, with varying grades including steep sections, like what one might find in a national forest wilderness rather than an "engineered" trail with constant 4% grade.

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I noticed that you are taking public comment on the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Master Plan. My comment is to request that dogs be allowed on trails, on leash of course.

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Thx for asking the public's input on the draft plan for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Plan Alternatives. They all look great and show a lot of careful attention to the public's previously expressed wishes. At the peak, I prefer the more natural of the two alternatives with just a rock wall circle showing what's in the view in that direction rather than a fancy compass at the peak. I encourage play areas for kids and group camping/cabin experience possibilities because they facilitate introductions to nature for kids and adults with little previous experience in nature. I'm sure I'll love the trails wherever you decide to put them, but make at least some of them not too steep and offering the occasional view to reward persistence. I look forward to enjoying this wonderful addition to local recreation opportunities. Thx for making it happen.

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I'm writing to congratulate you on a first-rate North Sonoma Mountain Regional Plan public review process given our current (pseudo-)quarantined reality; I'm very impressed with the thoughtful proposals as well as the .pdf slide presentation and the handsome interactive "story map." Wow; great work!

I did a deep dive this evening and, truly, any of the "alternatives" look wonderful to me. I suppose I have a slight preference for Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 (I like the addition of a "walk-in" trail), but it's not a strong preference. I would like to add, however, that I feel strongly that both bike and dog access should be strictly limited to particular trails. I adore dogs and I am an occasional mountain biker (though by no means a die-hard), but I'm also an enthusiastic naturalist and conservationist, and I wouldn't want to see a vital wildlife corridor disrupted by a large increase in two-wheeled and canine traffic. Perhaps the Umbrella Tree Trail (a family favorite of ours – we have boys 5 and 2) and the extension in Alternative 1 can be open to all multi-use purposes, but the rest of the trails that connect to Jack London and skirt the Fairfield Osborn Preserve can be off-limits to bikes and dogs?

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I love this park and I hope we can gain access to the summit.

We all deserve to witness the view from this iconic mountain here in Sonoma County.

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Hello I'm want to know why is says no disc golf on page 10? Any specific reason? Is there a chance to view the area the park will incorporate before the planing takes place ? Thank you Sent from my iPhone

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I would like to plead with the planners to have dog-friendly trails. More than two-miles worth! Better yet, have some off-leash trails.

There are so few places in this beautiful county to hike with your dog.

Especially compared with Marin and other surrounding areas of Northern California.

Please make the step towards a more dog-friendly Sonoma County!

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I am so disappointed to see that all three proposals include dog access.

With almost all Sonoma County Parks allowing dog access, it was such a relief to have this park be dog-free. So sorry this was SoCo parks decision.

(\*I do note that dogs won't have "full access" to the property, but from yearsof experience in SoCo parks, if you allow dogs in any part of the park, somedog owners will take it as an opportunity to venture outside the boundaries. I've already encountered multiple dog owners in N. Sonoma Mt. RP and that's with a "no dogs" rule in place.)

As a Sonoma County veteran with a PTSD diagnosis, it was one of very fewSoCo Regional parks for me to avoid dog interactions and I will miss it.

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Sorry,

I accidentally hit send on my comment card and I wasn't through!

We really need to change camping and park use culture to get away from open fires of any kind at any time. We are having FAR TOO MANY wildfire and air quality issues and this is going to continue and get worse. It is time to get away from the mode of thinking that fires are part of camping or park use. Parks departments need to take the lead on this. I really wish you would stop allowing campfires in county parks campgrounds at all and you need to stop selling firewood in the campgrounds. Burning wood is also VERY un-environmental.

I personally have become sensitized to wood smoke from repeated exposure since the wildfires of 2017. It is miserable for me to try and camp in campgrounds anymore with everyone burning wood. Most people are idiots when it comes to campfires anyway.

The other thing I want to point out is that Regional Parks suffers from a chronic lack of staffing. You simply don't have the staff to patrol, educate, maintain and housekeep what we already have. We don't need anymore high-use, unmaintained facilities. Covid has made this far worse. Why would you want to put in a group campground no one can use? And may never be able to safely use.

I would love to be able to take my leashed dog to the park because Covid has made it impossible for me to get anyone to come into my house to take care of her while I am gone enjoying the park. Thank you,

Begin forwarded message:

**Subject: North Sonoma Mountain comment card**

I hope this is acceptable as a comment card. I have no way to print it and couldn't figure out how to type into it or download it.

My preference would be alternative 3. Less development and NO CAMPFIREs OR BBQ's OF ANY KIND-RANGER OR OTHERWISE!!!! I don't want to see any camping at all preferably.

I would like to see dogs on leash allowed on at least some trails.

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Hi-- I have attached my comment card, but not sure you can read it. I prefer Alternative 3, but with the summit seating included. I like the simpler seating option without the compass. Very excited about these proposed enhancements. I also prefer that bikes and horses be restricted. Both activities have a large negative impact on the trail conditions. I find it odd that dog owners are expected to clean up after their animals but horse owners are not. Thank you,

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I am responding to an article in the Press Democrat requesting public comment on the proposed expansion of North Sonoma Mountain park.

I am a resident of Rohnert Park and visit many of the County parks in the area on an almost daily basis, especially Annadel, Crane Creek and North Sonoma Mountain. I utilize them for hiking, running and also mountain biking.

There is frequently resistance to access for mountain bikers because they are viewed as disruptive or likely to damage the trails. However, I would encourage you to support and maintain access for mountain bikers. Mountain bikers are numerous and supportive of the local park system and including access for them will broaden the support for the entire system. Given the remote and rugged nature of the terrain in this area mountain bikers are a community well suited to explore and utilize this area in way that foot visitors may not in large numbers.

It is my fervent hope that Sonoma parks remain open and accessible to all visitors and that we do not create a segregated and diminished system as exemplified by Marin County park managers.

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What is your plan to keep hikers off surrounding private property? Despite multiple no trespassing signs visitors to the park continue to trespass onto surrounding private lands with no regard for the people that live there, this includes cutting fences to ride mountain bikes. How many signs will you be putting up to ensure people will not attempt to access private lands? Who should be contacted when trespassers are found that originate in the park? Thanks in advance for responding to my concerns about the park.

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I looked through the PDF—a little too much detail for me. But I just wanted to voice my enthusiastic support for adding camping and summit access to this beautiful park.

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I'm supportive of most of the proposed additions and changes, including allowing dogs. I am not supportive of allowing bicycles on trails. There are many trails in Sonoma and Napa county that allow bicycles on trails. From my experience in Annandale, it is very dangerous for hikers and equestrians to share trails with mountain bikers. Many of the bikers travel at high speeds on downward inclines, which makes it unsafe for anyone else or the biker. Many hikers like myself, love the calm and ambiance of spending hours in the forest. Worrying about bicyclists takes away from that experience.

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I wanted to review and comment on the plan you have put forward for the Regional Park and Open Space Preserve.

In addition to the powerpoint document that I found, is there a more detailed written plan that goes along with that powerpoint presentation that is available to the public?

Thank you!

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I led several school groups to this park and would strongly appreciate having it opened up to leashed dogs. I am always looking for a new trails to walk my two great pyrenees who are very well behaved.

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I have been hiking and riding N Sonoma Regional Park for several years. I believe it would benefit the public to have access to the summit as well as expand access to leashed dogs.

I am concerned about any increased traffic on Sonoma mountain road. This is a treacherous, one lane road in many places. For this reason I believe creating campsites would be a mistake.

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Hello Karen and thank you for leading the planning effort for North Sonoma Mtn.

**Name** and I are excited to learn more about the plans.

Can you send me copies of each proposed plan or a link where I can download them?

I'm responding to an article looking for feedback on our new-ish North Sonoma Mtn Park.

Basically our feedback is: does every trail have to be dog friendly? Our experience has been that "no dogs" means we see dogs on a leash every few 10ths of a mile, and "leash" means many dogs and no leash. Please, let us hike without someone else's favorite pet barking, biting, and scaring off all other wildlife.

Thinking of getting a Komodo dragon as a hiking pet...

There is really no enforcement, so all we really can expect is a sign or two saying that dogs aren't, allowed, but it would be appreciated.

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I just received the mailer on the comment period on the North Sonoma Trail. This is the first that I have seen of this process and was surprised that I wasn't better informed earlier.

As this is of such importance to the homeowners on Coopers Grove, I would like to get together with you personally to better understand what is being considered to allow us to get a better idea as to how to respond. At first read, I'm very surprised that there is the consideration of overnight stays, BBQs and moderated campfires.

Please let me know when and how we might get together with you. Socially distancing is given in such a meeting and we are happy to conduct the meeting outdoors. Having the participation of any of your colleagues is also welcome.

Thanks for your attention.

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I have looked over the plans for North Sonoma Mountain. I am excited to one day be able to hike to the top of the mountain!

Here are some comments:

I am in favor of camping. More camping opportunities in Sonoma County make it easier to go camping without driving long distances and thereby adding CO2 to the atmosphere.

I am in favor of more short trails near the trailhead. These will likely appeal to people that are unable or unwilling to hike long distances, but are not so limited that they require ADA accessible trails. This population deserves to enjoy our county parks.

I am disappointed that there does not appear to be a bike-legal connection to bike-legal trails in Jack London. I realize that this is not entirely under your control but the county trails could be realigned so that the part of the Jack London trails that need to be redesignated/redesigned is minimal. In my experience, bikes are already using the part of the existing trail that is not bike legal (though why it isn't

legal is somewhat mysterious to me because it is relatively flat and wide). Let's not set up a situation where usually law abiding citizens become scofflaws. Note that I do not currently own a mountain bike.

I would like the trails to be open to on-leash dogs.

Thanks for your consideration.

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RE: Sonoma Mountain Trail.

I was just up on Sonoma Mtn today as I do weekly for years. Today I hiked into Jack London. I would prefer that the park is not open to dogs as to keep the natural habitat unmolested and clean. I have observed people bringing into the park ignoring post signs. They let them loose both in the parking lot and on the trail. I am not looking forward to little blue doggie poop bags littering the trail. I have been monitoring a quail nesting area that is fairly close to the trail and dogs would certainly find it. My hobby is animal tracking and studying scat. I go out with Jim Sullivan and have tracked with Meghan Walla-Murphy on the coast on in high desert down south.

Keep dogs out of Sonoma Mountain Park,

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Please don't allow dogs on the trail. People don't really pick up the poop. Dogs passing each other get aggressive often. The barking disrupts the tranquility of a hike. I've been jumped on by happy dogs that just want to be friends. But I don't want to be jumped on and scratched. The majority of us hikers don't bring our dogs for a reason. The perhaps vocal minority that want dogs to be allowed, shouldn't ruin the enjoyment of the rest of us.

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First let me say that when I went to the maps I got a warning from my computer security program that the sites were dangerous and to be avoided. I rarely get such a message.

So far as input on the park goes I am not a fan of cabins in the park nor do I like the idea of dogs in the park(s). People seem to have a tendency to unleash their dogs if they are welcome in my experience. We all know about the doggy poop bags found everywhere, little blue bags filled with doggie do that the owners do not take out with them. For these reasons I am vehemently opposed to dogs.

This is a beautiful park, I have visited many times and always enjoyed the quiet and the views. Excellent job on the switchbacks too, they make the trudge to the top easy.

Best wishes on adding new trails and acreage but please limit the camping to camping and not cabins and leave the dogs at home.

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I tried accessing the digital version on 2 different browsers and obtained this message:



### Your connection is not private

Attackers might be trying to steal your information from **www.sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com** (for example, passwords, messages, or credit cards). [Learn more](#)

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☐ Help improve security on the web for everyone by sending [URLs of some pages you visit, limited system information, and some page content](#) to Google. [Privacy policy](#)

Advanced

Back to safety

Any way to improve the security of that site for us as users??

Please send me an electronic or hard copy.

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I posted this in the topic on Facebook but have copied it here:

In Annadel there are several trails designated as multi-use that have been utterly destroyed by mountain bikes and are no longer suitable for walking/hiking. The Sonoma Mountain trails currently are not in such bad shape but it's only a matter of time. I'd like to see trails dedicated either for hikers or bikers, and fewer multi-use trails. As a hiker, I wouldn't be sorry to give up a trail for the exclusive use of bikes, but in return I'd like to see other trails repaired and made safe and suitable for hiking only. No doubt bikers would prefer not to have to dodge hikers on trails, and I'd rather not have to pick through loose stones, exposed roots, and narrow gullies eroded by bikes in trails that should be smooth.

Thank you!

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I want mountain bike access from North Sonoma Mtn Regional Park to Jack London -- do not close the short piece of trail between the two parks to mountain bikes. Allow mountain bikes to the top of Sonoma Mountain along with the Hikers. Horses and dogs on the trail are fine with me.

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Attached is my comment card regarding the new regional park plan. When I clicked back and forth between the slides presentation and the card, it greatly reduced my font size and would not allow me to edit. I retyped it twice and did not want to do that a third time. Here are my comments if you can't enlarge the font on your end and they're too difficult to read:

I would like to see trails that allow dogs. Only 2 miles with dogs allowed seems very limiting and I would be unlikely to visit this park. The surrounding state parks do not allow dogs and this is part of the reason I purchase a regional parks pass each year, so that I can hike with my dog. I understand the “no dog” rule along the Sonoma Coast where Snowy Plovers nest, but without logical environmental reasoning, there should be more trails open to dogs on leash.

I would prefer no bikes, but am open to the idea of some trails being “bike only” and some being “pedestrian only”. I am indifferent to horses, but am concerned about erosion issues due to both bike tires and hoof prints. Have erosion issues been taken into consideration for each trail, depending on the slope and terrain?

The natural play area is a wonderful concept and unlike anything else in our county (that I’m aware of).

For the Summit Knoll (J), I actually prefer a combination of the two plans. I prefer most parts of Alternative 1, but my favorite detail is the landmark profile map engraved into the seat of stone benches in alternative 2. Could these two be combined to include both the compass rose, decomposed granite, and map bench detail?

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I'm scanning my comments about this park and it's exciting to see all the potential improvements that may be made in the future.

I have lived in Santa Rosa for over 20 years and I walk daily with my dogs in the wonderful regional parks. Unfortunately I have only been able to explore North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park a few times, because dogs are not permitted there. I would hope in the future that there will be a few trails in this park where you can bring your dog – Thank you! (Also I like Alternative #1 the best)

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Thanks for developing trails at North Sonoma Mtn - a beautiful public resource.

Please include access to trail system equitably, for all trail users, including hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians.

No individual group of these park users should be excluded nor limited inequitably in the area of trails they may utilize.

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It's exciting to see your team's progress on North Sonoma Mountain! It looks like it will have some beautiful trails.

Just curious if Sonoma County is designing the park improvements in-house or whether the County is working with an outside designer or planning on doing so as the project nears construction next spring?

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Thank you for this information. It's helpful to better understand the process.

I live on Sonoma Mountain and one of our property's corner touches a corner of Jacob's ranch, I have concerns about overnight camping and potential campfires (even if they are managed by rangers). It is also not unprecedented that a campfire stove has created a wildfire. We have had so many fires in close proximity of the mountain over the last four years and one just a few weeks ago on the mountain about a mile (as the crow flies) from Jacob's ranch. I know many of the people on the mountain are quite concerned about fire safety.

While many of us on the mountain do a lot of work to reduce vegetation load and limb up trees, I would like to have a better understanding of how the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park will be addressing our new normal of wildfires with vegetation management and the types of activities permitted in the Park. Have vegetation management activities expanded with ever increasing wildfire dangers? Are activities permitted in parks risk-assessed based on the type of landscape (grasslands/forest versus shoreline) and the proximity to populations of people? At this time, I personally don't believe that overnight camping should be permitted during wildfire season (and especially red flag warning days) in an area that is tinder dry and in close proximity to populations of people. I believe a park on the shoreline is totally different — less vegetation, fewer people, the ocean as a backstop for any fire.

It isn't transparent to me how much funding will be applied to vegetation management and efforts to improve fire resiliency in this park. I hope that is detailed in the final plan that will be presented to the public. I have never been on the Fairfield Osborn Preserve, but when I have driven by, the first thoughts that go through my mind are: the vegetation is incredibly dense, it doesn't look like it is being maintained, and could firefighters even have a chance of fighting a fire in there. I think about how many people live in close proximity of that preserve and how many might have difficulty escaping if there was a fast moving fire through that preserve. When I look at the Sonoma County Park System website, I see tall, golden grasses which are beautiful. But, I wonder what activities the park system does to reduce the fire load of those grasslands. The fire that occurred a few weeks ago on Sonoma Mountain was on a grazed property. I am sure I would have been more dramatic had the property not been grazed.

I will be writing a more formal comment letter to you with these thoughts as a backdrop. If you could direct me to any public places where the Sonoma Park system details how it approaches fire management and how it risk assesses activities permitted in parks, I would appreciate it. So far, I haven't been able to find much, but perhaps I am missing something.

All this being said, I know how hard it is to put together a plan like this and applaud you and your team for the work you have done to piece together this iconic landscape. I am on the board of the Nature Conservancy of CA and I appreciate the challenges, time and effort to put together something like this. I would just like to make sure the plan incorporates the backdrop of our new wildfire regime and considers the safety of the community surrounding the park and those who use it.

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i read the article in the Press Democrat regarding the park proposal. is there a way to look at the plans on line?

the article said there was a way but did not print it.

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Please include as much dog friendly trails as possible.

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I would love to see more trails that allow dogs to hike as well. There are not many options for longer dog hikes in Sonoma County and this seems like a great park to allow for dogs. I also support bike access on the trails and creating trail loops when possible.

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I do NOT favor any type of overnight facilities at Sonoma Mountain Park. It needs to be protected and maintained in its purest form, preserving natural, untouched beauty for generations to come. Do NOT overdue a good thing. There are plenty of other beautiful parks in the area which provide lodging/camping. The more structures that are built, with their accompanying uses, the more impediment there is to natural landscape, which in the end results in destruction of that rarest entity of all, the natural beauty of our Sonoma County landscape. Please share this input with all decision makers.

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Hi, when I try to access your maps etc as linked on the Press Democrat site, using a Chrome browser, they come up as lacking https security - basic stuff. It seems there is a simple error somewhere, I get

"This server could not prove that it is [www.sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com](http://www.sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com); its security certificate is from \*.[maps.arcgis.com](http://maps.arcgis.com). This may be caused by a misconfiguration or an attacker intercepting your connection."

I imagine many potential users will be unable to access, or unwilling. As leader of the Oakmont Hiking Club I'm really interested to see what you have there. Thanks - Martin Johns

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What is best route coming from Petaluma, to access park for horse trailers ? Also, is there designated trailer parking? Thank you

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I have been coming to this park several times a week since it opened. I have enjoyed it from the early morning to almost sunset. I have become familiar with 3 coyotes that hunt together, a herd of young bucks who graze under the canopy of bay and oak at about 900ft elevation, the growing presence of turkeys, and the ever elusive fox and bobcat. It is my second home and love every inch of it!

I would be honored to be kept informed of the evolution of this magnificent place.

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Please no camp fires, that would be an invitation for disaster for sure

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As a Bennett Valley resident and land owner I want to express my concern and outrage at the concept of allowing campfires in the wilderness areas surrounding Bennett Valley, especially in light of the tinderbox the surrounding hills have become.

Please include me as vehemently opposed to the idea of allowing people to start fires of any kind in the open space(s) areas such as Sonoma Mountain or any other areas being considered.

Thank you, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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In light of the recent fires, I would strongly urge that fire-resistance be built into any new structures, and that constructions be of stone rather than wood wherever possible. There is a lot of talk about adapting to climate change, wildfires in our case, and if public places don't do it, then who will?

Building to outlast fires will increase cost, which to me makes Alternative 3 the most attractive because it has the lowest cost. The extra features in the other alternatives can be added over time. It is important to just get started rather than wait for full funding for the most full-featured options.

As a hiker, my primary desires are (a) a good trail to the Summit Knoll, and (b) a once-daily shuttle from Jack London Park that takes reservations and will wait for no-shows for 15 min or so. The hike from North Sonoma Mt to Jack London and back is too much vertical for most of our hiking club (mostly retirees).

I appreciate the aggressive timing of the plan, and I hope it can be kept to. We live near Taylor Mt Park and have been waiting for far too long for progress on the trail system there. We don't want to see a repeat of that delay in this case.

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Would love the park to be dog friendly. I love being able to bring my dog on hikes with me!

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## Comments on Plans for North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park

I am providing general comments based upon a preliminary review of the maps shown on-line.

1. Where is a written description of the proposed alternatives? This does not appear to be well spelled out. What are the actual alternatives?

As I see it, it is either build the trails or not build, allow camping or don't allow camping, build additional facilities like restrooms and parking, or not? If there is more to this, please explain this in a way that is obvious to the general public.

2. As to camping, Sonoma Mountain has not had a significant wildfire burn for more than 75 years. Some fire tried to ignite a limited area in 2017, but was put out by residents and others on Sonoma Mountain Road. There is so much brush up there and down wood, and many residences. Camping (even without open fires) is a disaster waiting to happen. And I note that the exception for large groups is available. Why, and why would you allow open fires for

anyone? Once you allow camping, there will be people smoking, drinking, and being careless. This is a big mistake, especially in today's climate change conditions. Please note, I am a resident of Rohnert Park. I do not live on the mountain, but I witnessed wildfire encroachment into the outskirts of Rohnert Park in 2017. Some sections of Rohnert Park were evacuated. But for the quick action by fire personnel, they kept the fire from encroaching into the city. Is the County willing to take on the liability for "accidental" or intentional fires by campers?

Also, why would you build campsites or other buildings next to a wetlands/pond as shown on the Jacob's Ranch map. It appears there is proposed building

2. Dogs: While I only saw two spots on the maps with a designated dog trail, I am not clear if that is it or not. They should not be allowed on steep switchback trails, nor single track trails where there are hikers, etc. I do not care to encounter dogs up close to me. I am an avid walker/hiker and have often walked/hiked in the State and Regional parks in this county. I have also been a foot patrol volunteer for the State Parks. My concern with dogs on most of the trails in North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park is for those irresponsible dog owners who don't keep their dogs on the leash, and believe their dog is well-behaved and won't bother anyone. This is not the case, almost daily on my walks/hikes I encounter such dogs where the owner is distracted or discourteous and these dogs run loose. I have been nearly jumped on and attacked by pit bulls, german shepards, mixed breeds, etc. I am over 65 and I am allergic to dogs and poison oak. If you are going to allow dogs in this park, I highly recommend that they be limited to the road into the park, and a small area. On the narrow switchback trails that I have hiked in this park, there is not room for dogs and their owners to pass without close proximity to one another and the dog. And I strongly recommend that you have people patrolling the parks to make sure recalcitrant dog owners are made aware of the rules, with fines for repeat offenders. Also, please provide ample signage, reminders and baggies for dog poop management by the owners.

Another concern for dogs in this park, is the fact that there is abundant wildlife such as mountain lions, raccoons, bobcats, deer, coyotes, etc. As with Jack London State Park to the east, the wildlife can be threatened and their habitat impacted by the scent of dogs, their marking of vegetation, barking, and those dogs that chase the wildlife when off leash. Also, dogs should not be allowed for overnight camping for the reasons outlined above, and disturbance to other campers due to barking, contact, etc. Again, I recommend a limited area and only day use for dog access.

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Subject: Sonoma Mountain North Plan Comment

Message: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan. I am very fond of the park, hike there biweekly and have the privilege of sponsoring a memorial bench there.

Alternative 3 appears to be the most supportive of expanding the trail system for hikers and preserving the space for habitat restoration and wildlife. Keeping this park focused on providing longer hiking trails and opportunities for birding and wildlife observation would be lovely.

I do see plans for trails that allow dogs. I love that there are no dogs allowed at the park currently, although I regularly see folks with dogs on the trail. I advocate for no dogs in the park since there are

ample locations for people to bring their dogs in other parks and they have a negative effect on the hiking experience and wildlife.

Having walk in campsites with no group camping or cabins seems to be the least intrusive option while still allowing camping access.

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Subject: Sonoma Mountain

Message: I saw a conversation on Next Door regarding allowing camping and campfires on Sonoma Mountain.

My questions are if allowed, how is it going to be managed, regulated. If camping is allowed, and campfires are not, there is always going to be someone that will build a fire.

There have been two incidences of fires being started due to a baby gender reveal. People aren't thinking of the dangers to the environment, peoples safety, homes, lives or the surrounding areas.

In my humble opinion, camping and campfires should not be allowed.

I don't believe the area could be monitored sufficiently to protect the area and puts the area and lives at risk.

If a fires starts you can not go back. Please say no to camping and campfires. The county has been through enough with fires. We do not need to ask for trouble!

Ask yourself if it was in your backyard would you want that kind of a risk?

I hope the safety and will being of the environment and the public it kept in the forefront when the decision is made.

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My name is **Name** and I manage cattle on Sonoma Mountain, and, more specifically, property under development you call Sonoma Mountain Ranch (SMR). I'm excited for the public to be able to have access to such a beautiful place because through a personal relationship with the land and experience people are willing to further preserve and protect our environment. Along with that, in my opinion, is the need for balance. We need access for people, but we also need to preserve the critical and vital role of Sonoma Mountain Ranch as a habitat corridor critical pathway to the south of the Mayacama range.

My feedback is organized around three critical points, maintaining as much as possible this unique and critical wildlife corridor, reducing the fire danger, and being good neighbors.

### Wildlife Corridor and Impacts

Due to the fact that we also manage Taylor Mountain, I feel I have a unique window into the actual reality of the impact of trails on the movements of wildlife across our public parks. Taylor Mountain can be thought of as having a northern, a central, and a southern section. All of the trails are in the central section of Taylor Mountain. What myself and our team has witnessed over the last few years is that the

activity of wildlife in the northern and southern sections of the park is exponentially higher than in the central part of the park where there are trails. There are countless tracks and signs of Mountain Lions in the North of the park and some in the south of the park as well. I have only seen tracks and signs in a few areas in the center of the park where they cross the shortest distance of grassland possible linking woodland drainages to commuter routes.

As we both know, there have been Black bear sightings in the northern section of the Park. The importance of that cannot be overstated. There are resident coyotes that den in the north of the park. I have never seen that specific pack cross the boundary of Kawana creek into the heavily used central section of the park. We have seen numerous bobcats north and south, but not in the central part of the park. I bring this up as on the ground observation about the impact and location of trails, their users, and their off-leash dogs. It is going to be very interesting to see how the expansion of trails into the North and South of the park affect the behaviors, populations of wildlife in Taylor mountain.

Taylor has the current benefit of having trails only throughout half of the park. The SMR has a loop trail that covers the majority of the park. There is no doubt in my mind this will greatly affect the movements, behaviors, and use of the land. There has been a lot of interesting new research into the impacts of human disturbance on elk calving and reproductive rates of animals that are consistently disturbed during key periods of their “parenting period”[1]

In light of the obvious impact of human activity on SMR, my opinion is that alternative 3, which has the least amount of trails, will be the best option considering the constraints. A single loop, without multiple spurs and double loops coming off of it, will be much less impactful than alternatives one or two.

The least amount of infrastructure on-site, including developed campsites and permanent features, will, in my opinion, allow for more intact movement and residency of the wildlife that has developed habitual patterns on SMR.

Additionally, of grave concern, will be people who, undoubtedly illegally, bring dogs onto Sonoma Mountain Ranch past the no dog trail portion. As we all know, a large percentage of people do not follow the rules in the park. Giving dog access around the heavy use areas of the lower part of the park makes a lot of sense. The key will be the design decisions of signage and behaviors of the park staff to create both formal enforcement and informal social controls. Dogs are massively disruptive to animal movement patterns on landscapes.[2] Not only do they actively deter when onsite, their consistent markings and scents alter movements of wildlife across landscapes as they indicate a strong predator presence.

My request is two-fold as it relates to mitigating dog impact.

1) Create numerous signage positions explaining the effects of dogs on wildlife and why there are no dogs allowed past certain points in the trail. Explain that, even though they do not see the impact, dogs are really hurting the wildlife populations. I would also encourage a park ranger phone number to call in case people see others breaking this rule. A phone number might lead to further prank calls and problems. However, having witnessed the behavior of park users at Taylor Mountain, their lack of fear of enforcement means 20% of the users let their dogs off-leash because there are no ramifications.

2) Signage is key, but active enforcement and ticketing are also requested. I understand rangers do not like to issue citations and resources do not allow for a lot of non-essential activities. However, if the

park decides to not prioritize enforcement on this issue people will disregard the rules and negatively impact a critical wildlife corridor. Choosing to not give the rangers the resources (time) to enforce, in my opinion, is choosing to be permissive to impacts on these communities we are about to drastically alter.

### Fire Concern and Mitigation

As someone who lives on Sonoma Mountain and manages a large portion of the landscape the increased risk of fire danger with increased use is of serious concern. Once again, I am in full support of community access. However, asking what actions we can take to decrease the risk of fire is extremely important. Alternative 3 has the fewest number of campsites and fewest permitted fire options which are undoubtedly the safest for Sonoma County from a fire risk perspective. The reality of statistics is, the more people you have, the greater the risk for anything. Increased users bring with them lighters, cigarettes, and, if camping, at the very least butane powered camp stoves. I personally believe that, even if only camp stoves are allowed, it is only a matter of time before a fire breaks out on Sonoma Mountain.

My request in mitigating fire concerns:

- 1) Absolutely no campfires or stoves permitted August through October. Permits which include instructions about what to do if the situation gets out of hand should be required all other times of the year. Also clearly placed and serviced and maintained fire fighting equipment available to deal with a small scale outbreak.

### Being Neighborly

As someone who looks at maps for a living and manages various property boundaries and trespassers, I can say that it is very challenging for the average person to delineate property lines. Given that there is a border with three private property holders on Sonoma Mountain Ranch, active and ubiquitous signage and enforcement of violations are going to be key to keep a good relationship with the neighbors. Being extremely proactive on the signage and education as well as on the enforcement front will pay off huge dividends down the line in terms of neighborly relations. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Additionally, people will almost certainly try to illegally access the park on Sonoma Mountain Road. This is going to be a consistent and serious issue for the neighborhood. Illegally double-parked cars at the end of the road are going to present a road hazard and often create impassible traffic conditions for extremely large vehicles that go up to the top of the mountain. People look at their parking jobs relative to passenger vehicles being able to get by on the road, but they rarely think about what happens when a 75000-pound truck is trying to pass another 75000-pound truck, which is a common occurrence at the top of the mountain. Actively managing the situation and giving the local property owners the option to call towing companies will be key to maintaining relations.

In summary, my requests in regard to all of the above points are as follows:

- 1) Copious amounts of signage along private property boundaries. Understanding that, over time, some signs will fall down or be cut off so having more than is needed is important for the long-term efficacy of the signage,
- 2) Giving each private property owner a plan for how to handle trespassers and phone numbers to call as well as what can be expected as far as enforcement when they do call. The protocol I recommend



is to get back in touch with the neighbors to let them know what happened with the situation after resolution.

3) Having an extremely strong signage presence around the illegality of parking at the end of Sonoma Mountain Road and an active towing enforcement program in order to protect the physical safety of those trying to access the neighboring properties with large vehicles.

We are excited about the public having the opportunity to further connect with the place and become better stewards. All plans come with constraints and negative externalities. How we choose to plan and delegate resources to balance and mitigate problematic behavior will determine the outcomes. As with all things, education is key and how we choose to convey that information to the public will be either more or less effective. My hope is that through minimal trail design, reduced camping footprints, and active dog management we can preserve as much of the wildlife corridor as possible. Additionally, through signage, enforcement, and neighbor communications, I hope we can maintain good relationships with our neighbors through these changes. Thank you for taking the time to consider my feedback and concerns. I am happy to be part of any group or project that is actively seeking solutions to any of the aforementioned problems mentioned above.

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We are District 2 residents and addressing this email to all Sonoma County Supervisors to note our opposition to the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve (NSMRP) Master Plan Project in its entirety. In July 2018, the Sonoma Mtn. Rd. residents requested the parks department to set up a meeting with us as a group, park department staff, and a Cal Fire representative. The purpose was to determine what would be done to protect our properties from increased fire risk due to planned changes at the NSMRP. Our request was ignored. This is why we are addressing our concerns to you rather than to the parks department.

The area around Bennett Valley from Hood and Sugarloaf parks to the Sonoma Mountain summit is a tier two high hazard fire zone. We attended the park department's community workshop for this plan on 4-27-17, and we and other local residents as a group had subsequent meetings with the parks department over the next 3 months. Our objection to the plan from the start was that overnight camping anywhere in the park and opening its Sonoma Mountain Ranch property at the remote summit is not appropriate given deficient road access for quick delivery of fire suppression equipment to the top of Sonoma Mountain where we live.

What we got two weeks ago was a planning document that will introduce campfires, BBQ's and overnight camping. The extent of fire suppression plans in this document is a statement noting that "group camping area BBQ's and the ranger-led campfire are in locations with nearby water source." The wildfires that start in a remote rural area, like the one we live in, are not extinguished by fire trucks and storage tanks. At best, they may protect nearby structures provided that there is enough manpower and equipment, and that's it.

As part of planning in a tier two zone it is imperative that the parks department create what-if scenarios to model fire ignition in this project area, the speed and direction of fire spread, where cuts and backfires could be made to protect private property near it, and what type of fire suppression could be delivered and how fast. Sonoma Mountain has rocky terrain with steep slopes (0.2 slope on the park property from Jacobs Ranch to the summit), dense forest of oak and bay, and significant areas of grass land that are not mowed or grazed. A fire containment plan needs to be prepared by the parks department and be reviewed by Cal Fire for sufficiency. The absence of a credible fire plan is a critical deficiency that needs to be immediately addressed with the parks department by the Supervisors prior to the development of a Preferred Draft Plan in the fourth quarter of 2020.

The presumption in this planning document is that a fire started by camping activity or access to the remote mountain top by potentially impaired visitors is not a material risk, and nearby residents should not worry because visitors will be supervised by rangers. NSMRP is very large and we cannot assume that a ranger will be trailing every visitor to ensure fire safety, especially at night.

Much has changed since the April 2017 community workshop planning on this project. The 2017, 2018 and 2020 fires, and the present limits on available manpower to fight them attest to this. The Supervisors need to insist that the park department take a common sense approach that considers the difficulty in putting out the recent fires when planning changes to NSMRP. We look forward to receiving a response to our legitimate concerns that we have addressed here.

Please consider this our response to the park's draft plan alternatives.

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As someone who lost their home in Glen Ellen in the 2017 fires, I am absolutely against open fires of any sort in campgrounds.

I like the idea of a group camp and cabins. There should be an indoor kitchen with a solar powered induction stove and possibly microwave. Much safer and much better for the world in general. Keep it small.

I really like the idea of putting the circle with the maps on top rather than the compass.

The rest of the presentation is really hard to follow on an iphone which is all I have. (Did I mention we lost everything in the fire? ☺).

So I can't give more specifics, but please keep it small, simple, emissions free and absolutely no fire, not even cigarettes allowed. If people want campfires, they can go have them on the beach or elsewhere, where it is safe.

Thank you!

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As a resident on Sonoma Mountain Road i am strongly opposed to the proposed planning of camping/campfires at the North Regional Park. The park is small and located in a very dry tinder area

that has not burned in a long, long time. The amount of fuel vegetation within the park does not make it ideal for campfires. On red flag warning days Sonoma Mountain is closely watched by local fire personnel as well as the residents. 2017 Sonoma Mountain came within yards of burning during the Nun's fire and with the aid of San Francisco fire fighters, Gold Ridge fire fighters and locals assisting with putting out hotspots (including us) we avoided what could have been a major loss of structures. Very stressful living up here on hot windy days and with La Nina on the horizon I am asking that County Parks reconsider plans to add camping/campfires in the park.

One improvement to the park that would benefit annual park pass supporters like myself is to allow dogs within the park.

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In my previous email, I neglected to choose from the three options. My choice would be option 3.

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I feel there should be a section that allows backpackers within the park. It's a way to be able to immerse ourselves in our local public lands and feel safe being close to home. In doing so it can open more opportunities for other parks to possibly do the same and increase the public's interactions with nature. Including what we have been going through as a community and country with covid-19 we now more than ever need refuge in our parks.

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Please be VERY generous about permitting dogs on leash. Our regional parks are crucial resources for dog-owners for spending time out of doors in nature (and not walking sidewalks and streets), and getting exercise with our dog companions. Dogs, horses, people and bikes currently co-exist at the Regional park in Glen Ellen, and it's the only substantial park near the town of Sonoma (Maxwell is very small, plus there is a homeless issue there) for hiking with our dogs.

Thank you!

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I recently became familiar with the proposed plans for North Sonoma Mountain Park, and would like to provide some initial feedback.

I feel like this should go without saying, but sometimes those are the things that really do need to be said: Please, do not open that space to ANY activity that could invite flame to the park.

- \* NO open fires - ranger led or not.

- \* NO BBQ space for day-use areas

- \* NO camping (even if fires are not allowed for camping, people WILL)

If we haven't learned by now that we live in the middle of a tinder box, then we're doomed. The last thing we need is to invite outsiders who have no clue what 99% ignition rates really mean, and how crazy dangerous even a small flame can become in a matter of minutes.

In the 3 years we've lived here in Glen Ellen, we've been evacuated twice, with fire ravaging our community in 2017 and only a few gusts of wind away from doing it again this year.

PLEASE don't contribute to burning down our community.

---

I've lived here on Sonoma Mountain since 1964 and was at the meeting when the Jacobs property was given to you for a preserve and hiking. There would have been an uproar if camping fires were mentioned.

As one Nexdoor reader put it -- how can you even think of allowing fires in our area in 2020 with all the fires and so many homes burned.

I don't want to be left homeless.

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Would you please put me on an email list for notice of all hearings or other matters concerning the plans for this park.

What is the best way to communicate to you (and others) our responses to proposals? We live right across the street from the park on Sonoma Mountain Road.

We are definitely against any camping and certainly against any campfires. This is a park for hiking in a lovely and secluded way. Not for tents and fires. It is also in a fire zone 2 area.

Thank you.

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Please explain how this plan complies with CEQA.

Is it considered a CEQA document, is there a separate CEQA document, or does CEQA compliance come at a later stage?

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I am a supporter and frequent user of our regional parks and live near North Sonoma Mountain Park. After reviewing the alternatives my observation is that there are no bad choices but that alternative three would provide access to the most interesting areas. In general, my suggestion is that the more trails the better. This park is best reserved for day use and camping and campfires should not be permitted, however overnight stays in the existing buildings would be acceptable. The overview does not address the negative impact that camping will have on wildlife, which should be a major consideration, because this park is in the cross regional migration area for wildlife and cause considerable disruption. Campers will be endangered by mountain lions and other predators, including black bear which have been seen more frequently in Sonoma County.

Thank you for your efforts to increase enjoyment of our parks!

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SUBJECT: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Master Plan Proposals

As an introduction, I am a regular user of North Sonoma Mtn. RP. I report bird observations from there to eBird, have photographed the wildflowers, and have made observations of the geology — all for possible inclusion in a book on which I am working about the Geology and Natural History of Sonoma-Marín area Public Parks. I greatly appreciate the natural environment of the park and believe it should be protected.

My *opinions* are as follows.

- 1) In general, I support Alternative Plan 3.
  - 2) Alternative Plan 3 is the least invasive on the ecosystems of the park.
  - 3) The restroom options in the Community Outreach pdf are not clear, but I think it imperative to have a restroom at any parking area or meeting/camping area in the park.
  - 4) As has been re-emphasized by the Glass and Walbridge fires this year, we live in an area of growing and extreme fire danger. I am vehemently opposed to any use of open fires, either in camping or for “campfire programs,” in the park at any time or season.
  - 5) I favor the imposition of fines for violations of fire prohibitions or the use of cigarettes in NSMRP.
  - 6) Camping introduces far too much human intrusion on the environment and I generally oppose overnight accommodations in regional parks that are near our communities, where lodging is available. Camping is available at Spring Lake RP and at Sugarloaf Ridge SP. Additional camping on Sonoma Mountain seems unnecessary. Generally, my suspicion is that camping (or barrack sleeping) would be largely used by folks from outside Sonoma County and I see no need to provide that kind of (costly) experience for non-County residents at NSMRP.
  - 7) Group events often result in unruly, alcohol fueled behaviors. If group camping or other events are allowed in NSMRP, those events should be restricted to educational events.
  - 8) The integrity of Cooper’s Grove must be maintained. No access should be allowed from Sonoma Mountain Road. A trail through the Grove, with interpretive signs, seems like an exceptionally good idea, as long as it is well designed to prevent damage to the trees.
  - 9) Horses and dogs, each in their own way, do damage to the environment. With regard to dogs, my observations at the Spring Lake/Trione-Annadel park complex support the view that there are always those who violate the rules, releasing leashed dogs, which then threaten wildlife and hikers. Dog walkers in Spring Lake and SR Vietnam Veterans Trail Park are occasionally observed to release their dogs and go from these parks into Trione-Annadel SP (where dogs are prohibited). In addition, it is my experience that enough dog walkers leave dog poop on the trails, that this additional detriment argues against allowances for dogs. None of the parks has the rangers to enforce the regulations and my experience in Putnam, Shiloh Ranch, N.Sonoma Mtn., and elsewhere suggests that Sonoma County cannot support adequate enforcement. Dogs should not be allowed at NSMRP.
- Horses defecate regularly, especially on steep trails. Notably, where trails are narrow, hikers are faced with trying to step around the poop and are subjected to the inevitable swarming flies drawn to the poop. Horses also create greater trail erosion than hikers. I oppose allowing horses in NSMRP park, with the possible exception of making one long loop trail specifically for horse use.

10) Bikers have done tremendous damage to Trione-Annadel SP trails, as well as non-trail areas, where they have created numerous unauthorized trails that have led to extensive erosion. Even the single "hikers-only" trail in T-A SP, Steve's S Trail, has been damaged recently by bicyclists. Annadel serves as a magnet for bikers across the entire region and it now seems to be accepted that the Trione-Annadel is a bikers park. With T-A SP available nearby, it seems prudent to limit bike use in NSMRP park. Enforcement is again an issue, but a single bicycle trail from NSMRP to JLSP might be acceptable and should be welcomed by bikers.

- IF BICYCLES ARE ALLOWED, much more than the proposed 0.4 miles of **hiking only** trails should be designated (a minimum of 3 miles of trail). Most appropriately, to prevent undue erosion, any trail through Cooper's Grove should be hikers only.

11) The current single entrance road to NSMRP is totally inadequate for the proposed expansions. I am not certain where it might be possible, but a trailhead, definitely not at Cooper's Grove, or an additional entrance road and parking area, would be a benefit to the community as the park is expanded. An off road parking and trailhead facility about 1/3 mile west off Cooper's Grove on the hilltop has potential, if that land is indeed owned by the County.

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Like ***Names***, we live in Highland Estates; we are on Inverness Ave.

As longtime park pass holders we would like to share our thoughts regarding the proposals for the expansion of Sonoma Mountain Regional Park before the community input deadline ends on Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

We hope that absolutely NO "Program-led Campfire Area" is accepted. Our community is getting drier and hotter every year with less Fire Response resources.

Our VOTE is Alternative 3 where the park feature (O) is omitted. NO "Program-led Campfire Area" should be permitted. NO "legal" fires in our parks at all!

Thank you for the committee's consideration and feel free to contact us with any questions.

---

I am a Santa Rosa resident. I use Regional Parks on a daily basis for bicycle recreation and commuting. I am also a native of Sonoma Mountain, having been born at home on Waldrue Heights (not far from Hayfields). I ride in NSMRP at least once a month throughout the year. I would like to advocate for more bicycle and hiking access, less (or the same amount) car parking, and the same amount of equestrian access. I don't understand why children would need a recreation area — when I was growing up on Sonoma Mountain, the trees and rocks and trails were my playground. The North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park is a truly special place. Thank you for your consideration and I deeply appreciate your service.

---

I live next door to the Park and I absolutely against any campfires - supervised or not - anywhere in the Park. It is a very brushy park, extremely hilly so very difficult terrain if a fire broke out. NO CAMPFIRES ANYWHERE!

We had a lot of discussion a few years back and I had thought any sort of campfires was taken off the table for good. With the extreme fires we are facing constantly, why would you ever allow a fire in that park??

Also I am also very concerned about tent camping anywhere on the Park. Who will supervise these overnight campers? Bad idea. We are just opening for more serious problems. You know how brushy and difficult the terrain is - full of highly flammable Bay Trees, high grass and weeds never maintained by the park system other than right by the parking. I have requested fire breaks but even that seems not possible with your personnel. How then would you control overnight camping? This area is high fire risk area as you know.

Please do not make it worse than it already is.

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We live in Highland Estates off Crane Canyon Rd./Inverness Ave. Our property ends at the north side of Crane Canyon Rd.

As avid hikers and longtime park pass holders we would like to share our thoughts regarding the proposals for the expansion of Sonoma Mountain Regional Park before the community input deadline ends on Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

We have spent some time going through the 3-Plan Alternatives that look well thought out with the exception of FIRE. We hope that absolutely NO "Program-led Campfire Area" is accepted. Our community is getting drier and hotter every year with less Fire Response resources.

Our VOTE is Alternative 3 where the park feature (O) is omitted. NO "Program-led Campfire Area" should be permitted. Please NO "legal" fires in our parks at all!

Thank you for the committees' consideration and feel free to contact us with any questions.

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Pretty please make this park dog friendly! My furry companion and I would love another beautiful place to explore. Thank you!

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As an involved citizen and responsible dog owner, I would love to see the park be open to dogs. It is challenging to find dog-friendly hiking of a sufficient caliber in Sonoma County, with Hood Mountain being the best current option. I know that Hood Mountain may need to be closed for a time due to wildfire impacts, so I would love to see another dog-friendly park within the County that will provide long and strenuous hikes. Thank you

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This park is up the road as I live on Sonoma Mountain Road. I love this park but it saddens me that my well behaved dog is not allowed. This rule keeps me from visiting the closest park to my home. PLEASE consider the needs of the neighbors such as myself who want to have her dog too.

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I was given your name to contact in regard to the opening of the trail at Sonoma Mountain Regional park.

It has been so frustrating for dog owners in our community to have so many of our local parks unavailable for hiking with our dogs, especially since our community has such a high percentage of dog ownership and not a lot of places to take them. I know it must lead to owner's "breaking rules" when it comes to finding a place to let them run and stretch their legs. I have done it myself. Dog Parks just simply don't work and my own have picked up illnesses or been harassed by dogs whose owner could care less about controlling them.

Granted, in my area of Rincon Valley, there isn't many places to go and I find that Spring Lake just gets overrun with people, bikes and pets so that there is absolutely nothing challenging whatsoever for a dog. We need trails! I am not asking for off leash but just some challenging non asphalt areas where a dog can sniff and check out nature and be just as fun for us hikers who love the more uncrowded places to enjoy.

I am hoping you can express the dog community's opinions and my own during the month of October for public comment on the opening of that beautiful park.

Thanks so much for your time.

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PLEASE NO FIRES OR CAMPING ON THE MOUNTAIN!

Please consider extending the comment/planning period. We are all overcome with fire/covid/election fatigue.

Thank you.

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We need more dog friendly hiking trails in Sonoma County! Our dogs and humans need exercise, together.

---

My husband and I have enjoyed the beauty of Sonoma Mountain Regional Park in the past few years. I would vote for the third plan as it seems to distract the least from the beauty of nature. I strongly oppose any allowing of fires or smoking in the park. With the recent fires in our area and the outlook of many more, it seems to be wise to take this into account with any future plans for the park. I also question adding camping to the area due to high fire danger.

Thank you for all your work to provide such beautiful parks.

---

I am examining the new plan Alternatives for North Sonoma Mtn Regional Park and have a question. Spring Lake Campground is a popular camping site. Generally, my suspicion is that camping is largely



used by folks from outside Sonoma County. Do you have data on the % of Sonoma County residents vs non-residents that stay at the campground?

Thanks for any help you can provide.

---

I am a resident of Healdsburg and am writing to advocate that allowing leashed dogs be a part of future park plans.

---

I tried to insert comments into the document and I have no idea if they registered or not. My main concern with any plan for this area is fire risk. I think that any BBQ or Campfire site needs to be monitored by park personnel. Unfortunately we can't leave management of this risk to whomever reserves the spaces. The property is beautiful and wonderful to have available to the public - but it is also next to and contains areas of dense overgrowth of dry volatile wildfire fuels.

Thank you,

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I am a fan of more overnight camping near the Bay Area Ridge Trail, especially if they are huts or individual hike in / bike in sites. Sonoma County Parks should keep planning for hike and bike sites throughout the whole region in general. Please make sure there are areas to park and lock bicycles. County parks should prioritize individual camping sites over group sites, as group sites are not really accessible to all types of users. The bigger staging areas with group sites and picnic areas really opens this up for a variety of uses and events. Adding additional trails with the increased access is important too. I do wonder how the people living near there will react to a much larger capacity to a park that is only accessible by a narrow mountainous road.

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I am writing to you about the proposed expansion of the Sonoma Mountain Regional Park to develop Jacob's Ranch. Just two months ago, I stood at the top of our property where I could see Jacob's Ranch and five large fires burning in different locations in Sonoma, Napa and Marin counties. I look at my window and I see a recently burned hillside. That hillside was burned by people that were recreating on a roadside and ignoring no parking signs. As the crow flies, that hillside is about 1 mile away from Jacobs Ranch where you are proposing camping and possibly campfires organized by rangers, and the expectation that people will follow the rules.

I support the Sonoma County Parks System and the development of recreational hiking trails in Sonoma County. You have done a terrific job piecing together an iconic landscape for generations to enjoy. However, I am very concerned about the plans to permit camping (including camp stoves) year-round and campfires that are managed by a ranger.

Over the last four years, we have experienced many significant fires within 50 miles Jacob's Ranch. The area that you have plans to develop for recreational use, including overnight camping, are very close to residences and significantly populated areas. While camping is allowed in many Sonoma County regional parks, most of those are near the ocean. Those areas have the benefit of cooler temperatures, the fog, the ocean as a backstop for any fire, little vegetation, and less populated surroundings. The location of this park is in the midst of a more

populous area. The landscape is grasslands, vegetation, and trees which are tinder dry during the summer and fall.

Given the increasing severity of fires in Sonoma County, I don't believe it is appropriate reasonable to allow camping at a place and in a landscape like Jacob's Ranch. **I strongly recommend that the final plan not include overnight camping.**

---

I am a homeowner living on Sonoma Mountain Road close to the park. My family and I have lived here for more than 50 years. I often go hiking in the park. I am very unhappy with all three of the Draft Plan Alternatives proposed for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park for the following reasons:

1. I am very much against allowing fires of any kind including campfires, ranger lead campfires or BBQ's in the park. The Sonoma Mountain area is at extreme fire risk now. Including fires of any kind would simply add another unnecessary fire risk factor.
2. I am against any overnight stays. I believe the park should be closed at Sunset. Day use only would have much less impact on the environment and the animals that inhabit the space.
3. I am against an equestrian vendor facility as well as private trucks and horse trailers at this location. Jack London Park would be a much more appropriate place to have an equestrian vendor facility as well as trucks with horse trailers. Sonoma Mountain Road is a narrow, one lane road in many places with no center line. Sonoma Mountain Road as well as the park access road are not designed to accommodate trucks with horse trailers, emergency vehicles or the ability to evacuate quickly if necessary.

I hope you will consider my comments. Thank you.

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I appreciate the thoughtful proposals for a master plan to further develop, enhance and protect, North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. Thank you for an opportunity to offer feedback. As a community member, county park member, and nearby neighbor to this exceptional tract of land, it personally means a great deal.

I am most in favor of Alternative Plan 3 as a starting point for expansion of facilities and access to NSMRP. Although, if it's possible, I feel it would be beneficial to include the park entry trail in Plan 3, rather than omit it. The more ambitious developments proposed in Plans 1 and 2, while reasonable, might best be reserved for further evaluation, once the real world impacts of the fully realized Plan 3 are taken into account. I am especially concerned about expansion of camping access in the current period of severe drought and elevated wildfire risk.

I would prefer mountain bikes not be allowed on hiking trails, both for safety considerations and to avoid the significant impact and potential harm to the integrity of the trail itself, such as wheel ruts, damage to trailside vegetation, as well as possible off-trail riding and shortcutting on trails.

I am enthusiastically in favor of allowing leashed dogs on trails within the Jacobs Ranch area.

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Subject: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park

Message: We are extremely concerned about the planning for additional use of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park (NSMRP). Plans appear to include overnight camping, bunkhouse and cabin facilities, BBQs and possibly open campfires. Sonoma Mountain has not burned in over 100 years, and we are concerned it may be the next big fire area.

Please - no fires under any circumstances! One cigarette or wiener roast could be devastating to the park and nearby communities. No BBQ and no campfires.

DAY USE ONLY. Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.

Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals.

Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.

Noise pollution. Keep it controlled as a day use park so people can enjoy the quiet and solitude of the surroundings.

Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil area. Please do not significantly increase traffic on Sonoma Mountain Road. It is a small narrow road without room for 2 cars in many places and with road deterioration and erosion.

Trails - No electric bikes in the park.

Thank you for your consideration.

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As a youth, the parks to me are open spaces that have changed my life and make me feel part of the community, it also allows me to express myself. I was part of the first youth group of YES-Coast; youth exploring the coast. Being part of this group showed me and taught me things that brought me closer to what the parks are. They are beautiful ecosystems that enrich our community. For me having the parks in my backyard and being a part of a youth group, helped me to develop leadership skills, communication skills, self-confidence, and awareness of how fragile these ecosystems are and the importance of educating the new generations on how to help sustain and preserve these diverse ecosystems.

For me, YES-Coast was a refuge. Some of the most memorable moments during my time with this group was the group camping. I can remember as if it was recently; I was so excited to be able to camp near Gualala, my fellow youth and I were amazed to see so many trees surrounding our tents and thinking they would take our tents when we weren't looking. Before night fell we made watercolor paintings, lifted rocks to see the cool bugs beneath, and took long walks in the thick surrounding woods. All the while surrounded by fresh air, the beautiful tunes of the wildlife, the distant breeze from the ocean, to how our feet would sink into the moist earth of the trails we explored. At night I enjoyed talking with the other youth about what had happened that day and guessing what would happen tomorrow. Sitting around a fire at night brought me closer to this group and at times I would look behind me into the dark, wondering what it had in store for me.

These types of experiences should not be exclusive, these opportunities should be available to everyone in our community. My experience in Gualala was unforgettable and to give that same opportunity for others to experience outdoor group camping in the Sonoma Mountains is something we can't let slip by. That 'we' being the Regional Parks and Sonoma County Foundation. I personally and professionally benefited from being part of YES-Coast, and today I have the pleasure to work with the Regional Parks sign shop as an intern and give back to the parks that have given me so much.

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The Bennett Valley community and surrounding neighborhoods are steadfastly opposed to a campground with campfire availability on Sonoma Mountain.

This proposal should never have been initiated. Besides the obvious extreme fire risks in that area, the narrow winding roads are not suited for heavy traffic, let alone RVs that are often very big and wide.

Should an evacuation of the area and the proposed campground ever occur, this would be a disaster.

I am confident that the Sonoma County Parks & Recreation Department can find a far more suitable AND safe location for a new campground. You have the staff and expertise to do this.

You owe it to the residents and visitors to Sonoma County.

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First, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done and continue to do for all of us.

You are AMAZING! I just can't imagine how you continue to stay so focused during these times. And, I hope somehow you are able to take care of yourself.

I want to apologize for having to contact you with yet another problem to add to your long list. This email from Nancy Kirwan is very disturbing. Can the planners seriously be considering allowing camping and campfires to a park located on Sonoma Mountain? What in the world are they thinking? PLEASE stop this very dangerous proposal.

It is just asking for yet another disaster that can affect all of us.

AGAIN, THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR BEING THERE FOR EVERYONE.

---

We strongly oppose the County's plan to inappropriately extend the development of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park (NSMRP). This land was originally intended to be an Open Space PRESERVE, bequeathed by the Jacobs family to the County with specific requirements to preserve the land.

Camping and campfires must not be allowed in this NATURE PRESERVE. It must be PRESERVED and protected as a critical part of a shrinking wildlife corridor network in Sonoma County. Camping and campfires significantly disrupt and damage wildlife patterns and would completely destroy this area as a preserve.

Who would patrol overnight use? Who would ensure it wasn't used by transients inappropriately camping, doing drugs or other criminal activity? Do you have a plan for this? In any case, even a few law abiding citizens camping completely destroys this land as a wildlife corridor for bobcats, mountain lions, and many other wide roaming wildlife in our midst using this corridor as one of the last few remaining in the North Bay wildlife corridor network. This preserve cannot be spoiled.

Furthermore, we citizens should not have to educate this County on the danger to public safety and property caused by lighting camp fires in the tinderbox of Sonoma County. For those of us who have had to evacuate from wildfires, lost homes or even lost loved ones, we are adamantly opposed to the County arbitrarily adding new wildfire risk to our area. Actually, we all think you are absolutely insane to even consider this irresponsible policy idea.

Even the road infrastructure is inadequate for further increased use and traffic, let alone for escape in fire danger. The County won't allow further vineyard visitor/event activity on Sonoma Mountain Road, this also should not be allowed.

The vast majority of Sonoma County residents want this to remain as a day use only nature preserve. While some additional trails could be added for day use without hampering the wildlife, these should be kept to a minimum. Dogs should not be allowed, this is supposed to be a wildlife preserve, not a recreational public or suburban park. Dogs are very disruptive to wildlife patterns. Certainly no camping cabins or other structures should be built either. There are far better options in the county for such facilities.

Finally, Sonoma County and surrounding counties already offer Bay Area residents with a multitude of camping options, and dog walking parks, there is no pressing need to jeopardize this critical flora/fauna preserve. Keep this preserve a PRESERVE, as originally intended: limited day use only!

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We absolutely love North Sonoma Mountain - it's been our salvation and special place throughout the past couple years, especially with all that's been going on, pandemic etc... Nothing makes me feel better than touching and seeing the beautiful trees and taking in the surrounding beauty - so precious! I think the plan looks great and like many of the suggestions you have already incorporated - and am excited about the park's future.

Here are some suggestions or comments - hope they help.

1. Expand the handicap parking on top of hill - at least 2 or 3 spaces should work ok.
2. Not sure, don't really like mix of bike trails and hiking - riders often blaze through (I am somewhat disabled or "fragile" and don't think it's a safe mix unless more rules/caution posted maybe as I can see it would be a fantastic route to mountain bike from Sonoma Mtn to Jack London.
3. A few more picnic spots would be great.
4. I like that you do not have dogs on trail who may scare the local wildlife but maybe have a separate dog area.
5. Some interpretation signs about the rich local history (see works by Greg Sarris for example)

6. And lastly, tho the rather narrow and rough road keeps traffic and crowds down; if you expand the park and expect more people, probably need some road widening or improvements ie. more pullouts if possible.

Again, thank you for doing this - this park means a lot to us. While back in Feb. 2019 I had a ski accident and broke my hip - your park was the first place I could go and walk a few steps near one of the most beautiful nature spots around! I am very worried with all the fires and our county budget so hope we can protect this gem for many future generations to come!

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We live in Highland Estates off Crane Canyon Road in Santa Rosa. We live a hop, skip and jump from North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. In fact, you can see our neighborhood in the picture you have on the cover of the Master Plan. We have enjoyed many hikes at No. So. Mtn. Park.

The 2017 fire came very close to us. We had to evacuate for 10 days. And now between August and October we've had fires in not only our county, but close to us again. We've been sleeping with our bags packed next to our bed for the last month in case we have to flee a fire again. Needless to say, our stress and anxiety levels are high.

After going through the 3-Plan Alternatives we hope that absolutely NO "Program-led Campfire Area" is accepted. Our vote is Alternative 3 where the park feature (O) is omitted. NO "Program-led Campfire Area" should be permitted. Please NO "legal" fires in our parks at all. Frankly, there shouldn't even be a campfire option in any Master Plans in our county right now. Our community can't keep going through this high anxiety of worry about campfires in parks so close to residential areas, in particular when in this area there is only one way out.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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I have just finished reviewing the master plans for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park for the second time and have several comments. I reside on Summit View Ranch which borders the Park on the West side and over the years before the Park was up and running served as a docent to the park for the county, reporting downed trees and other problems so am quite familiar with the property. I don't presently hike there because of the current policy disallowing dogs.

I thought the report was most interesting and just a lovely idea of what to do for the public, in another time, another place and perhaps even on another planet. Given our recent history with fire in Sonoma County and beyond and knowing how quickly these fires spread and burn peoples homes and even cause death to humans and valuable animals, I cannot fathom that you would propose camping and camp fires. I know that you have a non-smoking policy in the parks, but with overnight campers, they are gonna do what they want to do and unless you have a ranger assigned to each camping area there is no way that the smoking issue can be policed effectively. Have you thought about the liability involved in allowing campfires AND a campfire circle even? As a daughter of a US forest Service Supervisor and Fire Control Officer I am well schooled in fire and fire prevention. Lots of fires that you think are out, are not. Please remember the 1991 Oakland Hills fire. A fire supposedly out—nope! Next day the wind came up and fanned the flames resulting in an uncontrollable firestorm burning 3300 homes and killing

more than 25 people. People died because there was chaos, two lane roads and monumental traffic. There are a lot of residents already along Sonoma Mountain Road, Pressley Road etc. etc., all dark, two lane roads and we don't need more fire risk added to our lives.

I can see how you may think I am the local crank, but our recent history with the Tubbs and Nuns Fire of 2017, the Kincaid fire, the Walbridge fire and most recently the Glass fire show just how vulnerable we are. If you have overnight camper's in the area, who are not familiar with fire like all of Sonoma county residents unfortunately are now, and in addition do not know the area or directions, then in the case of a fire evacuation, those people will just be adding to the chaos and panic. It takes little imagination to see people unfamiliar with the roads fleeing a fire going precisely the wrong direction causing traffic problems and creating blockages for current residents trying to flee. We already have unabated development on 2-lane Petaluma Hill Road, the main exit road off this side of the mountain which will clog quickly even as things stand today.

And I get it, this is a beautiful Park! You want it to be the crown jewel of the Regional Park system. You have great ideas on the educational side and trail development side, but let's leave it at that and continue to develop your trails and move away from overnight stays and camping. Even our US forests ban fires and camping in high fire season, which seems to be about 5 months of the year here in Sonoma County. Let's leave the camping to your coastal sites.

That is my take on the master plans for the NSMRP. You all worked hard and developed a lovely plan and please don't implement any part of it that calls for overnight stays and camp fires. Thank you for listening and for allowing me a chance to comment.

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We are residents of Bennett Valley and frequent North Sonoma Mountain park users. We are writing to share our strong opposition to components of the North Sonoma Mountain park master plan, particularly with regards to overnight camping, open fires, and large events.

We just lived through our second mandatory fire evacuation. We know first hand how quickly and how far wildfire travels. We are now surrounded by multiple burn scars. We are strongly opposed to any allowance of open flame. We are also opposed to overnight camping and large events, both of those bring environmental concerns as well as fire concerns. Large event and overnight use in a high fire prone area with narrow roads does not seem like a safe or compatible use for this park.

This park is a jewel, and we use it regularly as an escape from the busy world, especially during the pandemic. We would prefer it remain as originally intended, a nature and wildlife preserve and not become another busy, crowded park with large events and heavy use beyond hiking, biking, and horseback riding. We need a wildlife sanctuary and corridor without excessive human disruption. But more importantly than our personal preference is the very real concern with fire risk that comes along with heavier use and development in the park, particularly with regards to large events and overnight camping. Even if the county does not allow smoking or open flame, people may not always follow the rules. Any increase to heavier use and/or overnight use brings potential for an accidental fire. Please protect the people and wildlife in the area and limit use at this particular park. It would be a shame to turn this jewel in our county into a liability.



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We live in the community of Summit View Ranch that shares a fence with North Sonoma Mountain Park and we are very concerned about some of the proposals for the park.

**Fire safety is our number one concern.**

1. No fires under any circumstances. One barbecue or campfire could be devastating to the park and our nearby community.
2. **DAY USE ONLY.** Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.
3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
4. Noise pollution. Keep it controlled as a day use park so people can enjoy the quiet and solitude of the surroundings..
5. Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil area.
6. Trails-No electric bikes in the park. Mountain bikes restricted to certain trails. Horses and bikes on separate trails; some trails just for hiking.
7. Horses enter through Jack London Park only.
8. Cooper's Grove-2nd growth Redwood Grove, identified as a cultural and sacred place to Native Americans, to be entered by groups lead by a Ranger or Docent only.

Let's keep our Sonoma Mountain as a natural paradise as it now exists!

---

I am very concerned with the proposed park development. Most people know absolutely nothing about the proposed changes to the park. I know this was originally discussed in 2017 PRIOR TO ANY FIRES<sup>1</sup> How can Sonoma County and the Park Services possibly think open campfires and overnight camping a smart move in light of the devastating wildfires we have all dealt with for the last four years. **Very irresponsible.**

I do support increasing some hiking/biking trails but only if kept to a minimum and away from sensitive areas to protect the land. There should be separate trails for horses, bikes and hikers. We have seen the damage on Annadel with all three on the same paths. Horses should only enter from Jack London State Park. The entrance off Sonoma Mountain Road is very narrow - in case of emergency it would be very difficult to even get cars out let alone horse trailers. I am neutral on dogs being allowed in park, but ONLY if people follow the rules and keep them leashed.

Fire mitigation and prevention is essential to keep us all safe.

**MY FEEDBACK:**

1. No fires under any circumstances. One cigarette or wiener roast could be devastating to the park and nearby communities. **No bbq and no campfires.**
2. **DAY USE ONLY.** Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.



3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
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5. Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil area. Not significantly increasing traffic on SMR much more - it is a small narrow road without room for 2 cars in many places and with road deterioration and erosion.
6. Trails-No electric bikes in the park. Mountain bikes restricted to certain trails. Horses and bikes on separate trails; some trails just for hiking.
7. Horses enter through Jack London Park only.
8. Cooper's Grove-2nd growth Redwood Grove, identified as a cultural and sacred place to Native Americans, to be entered **only** by groups lead by a Ranger or Docent..

Let's keep our Sonoma Mountain as a natural paradise as it now exists!.

---

I am communicating this information so the responsible officials will have the knowledge which is critical for making the correct and informed decisions to proceed with plans for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park.

In the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting on Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, I stated, "We need Zero Tolerance for Fire." I write this based on the experience of attempting to defend our property from the Nuns Fire in 2017 which is directly across from Coopers Grove, 5800 Sonoma Mountain Road.

I was communicating and working with Occidental Volunteer Fire Department and CAL Fire as they were fighting to prevent the fire from jumping Sonoma Mountain Road and then incinerate Coopers Grove including the rest of Sonoma Mountain. We observed a one-acre grove of Redwoods ignite from the undergrowth and torch up in flames over 100 feet in height. This immediately started a thermal-induced wind spreading burning ember chunks over a distance of a 1/4 mile and starting new fires. While we were able to save our house, we lost 2/3 of our property and many structures. Three nearby homes burnt in the following period.

The lesson here is about how incredibly explosive a fire will be in Coopers Grove and how that will threaten the communities of Glen Ellen, Petaluma, and Cotati. We were lucky that time as the entire mountain would have torched if not for the still air of midday and the experienced fire teams on-site at the time. Imagine what would have happened if there were the typical mountain winds.

The attached picture was taken 70 yards from Coopers Grove on Sonoma Mountain Road looking East.

ZERO TOLERANCE for FIRES.

No overnight camping. Day use only.

No campfires.

No barbeques.

No smoking.

Please make Zero Tolerance for FIRE easy to communicate, unambiguous, and enforceable.

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I was just looking over the proposed plans for North Sonoma Mountain. Lots of great ideas and concepts but I was sorry to see that almost all the proposed trails will be multi-use. I'd like to encourage those developing the project to go hike in Annadel (when it's open again), particularly the Cobblestone Trail and connecting trails. Mountain bikes have utterly destroyed these trails. Between the loose stones, exposed roots, and deep ruts, they are almost not fit to hike upon. Add to that all the unauthorized "trails" criss-crossing the area created by bikers, and it's a level of erosion that should alarm anyone who cares about the area. In my humble opinion, this is the future of any bike trail. Already, mountain bike riders do not honor the "no bikes" stretch of trail connecting North Sonoma Mountain to Jack London. I watch them careen through there regularly. I've nearly been run down on the trail to Bennett Valley Overlook and those cyclists, who did not call out or ring a bell as a warning, skidded around the tight switchbacks, kicking up dirt, dislodging rocks, and eroding the trail right before my eyes. While most bikers I've encountered on various trails around Sonoma County are more thoughtful, it only takes a few like those I've mentioned here to destroy a trail. And, sadly, they aren't just a few. They are many even if they aren't the majority.

I'm not against mountain bikers having a place to ride. I only ask that more consideration be given to dedicated trails rather than multi-use. Again, I can't recommend enough going to take a look at what prolonged bike usage does to trails in Annadel. It's appalling, and I'd hate to see it happen to the trails in North Sonoma Mountain Regional.

Thank you for your consideration!

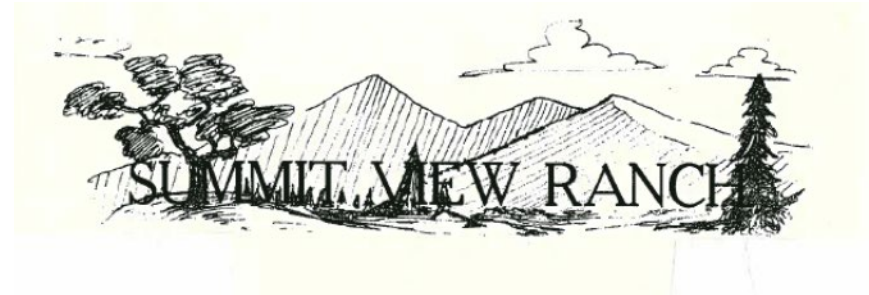
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I am writing you with my concerns about the plans on North Sonoma Mountain Park.

I support increasing some hiking/biking trails, but this has to be done to minimize fire risk. I suggest DAY USE ONLY with NO overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse. Further, we need to minimize damage to trails and hence need separate trails for horses, bikes and hikers. We have seen the damage on Annadel with all three on the same paths. The entrance off Sonoma Mountain Road is very narrow - in case of emergency it would be very difficult to even get cars out let alone horse trailers.

Thank you for soliciting our input.

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Regarding: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve Master Plan

From: Summit View Ranch HOA Board of Directors – **Name** – Secretary

We are a 21-member HOA that live on Summit View Ranch that directly borders North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. We are writing this response on behalf of all 21 homeowners, although certain individual homeowners may be writing their own response as well.

We have a long history being neighbors of the Jacobs Ranch, which of course is now part of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. In fact, many of us were “stewards” of your Park when it was being developed after being acquired from the Jacobs family. We would keep an eye on the park prior to having park rangers living there. You are important neighbors to us.

We are also delighted that the property is now a Regional Park, and welcome having the public be able to take advantage of the recreational activities and beauty of this wonderful property.

However, we are concerned with the proposed development of the Park in that the property was acquired to be an “*Open Space Preserve*”; the majority of the proposed development would be in conflict with preserving the land in its natural state. We are submitting below our comments and concerns regarding the three development plans for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve:

### **Camping:**

1. Noise concerns: This is a very quiet neighborhood where all of us enjoy the serenity and quietness of our rural properties. Camping would likely lead to noise concerns and complaints from neighbors.
2. Fire concerns: It would be virtually impossible to restrict campsite fires if camping were allowed. Given firestorms in the immediate vicinity over the past 3 years, this is an obvious concern. Even under the watchful eye of a ranger, a fire that is thought extinguished could easily ignite hours after campers have vacated the area. This is a common occurrence in the western United States. Our association is not comfortable with campers and fires at all. It endangers all the residents who currently live in areas surrounding the park and beyond.
3. Security concerns: We are concerned that if the public are in the park overnight and “unsupervised”, there could be issues with them trespassing on private property (including ours) that borders the Park.

4. Wildlife Migration concerns: Wildlife, including Mountain Lions, are prevalent in the Park and camping disrupts migration patterns and represents safety threats to campers.

We believe that the Park should remain CLOSED during the nighttime hours with NO camping allowed.

**Trails:**

1. Bicycles, hikers and horses using the same trail can be problematic. Bicycles and horses are particularly destructive to the trails in wet conditions. Is it possible to consider separate trails for horses and bicycles in dry conditions only?
2. We believe that dogs (on leash and with owner clean up requirements) should be allowed, increasing the attractiveness of the park to families.

**Ranger Host Entrance:**

We are opposed to the location of this structure on proposed plans 1 and 2 which would create additional noise from vehicles and from conversations.

In closing, we believe that the existing plan for the Park should be the current plan kept in place. The other plans would add to noise pollution, damage the natural landscape, disrupt the natural habitat, and most importantly create additional fire threats to the already high threat of this property and of surrounding properties.

---

The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Craig
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A; the fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street choke point.
- The distance between the locus of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the locus of the origin of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont and is substantially shorter than the distance between the locus of the origin of the Tubbs fire and Coffey Park
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community; plans for overnight camping and/or open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

The optics are terrible and the worry is palpable.

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I do support increasing some hiking/biking trails but only if kept to a minimum and away from sensitive areas to protect the land. Horses should only enter from Jack London State Park. The entrance off Sonoma Mountain Road is very narrow - in case of emergency it would be very difficult to even get cars out let alone horse trailers.

I am AGAINST adding camping facilities or anything that will increase fire danger. It is unconscionable that we would even consider these proposals given the last few years of fire devastation.

Fire mitigation and prevention is essential to keep us all safe.

#### MY FEEDBACK:

1. No fires under any circumstances. One cigarette or barbecue could be devastating to the park and nearby communities. No bbq and no campfires.
2. **DAY USE ONLY.** Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.
3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
4. Noise pollution. Keep it controlled as a day use park so people can enjoy the quiet and solitude of the surroundings..
5. Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil areas. Not significantly increasing traffic on SMR much more - it is a small narrow road without room for even 2 cars in many places and with road deterioration and erosion.
6. Horses enter through Jack London Park only.
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Let's keep our Sonoma Mountain as a natural paradise as it now exists!.

---

I wanted to respond to the "ask for comment" card you sent out, thank you. I was a bit shocked to see such an emphasis on overnight stays with the risks associated for campers, fires to mountain lions. This also poses risks for permanent residents around the park. Non accountable overnight campers with ulterior motives could launch mischief from the park. This all is a bit scary.

We have been here for over 17 years. We have seen and supported the Open Space Initiatives, to the extent of preserving the mountain tops and pristine areas. A park development of this extent seems counter to the mission.

I would hope consideration would be given to the location of the entry gate closer to Sonoma Mountain Road. The gate location on the plans would be loud and busy. Perhaps closer to Sonoma Mountain Road is better.

Overnight campers will eliminate what was a serene and still sound environment at night. We in the area value this quiet. The security of the hills away from town is an important reason we are here. This development to include overnight camping will eliminate that. Very discouraging when added to the fire risk, power outages, and declining financial status of our County.

---

Good afternoon!

We are extremely concerned about the planning for additional use of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park (NSMRP). Plans appear to include overnight camping, bunkhouse and cabin facilities, BBQs and possibly open campfires. Sonoma Mountain has not burned in over 100 years, and we are concerned it may be the next big fire area.

1. Please - no fires under any circumstances! One cigarette or wiener roast could be devastating to the park and nearby communities. No BBQ and no campfires.
2. DAY USE ONLY. Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.
3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
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6. Trails - No electric bikes in the park. Mountain bikes restricted to certain trails. Horses and bikes on separate trails; some trails just for hiking.

Thank you for your consideration.

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I recently heard that there are plans for having overnight camping at the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park which could include open fires for campers. Considering the vulnerabilities of Sonoma Mountain to extreme fires, I strongly want to discourage overnight camping in general and more importantly, campfires. With Diablo winds blowing, a fire could readily reach Diamond A where there are about 200 households.

I commend the County's efforts to provide outdoor recreation, but it needs to be done safely and overnight camping and campfires are pushing the limits. Too much is at stake these days.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

---

Day use only, absolutely!

You're kidding about fire pits, right.....???

Try not to materially increase traffic on SMR (unless of course you agree to widen and repave it in its entirety)...it really is just about the worst road in the county, and frankly an embarrassment to the roads department.....

Let's put the people pressure on more accessible parks

A concerned Sonoma Mountain resident.....

---

We are extremely concerned about the planning for additional use of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park (NSMRP). Plans appear to include overnight camping, bunkhouse and cabin facilities, BBQs and possibly open campfires. Sonoma Mountain has not burned in over 100 years, and we are concerned it may be the next big fire area.

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6. Trails - No electric bikes in the park.

Thank you for your consideration.

---

I currently live by Annadel Park in the Bennett Valley part of Santa Rosa. I am a frequent user of all of our beautiful local parks, including NSMRP.



I recently found out about planned changes to NSMRP that would include adding campgrounds, bbq pits, and bunk houses. I am very concerned about this proposal as we are in the midst of an obvious fire crisis that will probably continue for years.

So, I am incredulous that something like this would be considered in an area that is so dry, where there is so much natural fuel for a fire and a narrow access road to the park (and along much of Sonoma Mt. Rd.) Emergency access to and from the park would be a huge problem if a fire were to occur, and would no doubt result in litigation if trapped campers were hindered in trying to flee a fire.

Campers can be lovely people, but they can also be reckless when a little alcohol is thrown into the mix- which could result in less than ideal monitoring of campfires, bbq pits, and pet dogs for that matter. I wonder who would be enforcing and patrolling the area to keep it safe. Campers could also impact the ecosystem- which includes mountain lions which inhabit the area. Upsetting an ecosystem often leads to unintended negative consequences.

The park is lovely the way it is as a day use hiking and picnic destination. I encourage you to not expand the use to include camping and bbqs. It is just too dangerous for people, wildlife and property.

---

I don't know if a formal submittal is required to comment, but I would like to add my input as a regular and "long time" user of the North Sonoma Mountain Trail nonetheless.



I'm excited for the proposed additional trails and camping at NSMT, and would like them to be multi-use to include bicycles, primarily all through trails and any leading to potential camping sites.

I'm currently a 50/50 user between hiking and cycling, and love the "through" option to Jack London SP. Additional trails will be fantastic!

---

I am a resident on the Western slope of Sonoma mountain, on Sonoma mountain Road. At the top of our road, we end at the boundary of the proposed park additions.

Approximately a year + ago, during similar hearings it was agreed that if any camping was to be allowed, it would be at the trail head, and then hikers can do day hikes up the mountain.

The new alternatives all sly in the face of that agreement, verbal as it was. You are placing a cabin and camp sites with in earshot of neighbors who live on Sonoma Mountain.

It is just not reasonable and very unneighborly to infringe on the peace and quiet of the mountain as well as setting up potential clashes between neighbors and campers.

I know that ideally people will respect private property rights and property owners privacy. However year after year proves that this nice behavior just does not happen.

One of the neighbors of these camp locations has had people come on to their property and swim in a pond they have right next to their house. Fence wires are cut routinely by people who decide they want to see more than just in the park boundaries.

Drive up Sonoma mountain road on the western side and see the broken fences, mended over and over again, and see the trash all over the road where people come up, ostensibly to enjoy the view, but they tear fences and throw trash and paint over signs and toss their bottles into the pastures. Come see it please so you understand why we are so against camp sites so close to private property and their homes.

Having campsites at the trail head was a good compromise. I don't know what has happened for your department to go back on that agreement. But the idea of a cabin and campsites is really over the top bad planning. I know it sounds good to a few, but it is at the disregard of the privacy and safety of people who have lived on the mountain for many years.

The wild life on Sonoma Mountain gets squeezed till they have no place to go and not be near people and carry on with their wild life habitat.

Please rethink this plan. There is not a park of this size anywhere that has to have a cabin on it and no campsites so near other people's homes.

As thirty-year residents atop Sonoma Mountain, **Name** and I adamantly oppose any additional Park development or public access -- especially the inappropriate plan to provide overnight camping and camp fires. The fire situation alone is clearly far too dangerous to allow such an increased risk.

The site Bert Whitaker proposes is only some 200 yards from our boundary and 300 yards from our guest house. It's also directly in the wind channel!

Our experience in the past has demonstrated that there ARE a few people who come to the mountain top without a shred of respect for its beauty or the security of its residences.

We have had hikers who, once they see our pond, are irresistibly drawn to it and we have found them swimming and lounging on the dock. When told it's private property and asked politely to leave, we've been met with threats and curses. The pond comes right up to the house - - it is NOT some isolated landscape feature so such a breach of private property is truly a scary invasion. Then the offenders retreat to just over the property line and INCREASE the threats and curses.

At an earlier meeting around 2017, there was an agreement to plant vegetation as a visual barrier. Sadly, this has never materialized.

One only needs to look at the garbage, traffic, broken fences, crashed cars, and drunken loud partying that goes on almost nightly at nearby "Pecker Point" (on Sonoma Mountain Road) to understand the threat of trespass, vandalism and fire that unfortunately accompanies a certain element of the public that we are already forced to live with.

We residents are extremely fearful for our lives and property if public access is greatly expanded with overnight camping and fires - - the risks are just too great. Does Jack London State Park (our neighbor) allow any such activities? I just looked it up: NO.

---

As residents for 29 years atop Sonoma Mountain and adjacent to the new Park, I and my wife are adamantly opposed to overnight camping, especially with BBQs and campfires!

First, I have already lost one home to a lightening caused wildfire which merely smoldered 7 miles away for 3 days WITHOUT CalFire responding - - despite numerous requests. This became the Sawtooth fire of 2006 which burned a path 9 by 15 miles, including my home, built by one of Frank Lloyd Wright's leading disciples, completed and restored by me after two years and some \$150,000. The home burned the very day we completed it!

Second, please put yourself in our place. Inviting the public to camp overnight with BBQs and campfires is so unwise in light of the danger that the benefits cannot possibly justify the risk. These fires would be just 200 yards from our boundary and only another 100 yards to our guest house and barn.

Third, our previous experience with Fairfield-Osborn has confronted us with trespassers swimming in our pond (which comes to within 3 feet of our home itself!) and sitting on our dock. When informed this was private property, my wife was met with curses and threats. This is real, this happened. Sure most people are good - - and "most" areas are not (yet) victims of wildfire and vandalism.

But to increase public access while ignoring the increasing threat is completely irresponsible. What little effort or small mistake does it require to start a fire? If YOU were to be held personally liable, would you sanction greatly increasing these risks? Would you offer to pay our fire insurance - - sure to increase (if not cancel!) as a result of such park access? Would YOU advocate this if it were next to your home and property?

Fourth, in one of our discussions with Bert (and likely you) standing at the very spot identified for camping, I requested planting of vegetation to conceal our property from hikers wandering off the trail. A pond is an irresistible attraction to a hiker!

Seems like lip service was paid . . . but no action was taken. Is this what we can expect going forward?

Fifth, the Park property includes a far better site for your planned campground down near the existing pond and much further from our property and that of the Grays. Why is the Park service overlooking this site which seems better in every way? It WAS the site of a previous hunt camp - - for the same obvious reason: it's in a better spot!

This is a terrible feeling - - being nearly helpless in the face of Government when it's so clear that tragic consequences are bound to result. Why can't some degree of accommodation take place here? We await your response.

---

I am a resident of Diamond A (**Address**) and am writing to express my concerns about open fires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. The proximity of the park and the threat of wildfires to our community and all of the surrounding areas should be given priority in any future plans for parkland use.

I am sorry to say based on a couple of my own experiences (one while backpacking and one recently by the Truckee River where someone had an open fire to cook trout), people are not very good at being mindful of potentially negative impacts of their actions.

---

I am writing regarding the proposed expansion plan for the North Sonoma Mountain. I am definitely against adding overnight camp sites and camp fires! We have enough problems in Sonoma County with wildfires without adding to the equation.

Many people would be able to light a camp fire and watch it vigilantly, putting it out until all embers are ash. However, there are MANY others who get distracted or really don't care much because they don't live here. Those are the people who scare me.

I am part of the Diamond A residential community in Sonoma which is south of the proposed expansion @5-7 miles. Fire travels very fast and far in a short amount of time.

We have all seen the Paradise videos or have known someone (or been that someone) whose home burned in 2017 &/or 2020. In Diamond A we have established a Fire Safe Council of volunteer homeowners. We have been working on fire mitigation strategies for our one way in/one way out community (Grove Street) for about one and one-half years.

Please register my opinion to cancel this plan.

---

I work with Sonoma Mountain Institute and Grounded Land and Livestock in managing grasslands for ecological health on multiple ranches around Sonoma County. We run cattle at several locations on Sonoma Mountain, including Taylor regional park and the area you are calling North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. I reviewed the proposed master plan and wanted to send you some thoughts.

I believe access to nature through our parks system is fundamental to developing and sustaining the public's relationship to and love of our environment. I have been lucky enough to spend many days from sun up to sun down working on, learning from, and caring for these lands. I very much support others having the opportunity to develop the same connection.

That being said, I have several concerns in how the access is provided and what unintended consequences may stem from it. North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and the adjacent preserved lands are some of the last vestiges of undeveloped nature in our county. Wildlife depend on these spaces as both habitats and corridors for migration. If these spaces are cut up with paths, disrupted by trespassers, inundated with dog walkers, or burned because of careless fires or cigarette butts, it will be detrimental to all of the other beings who depend upon them.

With that in mind, I strongly support Alternative 3 as it will have the least impact on the ecology while still providing access to the public. Furthermore, I highly encourage all steps possible to be taken to mitigate the effects on wildlife including banning and enforcing off leash dog walking, fires, portable speakers, off trail excursions, and trespassing. Additionally, I support minimal trail development in order to leave large sections of the preserve undisturbed.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work that you do in balancing all of these factors.

---

As a neighbor (just across the entry driveway) my wife and I used to enjoy visiting the Jacobs Ranch and, because we are dog owners, miss being able to walk up the hill to the umbrella tree for the wonderful views and get together with neighbors for celebrations in the Redwood Grove since the park opened. We love the sensitive plans you have prepared and sincerely hope the modest plans to include an area that allows leashed dogs survives this process so we can enjoy this wonderful resource

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I prefer Plan 1. I would like to keep bicycles at a minimum.

---

I hope you are well! I wanted to make a public comment on the North Sonoma Mountain Park.

Today, was the first time I saw mountain bikes going up and down the Mtn towards Jack London and as a hiker/runner I felt that the trails are too narrow for both cyclists and hikers. The cyclists were going too fast and not adhering to the trail rules.

I have run in the park many times and haven't seen this many cyclists and the only thing I could ascertain is that these mountain bikers didn't realize Annadel reopened yesterday.

The other comments I would like to make is before we build more trails in the park we fix the curves going up and down the switchbacks. I have run down the mountain in the winter after a good rain and it was really slippery that I basically crawled around a curve. Isn't so bad now but is bad in winter

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I'd love to see hike-in family camping at North Sonoma Mountain be made available. My family and I would really enjoy going camping there. Thank you!

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There should be no changes to the NSMRP. This plan will bring more people and traffic into our community, and will disturb the right to quiet enjoyment of the properties of residents. Our roads are not appropriately sized and are not in good enough shape to handle increased visitor traffic, and do not meet Cal Fire State Responsibility Act Fire Safe Regulations. Increased traffic from visitors would make it harder for us to evacuate in a fire emergency and for fire suppression equipment to move in to protect our properties. Please see the following 10-2-20 11:44am email regarding our opposition to the plan in its entirety that was addressed to all Sonoma County Supervisors.

---

Thank you for your work on this important parks project.

I am writing in support of Alternative Map #1.

We need greater access to this regional park site and accessibility is key. I like the larger expansion of the parking lot and ADA accommodations.

Overall, increasing access to Sonoma Mountain Ranch will be amazing. The park is already a gem but with these proposed changes folks from all over the North Bay can enjoy this park. One of the major things we need during COVID is access to safe outdoor space. With the expansion of this park, we can achieve more accessibility and opportunities for folks to stay healthy and experience nature.

---

The PDF form is attached, but it's painful to use. Here is a regular email.

The plans are reasonable and I prefer Alternative 1, with additional parking and road access. I am a north county hiker (30 hikes/yr) who would get to this park a couple times a year. It seems like a local resource for Valley of the Moon residents, which is fine, but there are lots of alternatives immediately nearby.

Two main questions:

1. IDENTITY: this park is surrounded by major parks on all sides (Annadel, Hood, Sugarloaf, Jack London) so how is this park different? What need does it fill? Is it a children's/school area,

hiking, families, all day self-rec, camping (which is sorely in demand... we could do with another major campground). What is the focus, and problem being solved?

2. FIRE: I don't see plans to incorporate the reality of fire. How are we hardening the park (such as metal signage, concrete restrooms, concrete bridges, etc) to recover quickly, and not continually incur budget and capital repairs? How is the park planning to proactively use fire to maintain? The 2017-2020 fire seasons have demonstrated that Conservation is not equivalent to infinite Preservation.

FEEDBACK on the storybook and website:

- The storybook is interesting on desktop, but is not workable on mobile. At times there are 3 things side-by-side, which is too many.
- I prefer a slide format, I can browse it quickly
- I liked the graphics that showed the "delta" between the plans. But I would like this summarized upfront without so many flowery words
- I like the clickable ArcGIS maps.
- This PDF comment form is all on one line, there is no line wrap. This form of feedback is very very difficult to use

SUMMARY: I love SCRP parks and use them weekly. The plan is good but vanilla. It needs to highlight how it will be sustainable, given the reality of Fire.

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## NORTH SONOMA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

### REASONS **NAME** IS AGAINST CERTAIN PARK DEVELOPEMENT

Fire mitigation was requested from the Summit View Ranch property owners. The park ranger explained that there was no budget (money) to do that. That is a good reason to NOT expand this region of Sonoma Mountain. Who will be responsible to pay for all the improvements? Who will pay for the maintenance of restrooms, garbage, common areas such as parking lots, trails and constant supervision of campers? What happens when the funds run out and the park closes like many others in California have done? I don't recall seeing a budget, although I have only lived here two plus years. Many of these issues need to be addressed and clarified.

I do support increasing some hiking/biking trails but only if kept to a minimum and away from sensitive areas.

Fire mitigation and prevention is essential to keep us all safe.

### MY FEEDBACK:

- 1 Day use only. Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunk house.
- 2 No fires under any circumstances. One cigarette or wiener roast could be devastating to the park and nearby homes and structures.
- 3 Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals

who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties.

- 4 Noise pollution. Children screaming, music playing, car engines, motorcycles... etc.
- 5 Increase of traffic on and in already sensitive areas.
- 6 Properties that are bordering the park boundaries will lose the serene and tranquil lifestyle that is the reason we chose to make this area our residence.
- 7 The loss of our privacy and the risk of people entering our properties illegally.
- 8 Locals will be forced to share the park with people from other counties and States that may not have the care and respect for this special protected environment that we and nature enjoy.
- 9 The North Bay has many existing parks that provide campgrounds, equestrian, bike and hiking trails. Let's keep our Sonoma Mountain as a natural paradise as it now exists.

Thank you for your consideration.

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I am very concerned about opening up Sonoma Mt to camping and any sort of fire option. This seems like a crazy idea. We are experiencing winds, temperatures and fires like no other time. Ask the firefighters what they think. Trump has just denied fire relief to California.

Whose idea was this ?

---

I am an avid hiker and lived on Sonoma Mountain back in the 1960s. I do a lot of watching YouTube videos about hikes in other countries as well, and the one thing that I noticed about hiking in other countries is that many of them have areas for hikers to camp just by throwing up a tent overnight for a night or two while they hiking along trails, The trails are not super remote some of them are near pasture land and some of them are right outside of towns or cities (Much like the camp grounds in the north part of the Tahoe basin outside of Tahoe city, There are two State Park campgrounds that are literally in town or near the outskirts.

I'm not into cabins but I do love the idea of being able to circumnavigate the bay on the ridges or by way of the San Francisco Bay water trails and be able to pitch a tent for an overnight stay or two night stays. That way I don't have to keep breaking up with my desire for a multi day long distance hike.

Might I suggest you guys take a look at how the Camino de Santiago and many of the trails in Scotland Ireland and England are set up for overnights so that what works can be emulated, especially for trails in more suburban like areas.

Thank you

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The very thought of allowing any kind of fires (by irresponsible non-residences) on Sonoma mountain is **terrifying** to us who live on the mountain. **How can you even consider it?** We have 30+ years of our blood and tears into our home! Insurance cannot possibly replace all that could be lost by ONE careless and uncaring person or persons.

---

Hi Karen, please add my name to the list of those opposing camping and especially fires at the park. Too many knuckleheads out there to trust that they would be responsible with the ability to have fires.

Thank you.

---

I just read an article about this in the Sonoma Index-Tribune so thought I would send feedback.

It seems less than ideal to allow anyone to use any type of flame in one of our parks given our issues with fires. No matter how many people are responsible, there is going to be some percentage of people who are careless or just not very thoughtful and could start the next Glass fire.

If you allow camping, you will have some kind food cooking going on whether you allow campfires or Bunsen burners or not. People will just do that. It is part of camping. I can see kids running around with their still flaming marshmallows ... starting the next fire. So given people will cook whether allowed to or not because it is part of camping, it seems allowing camping is ill-advised as well.

Just one person's opinions.

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I have reviewed the proposed alternatives for the above Master Plan. While most aspects appear well thought out, I am appalled at the idea of allowing ANY outdoor fires (campfires, individual fires, BBQs) on the preserve, which all three plans do to some extent. The prior public review was apparently done in May-June 2017, before the Tubbs, Nunn, Kincade, LNU Complex & Glass fires (not to mention wildfires in other parts of the state such as the 2018 Camp fire which destroyed the town of Paradise). We now know much more about how destructive the combination of wildfire and wind, along with hotter temperatures from climate change, is and will continue to be. I believe if you asked most commentators now for their opinion about allowing outdoor fires in the Preserve, you would get a much different answer than you did then.

I live in the Diamond A Ranch Estates, on the southeast side of Sonoma Mountain, not very far from the Preserve. It would not take much – a spark from a campfire, or someone failing to fully put out a BBQ fire – for a fire to take off, possibly with help from a north / northeast wind (common during fire season), and blow over the top of Sonoma Mountain to Diamond A. Our only exit route is Grove Street. Grove Street is a narrow, winding one-way in, one-way out road. There are ~200 homes here, and more homes in the George Ranch to the south and below Diamond A on Grove Street. If you allow ANY outdoor fires (supervised or not), you will be putting people's lives and homes at risk.

This is not a NIMBY objection, this is a plea for safety for those who live on Sonoma Mountain. Please consider it.

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I commend Sonoma County Regional Parks for the creative methods for allowing the public to comment on the master plan alternatives for North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. I have walked the trails of North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park several times in the last few years.

1) I recommend that dog access to trails not be expanded beyond that shown in the alternatives because of the effects of dogs on reducing the occurrence of wildlife. The odors of dogs along trails will repel wildlife.



2) I would support limiting bike access to trails because of the roadkill effects of mountain bikes on reptiles.

3) I could not find any information on the management of the resources of North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park in the master plan. Without management, the vegetation of the regional park will change. There will likely be a decline of grassland and freshwater marsh as those vegetation types will be overgrown by trees over time. There will also be an increase in Douglas-fir trees.

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department (Department) should determine how much of each vegetation type would be within the regional park.

4) Sensitive resources should be protected by an appropriate buffer whose width should depend on the resource.

5) Before any management activities are initiated, a baseline survey should be undertaken to determine the location of sensitive biological resources and, for any rare plants or animals or sensitive vegetation types such as freshwater marsh, the density or number of plants and animals within an area. Taking this type of baseline data will allow the Department to determine whether the management is achieving its goal.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

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Karen, I tried to fill out the PDF comment card, but could not manage to figure out how to send it to you--beyond my limited computer skills.

So, here is my comment:

Campfires no longer make sense for this park. After four consecutive years of severe fire impacts and evacuations here in Sonoma County, we are lucky Sonoma Mountain has not burned. Given the dry conditions and climate change, campfires would simply invite a tragic fire and the risk far outweighs any benefit.

PLEASE do not allow campfires.

---

I live about half a mile from the entrance to North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park, and diablo winds would blow any fire in the park "downwind" in my direction. Sonoma Mountain contains a vast amount of fuel, and has not burned in a century.

Sonoma County has had four major wildland fires during the past three years that have burned 20% of the county's geographical area. I have lived in Bennett Valley for 20 years, and my family evacuated during the Nuns Fire which came within 150 yards of our home. We have been prepared to evacuate several other times, and now lose electric power when PG&E has public safety power shutoffs. We live under threat of wildfire much of the year. Staff in the parks department apparently hasn't taken notice.

I adamantly oppose turning Sonoma Mountain into a mini-resort with campgrounds, bunkhouses, and cooking. I also oppose expanding parking and any equestrian use that begins in this park. The trailheads

for existing equestrian use should be diverted to Jack London Park which has adequate road access. I support increased trails, especially allowing dogs to use the park. It is silly that I have to drive miles to walk my dogs when this park is so close to my home.

Residents of Sonoma County (including my family) voted to tax ourselves to purchase and maintain this park, which occurred years after we built our home here. My family has purchased an annual pass each year for 15 years. Support for camping from organizations and individuals who do not live in Sonoma County should be ignored. They did not make this park possible and don't have to live with the consequences of a disaster.

### **Bennett Valley Area Plan Issues.**

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Bennett Valley Plan in 1979, with an overall goal of preserving and protecting the traditional rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. Its area-specific policy requirements were adopted to avoid significant environmental impacts within Bennett Valley. Policy LU-1a of the General Plan states:

A Specific or Area Plan may establish more detailed policies affecting proposed development, but may not include policies that are in conflict with the General Plan. In any case where there appears to be a conflict between the General Plan and any Specific or Area Plan, the more restrictive policy or standard shall apply.

Land Use Policy 2 in the BV Plan states "Commercial development is not considered appropriate to the rural character of Bennett Valley." The attributes of this mini-resort are commercial in both nature and effect. A private entity's proposal of a campground or hotel/bunkhouse facility of this size it would be deemed to violate the BV Plan. A government proposal is no different.

### **Access Road.**

The sole access road into the park from Sonoma Mountain Road is posted "one way," and the dead-end road extends about ¾ of a mile to the parking lot. Parts of the one-way access road are only 10 feet wide, with minimal shoulders, and no part of the access road seems wider than 12 feet. It should not have opened in 2015 with such inadequate access.

Sonoma County has wrongly contended that new development on roads build before 1991 are not required to meet Fire Safe Regulations. This was clarified in the attached October 23, 2020 letter from Jeff Slaton, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) attorney, to Sonoma County:

**Sonoma County has repeatedly maintained that Public Resources Code section 4290 and the Fire Safe Regulations do not apply to existing roads. Sonoma County's position is incompatible with the plain language of PRC § 4290, the Fire Safe Regulations, and opinions and letters issued by the Attorney General of California. More importantly, the Fire Safe Regulations themselves . . . clearly provide no exemption for existing roads . . .**

The narrow access road violates the regulations, which require "safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, and shall provide unobstructed traffic circulation during a wildfire emergency. . . ." 14 CCR § 1270.02(d). It would be impossible for firefighters in Type 3 fire engines (9 feet wide plus mirrors) to enter the park without creating a dangerous bottleneck if they encountered vehicles, including trucks hauling wide horse trailers. Normal passenger vehicles are at

least 6 feet wide. The regulations require a minimum road of two ten (10) foot traffic lanes, not including shoulder and striping. § 1273.01(a). This is not a theoretical problem. The Press Democrat reported that Cal Fire crews declined to enter Cougar Lane during the Glass Fire and Mill Creek Road during the Walbridge Fire while they waited for evacuations on these roads.

The development projects in the master plan cannot go forward without improving road access.

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Analysis.**

Sonoma County has a history of undertaking inadequate CEQA analyses, which requires an analysis of potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the project alternatives. A full environmental impact report is needed for this project.

The park has existing hazardous conditions that should be reflected in the environmental setting (baseline) of the CEQA document. This includes a data-based analysis of habitat, topography, climate, fire history, fuel types, density, anticipated fire behavior, and threats to adjoining properties and the region. Model counties require an assessment of wildfire hazard potential and fire protection plan that conforms to the National Fire Protection Association Standards. Humans are the primary cause of wildfire ignitions in the wildland urban interface. The attached letter by the California Office of the Attorney General states “It is well-accepted that building in wildland areas increases the risk and severity of fires,”<sup>1</sup> and includes extensive references to technical and other literature. The National Academy of Science concluded that “Human-started wildfires accounted for 84% of all wildfires, tripled the length of the fire season, dominated an area seven times greater than that affected by lightning fires, and were responsible for nearly half of all area burned.”<sup>2</sup>

The parks department must prepare an emergency evacuation plan. The CEQA guidelines (checklist XX) require an analysis of wildfire issues, and the California Supreme Court has held that CEQA requires that a project’s fire risk be considered as an impact on the existing environment.<sup>3</sup> Any wildfire mitigation measures that supposedly result in an acceptable risk to lives, homes, and communities must be substantiated as being feasible and effective. If overnight stays are allowed, park users will inevitably make fires irrespective of any rules. Sonoma County enforces few of its rules in any department, due either to a lack of resources or a lack of will. Merely adopting rules is not a feasible or effective mitigation. For example, people in homeless encampments start numerous illegal fires that are “against the rules.”<sup>4</sup>

For all of these reasons, I urge you to pare back the proposed activities in the master plan to focus on day use.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Nicole Rinke to Planning Commission of Monterey County (March 20, 2019), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer K. Balch et al., Human-started wildfires expand the fire niche across the United States, PNAS March 14, 2017 114 (11) 2946-2951. <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/11/2946>

<sup>3</sup> *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015), 62 Cal.4th 369, 388.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/09/30/san-jose-sees-spike-in-fires-at-homeless-encampments/>; <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/homeless-camp-fire-in-santa-rosa-burns-woman/>; <https://www.thedailybeast.com/los-angeles-fire-blamed-on-illegal-cooking-in-homeless-camp/>; <https://krctv.com/news/local/firefighters-put-out-homeless-camp-fire-in-redding>

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Subject: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park planning

Message: I CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THAT AFTER 4 YEARS OF LOCAL FIRES AND ALL THE DEVASTATION THEY HAVE CAUSED, INCLUDING THE LOSS OF MANY LIVES, THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL IS BEING MADE.

The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community.

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has A SINGLE PUBLIC ACCESS ROAD with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in unincorporated Sonoma County have access through this "ONE WAY IN -- ONE WAY OUT" access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are now lived in. WE MUST THEN FURTHER ADAPT EXISTING FIRE SAFE STANDARDS WHERE WE CAN TO ENSURE SAFETY IN THESE COMMUNITIES.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.
- My home of 40 years is on a SINGLE LANE EASEMENT/ROAD above Diamond A. It is situated in woods and forest near the top of Sonoma Mountain. The dangers of fires has become a very real threat not only to the safety of the homes here and to the forest but to the added stress that occurs every fire season. To have the County increase this stress and decrease the safety is INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, DO NOT PROCEED WITH CREATING ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FIRE HAZARD AND ANXIETY for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

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Subject: North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Planning

Message: FIRST AND FOREMOST, IT BLOWS MY MIND THAT AFTER 4 YEARS OF LOCAL FIRES AND ALL THE DEVASTATION THEY HAVE CAUSED, INCLUDING THE LOSS OF MANY LIVES, THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL IS BEING MADE.

The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community.

Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has A SINGLE PUBLIC ACCESS ROAD with a "choke point" at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in unincorporated Sonoma County have access through this "ONE WAY IN -- ONE WAY OUT" access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are now lived in. WE MUST THEN FURTHER ADAPT EXISTING FIRE SAFE STANDARDS WHERE WE CAN TO ENSURE SAFETY IN THESE COMMUNITIES.

The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A.

The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.

The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real "slap in the face".

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, DO NOT PROCEED WITH CREATING ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FIRE HAZARD AND ANXIETY for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

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I am a resident on Sonoma Mountain, backing up to the regional park, and I am absolutely against any and all fires at the park. This should include individual or fires with rangers. Intentionally having fires in this area is the most idiotic suggestion after the fires that have decimated our community I have ever heard. Stop this insane idea right now.

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RE: NORTH SONOMA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK - Comments about proposed park development

Summary:

I advocate limited development some hiking/biking trails but only restricted to day use and respectful of sensitive areas to protect our land. Trails designated for equestrian and bike use should be separate. Equestrian entry only from Jack London State Park. No equestrian access from proposed trailhead development. The entrance off Sonoma Mountain Road is very narrow - in case of emergency it would be very difficult to even get cars out. Sonoma Mountain Road is also a difficult road to maneuver with horse trailers.

Fire mitigation and prevention is essential to keep us all safe.

Specific comments and suggestions to Alternative 3 of the Master Plan:

1. No fires and no smoking permitted under any circumstances. Just one errant cigarette butt or BBQ ember could be devastating to the park and nearby communities. No BBQs and no campfires. No program-led Campfire Area.

2. **ALLOW DAY USE ONLY.** Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping, cabins or bunkhouse.
3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to minimize impacts on our wildlife corridors, especially migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative impacts to the natural flora and fauna endemic of this region, particularly associated with riparian areas. Sonoma Mountain has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties.
4. Sonoma Mountain is a critical link to the ecological mosaic of this region. Wildlife corridors are critical areas to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
5. Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil area. Not significantly increasing traffic on Sonoma Mountain Road - it is a narrow road difficult for oncoming traffic to pass in many places. Road can be hazardous, especially east of park access, severely deteriorated and eroded in many places. Consider control (electronic and app based?) signage at Sonoma Mountain Road and Bennet Valley road informing users when parking is at full capacity.
6. No electric bikes. Mountain bikes restricted to certain trails. Horses and bikes on separate trails; most trails pedestrian only. Horses enter through Jack London Park only.
7. Cooper's Grove-2nd growth Redwood Grove, a place identified as a cultural and sacred to Native Americans, should be restricted to groups lead by a Ranger or Docent only.
8. No dogs on trails. Dog urine detrimental to and incompatible with wild habitat.

Let's conserve and preserve Sonoma Mountain.

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Thank you for your quick response. I prefer that the plans for expanding services at the park do not involve any open fire pits or BBQ's. With fire danger in Sonoma County at all time high levels, it simply doesn't make sense. We live 1/4 mile from the park entrance and are very concerned about wildfire risk every year.

Thank you for allowing community input on this issue.

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I am a resident of southern Sonoma Mountain in Petaluma, and here is my input on the Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Master Plan

Support:

- The trail that takes a gentler grade to getting toward the top of the mountain makes both environmental and accessibility sense.
- The loop at the top of the mountain will provide an overlook of the surrounding terrain.
- The camping in Jacob's Ranch if kept limited is a reasonable use of already developed public land.
- equestrian access on the trails
- plan to use grazing for wildfire mitigation

Criticisms:

- Concerned about new trails through mature oak woodland and steep hillsides particularly where there are existing trails nearby. Various new trails around Jacobs Ranch through oak woodland and otherwise undisturbed areas don't seem necessary given the existing trails in the area. Those could be improved and maintained as necessary. Meadow Loop – crosses wetlands and high drainage areas coming off slopes below Umbrella Tree.
- Oppose camping of any type at night on top of mountain. **Backpacking:** At this time do not allow or provide for backpacking on Sonoma Mountain for these reasons:
  - Disruption of wildlife habitat and critical wildlife corridor by the presence of humans in backpacking camp that will create noise, lights, smell and other impacts on an area that is currently free of such impacts. It is also likely that backpackers may bring large intrusive lightweight LED lamps that you now see in campgrounds that are very bright. Even headlamps can be disruptive to a place with a very dark sky as it is now.
  - Monitoring and maintenance of a backpack site at top of mountain will be difficult if not impossible to enforce standards. In other backpack sites operated by Regional Parks, specifically Azalea Camp on Mount Hood, the area has been essentially abandoned with no maintenance or improvements for the decades. It does not appear that Regional Parks has the capacity to maintain or operate remote backcountry sites effectively.

### **Recommendations/Improvements:**

- Develop a fuels management plan to reduce risk of high-intensity wildfire, with evidence based tree and brush management
- Lease to ranchers who use rotational grazing allowing pastures time to rest and recover, limit livestock access to creeks and ponds when possible, and utilize livestock to mitigate fire risk through fuels reduction
- **Sonoma Mtn. Ranch** - Connect to Jack London via fire road/access road to the south NOT on knoll at the top of Jack London – there is considerable amount of erosion being caused by people going straight downslope to the Hay Trail junction within Jack London. Trail grade much more efficient connection via the PGE road/access point.
  - **Sonoma Mtn. Ranch** - Connect to Jack London via fire road/access road to the south NOT on knoll at the top of Jack London – there is considerable amount of erosion being caused by people going straight downslope to the Hay Trail junction within Jack London. Trail grade much more efficient connection via the PGE road/access point.
  - Connect to Jack London Access Trail + Mountain Loop trail.
- Summit trail connection to North Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail – beware of General Vallejo era corral and old growth Bay stand.
- Dogs should be allowed on leash only and/or prohibited if they disturb wildlife habitat, bird nesting and wildlife corridor. Matanzas Creek – hike only trail – good option for no dogs because of riparian habitat. No dogs past bridge – okay to Redwood picnic site and Umbrella Tree trail.

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I've looked through the proposed plans. My hope is that the NSRP/Open Space be left fairly undeveloped. I like it as it is. I'm not in favor of the proposed camping facilities at Jacob's Ranch, though perhaps a modest natural playground area would be okay. If the house and barn are being made available to the Parks, I'd prefer a natural history educational center there or something like it. Or a residence for a park ranger. If camping were to be permitted at SMRP, I'd prefer land farther in on the



trails for that purpose. There are some nice meadows and hillside knolls that I think would be more suitable. My concern with campgrounds is also the noise made by campers. As it is, SMRP is a beautifully quiet place that I appreciate for that reason alone.

As for trail usage, I'm in favor of priority to hiking, with some allowance for equestrians and very limited access for mountain biking. I think there are other trailed areas (e.g., Crane Creek, Jack London SP) more suitable for mtn biking.

Regarding the Sonoma Mountain summit, I would like to see it better marked than it is now. It's kind of anticlimatic to reach the top with no marker other than the bench that's up there. At the very least, an elevation marker with a placard that indicates the summit would be good.

I understand the Park department's position to make SMRP more multi-use oriented, but my vote is for things to stay pretty much as they are now. Since it opened five years ago, it's really a pristine place to spend time in the natural world without a lot of crowds to have to deal with, especially with more urban folks that may not respect the quiet of nature and the wildlife that inhabit the wilderness.

I'll look forward to hearing the outcome of the Master Plan.

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I have lived on Sonoma Mountain for 16 years. My home is located across the street from North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park next to Cooper's Grove. It is important to me to keep this park with minimally developed as possible so it can be treasured for generations to come as we see it today and also to preserve the Native American cultural aspect of this sacred mountain.

I strongly oppose the County's plan to **allow overnight stays that consists of bunkhouses, tents, backpacking, cabins.**

In addition I am opposed to any kind of fire that includes **campfires, bbqs, portable camping stoves, backpacking stoves** in the development of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park (NSMRP). Permitting any type of fire is a risk that could result in a wildfire that could consume a large area of the park, Coopers Grove and expand to **people's lives**, homes, wildlife and livestock. In my effort to understanding the Regional Parks' NSMRP Master Plan was correct and that I do not misrepresenting any information provided by the Regional Park representatives, I provided the responses below as well.

By having any type of overnight stays or any type of fire increases fire risk and will impact not just residents bordering the park, but residents in Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Developmental Center, Glen Ellen, Bennett Valley Ridge, Bennett Valley, Penngrove, and Diamond A.

I have PTSD from the 2017 fires. In 2017 my house was completely surrounded by the Nun's Fire and if we were not there to protect it we would NOT have a house today. See attached picture below. The only reason the fire did not jump from our property to NSMRP was the road. The fire went all the up to Sonoma Mountain Road. Several other structures on our property were burned as well as two homes behind our house. Every year following 2017 I smell smoke due to fires within this region. My husband and I had our generator, fire hoses, and ladders ready to go from August 2020 to November 16, 2020. November 16<sup>th</sup> was the first time Sonoma County had rain since the Glass Fire that occurred in August 2020 and we then put our generator, fire hoses, and ladders away.



Sonoma Mountain has not burned for over 80+ years. No one can remember when the last time it burned. Sonoma Mountain is a tinder box ready to ignite. Please do not allow overnight stays of any kind or fires of any kind into the "Proposed Plan" and have this occur.

I believe NSMRP can provide life-changing experiences, environmental education opportunities, and have intimate experiences with nature without having to spend the night. Training for distances locations like Yosemite can be done today at Mount Hood Regional Park and Spring Lake Regional Park. Both which are nearby.

There are other Regional Parks that do not include overnight stays, Helen Putnam, Taylor Mountain, Laguna, Windsor Riverfront and Shiloh Park, Sonoma Valley, and Foothill Park and people enjoy the intimate experience with nature **without** having to spend the night and risking lives, property, wildlife and livestock.

I would request the County not risk people's lives, property, livestock in exchange for 6 campsites, 1 group camping, 2 bunkhouses, 4 cabins and a problem-led campfire area. As of November 17, 2020, the [County of Sonoma is joining other Counties to sue PG&E](#) in the 2019 Kincade Fire.

Having overnight stays and any type of fire is a danger to public safety .

The road into the park and Sonoma Mountain Road is addition is inadequate for further increased use and traffic and especially to escape if a fire would occur.

I want this park to be a park with lots of trails for horses, bike riders (no electrical bikes), hikers to enjoy! I want people to enjoy the beautiful nature and enjoy the intimacy with nature in this park but **not spend the night**.

I want this to remain as a **DAY USE ONLY** nature preserve.

I also would request that **no dogs should be allowed**. There have been many times when hiking on NSMRP where the sign indicates dogs on leash and is not enforced or people do not follow the rule. In addition, dogs are disruptive to wildlife. When there is a dog around you will not see wild turkeys, deer, bob cats, coyotes, foxes, and any other wildlife that currently inhabits NSMRP.

This land was originally intended to be an Open Space PRESERVE, bequeathed by the Jacobs family to the County with specific requirements to preserve the land. I intend to become a volunteer for this Park and look forward to preserving it.

I urge the County to continue to have this park as a **DAY USE ONLY** for North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park.

**The proposal to allow overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park in this day of hugely destructive fires is frankly ridiculous and appalling.**

**I live on the Sonoma Mountain hillside and am opposed to allowing any open fires on or near this wild, heavily wooded, mountain.**

- There are over 200 homes on the hillside where I live. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.

**Please consider day use only for the proposed recreation area, or ensure that camp fires are forbidden and that the rule is vigorously enforced.**

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Subject: Camping at Sonoma Mountain Regional Park

Message: I urge you to reconsider the idea of allowing campfires at the Sonoma Mountain site.

This seems like the risks outweigh the benefits.

I know of many residents who are tired of dealing with the threats to their homes during the wildfire season. While we want our parks to be an attractive place to enhance the quality of life here in Sonoma County, decisions like this could actually drive away long term residents like myself.

Thanks for your consideration of my opinion.

I am writing to express my opposition to the plan of creating facilities for overnight camping and open fires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. I am a current resident of the Diamond A community, a development of over 200 homes on Sonoma Mountain above the town of Sonoma.

As a survivor of the Oakland Hills firestorm in 1991 where I lost my home and all of my possessions, I know first hand the devastation of wildfires. The Diamond A community is especially vulnerable since there is only one way in and one way out. It is not overly dramatic to say that if there was a fire in our community, there is a high probability of loss of life due to the difficulty residents would face in fleeing.

As I am sure you are aware, wildfires in Northern California have become a yearly event. We spent weeks this summer battling unhealthy air conditions and watching the weather report to see if the winds would send the fire our way. Although, I can understand the desire for an open fire camping option, with the current reality of global warming and the real possibility of fire destroying our homes and possibly our lives, it is a luxury and risk that is not worth taking.

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I estimate about 40 parking spaces there now, including horse trailers.

How many parking spaces does the master plan contemplate?

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The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community.

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

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I am writing to express my opinion about the proposal to add a bunk house, overnight camping, camp fires, and barbeques to Sonoma Mountain Regional Park.

I oppose all of the above.

Due to the potential for wildfire in and around the park, and the potential for fire to rapidly spread to surrounding homes and communities, I think this proposal is a bad idea and not taking fire mitigation and the safety of the community into consideration.

I do not live near the park, but lost my home to the 2017 Tubbs wildfire, and this year alone the area I live in has had 3 separate fires started by transients (at least one due to their overnight campfire.)

I understand that campfires are "proposed" to not be allowed unless a park ranger is there. However, this is a ludicrous assumption that this rule will be followed.

So, there is my input and public comment. I hope it will be considered.

Thank you.

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As a long term Bennett Valley property owner/resident (1972), I am opposed to any development in the North Sonoma Mountain Park that involves campfires, barbecues and/or overnight camping.

Until 20 years ago much of this park was grazed by large herds of cattle on the Jacobs Ranch. Any fire now on that property would impact a series of substandard inter-connecting roads such as Enterprise Road, Warm Springs Road and Pressley Road. Additionally, any evacuation from the Park area would impact the communities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, Penngrove and Glen Ellen – possibly even Petaluma and/or Santa Rosa.

The photographs in the Press Democrat (November 10, 2020) illustrate clearly the extremely narrow condition of Sonoma Mountain Road. There are sections of that road where tow cars barely can pass one another. What would happen if/when a fire truck was trying to reach the park and at the same time cars were trying to evacuate that same area?

In the last few years we have had to evacuate the Bennett Valley area twice – in 2017 with Nuns Fire and just this last October with the fires along Calistoga Roads and Highway 12.

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My wife, Dr. **Name**, and myself live on Sonoma Mountain off Lichau Road. We are writing to you in our capacity as residents and private citizens and not as official Board members of the O.W.L. Foundation, which deals specifically with Open space, Water resource protection, and Land use.

We have recently discovered plans to allow barbecues, campfires, human camping, and other highly dangerous and risky activities to be allowed in a planned North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. It is difficult to convey the total dismay at learning this. I find it extremely difficult to believe that you are

unaware of the severe drought we are in, that this is a La Niña year (meaning less rainfall); and that the mountain is rich in tinder dry fuels ALL YEAR LONG. The fire season, which used to be a couple of months, is now all year long and the Parks department should be aware of this. This plan seems to indicate that you are unaware of the fire potential of allowing people to camp and cook on this mountain.

We have had many, many serious conflagrations in this entire area. This year we had a single fire that achieved one million acres; there were 28 extremely large fires across California. The Tubbs fire ran right across this mountain from the east and took out several homes a only mile from us.

I strongly urge you to cancel any plans pending to allow such extremely risky behavior. We work all year long on fire, clearing fuels. We run cattle to keep pasture grass down.

We have a 300 gallon brush truck and more than 21,300 gallons of water in storage specifically to fight the next fire.

The next fire, in case you are unaware, will be bigger than the last ones. We have seen fire behavior change dramatically in the last 10 years. Wildfires use to have predictable patterns, they would have an obvious head, for example, Today's wildfires that threaten us often have to discernable head, they will burn in every direction at once. They can explode both up and down hill, we've seen such bizarre behavior right on our place. A fire at the north end of Sonoma mountain threatens the entire county.

The fact that we were not personally contacted you to alert us to this plan is regrettable. Fires have been seen to travel 20miles in a few hours. Firebrands can easily loft and travel many miles starting new fires as they land in all this fuel. Any risk so great should have been published widely. This plan puts everyone in the entire county at risk. I hardly think it necessary to point this out, but for some reason you have managed to miss this rather important bit of intelligence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please halt these reckless plans immediately.

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We have lived at **Address** Pressley Road for over forty years. When the North Sonoma Mountain Recreation area opened, we agreed on the day use plan. That people would want to walk and hike within the Parks boundaries seemed reasonable in an area that is so spectacular and home to the Coopers Grove of magnificent redwood trees.

The recent proposed plan to allow overnight camping and camp fires is simply not tenable. The proposed plan is based on community input from 2017 prior to the Tubbs firestorm; which burned across our property and destroyed homes very near us. In the following three years our community has been threatened by uncontrolled wild land fires each year.

Many of the residents of this rural residential community that surround NSM have lived here for decades and now live in fear of being burned out each new fire season. PTSD is a real thing here, which I fear many respondents to this proposed plan don't understand.

Introducing overnight camping and campfires is not realistic given what appears to be the new normal for our fire seasons. We strongly oppose this plan and urge the North Sonoma Mountains Recreation Area remain strictly for day use with no fires allowed.

Thanks so much for speaking with the Foundation Board. Some of them have not experienced North Sonoma Mtn. Since it is in the planning stages, that is why I suggested a board hike there. We were going to go to Lawson, but that is not happening. It will be so informative if you can join us. You will then create fundraising advocates for this project.

I have attached my comments on the plans. Thank you for all your work on this project. You do amazing work.

### **Public Comment – North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Master Plan**

I prefer the Summit Knoll – Sonoma Mountain Ranch Alternative 2. It is a less impactful design yet serves its purpose well.

I like multi-use trails and find most people respectful.

Group picnic areas should be available as well as the informal picnic area.

The Sonoma Mountain Ranch Trails will be awesome.

A gathering area for educational programs will be an asset.

Adequate equestrian parking is necessary.

Because of the fire impacts we have experienced in the past years, I don't think camping is a good idea – with or without campfires. (Tolay Lake is a much safer place to locate camping.) If there were a fire, simultaneous egress and ingress on the narrow road into the park would be impossible.

A bunk house with kitchen and meeting space might be ok for overnight stays that are organized and led by SCRP.

I love getting down to South Fork Matanzas Creek now. It is so lovely there on hot summer days.

The road into the park is so narrow, I don't know how school buses could navigate it. Even horse trailers are challenged.

Great to have a range residence there.

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We are outdoor enthusiasts and avid hikers, and we share a common passion for much of the Sonoma Park's mission to create memorable outdoor life experiences.

However, I'm writing this letter to communicate our grave & utmost concern for increased danger, destruction or death to ourselves, and to our communities surrounding Sonoma Mountain resulting from wildfire due in part or directly to the NSMP draft plans because they include overnight staying (and including BBQ's and fire pits).

Even without BBQ's and fire pits, man-made fires and cooking is part and parcel of the overnight camping experience, and even with rules in place, campers will inevitably break those rules, even under supervision.

We have been forced to dedicate the time and resources to effectively gathering all of the relevant data with regard to park planning, in order to assess the plans being put in front of us, and to develop a professional understanding of the plan that's being proposed, and whether it meets the new and evolving standards of our times. We have learned it does not, and it is out of line with guidelines coming out of Cal-Fire and increasingly coming out of governmental departments.

- We note **the plans were developed in 2017 before we entered an annual cycle of mass wildfire destruction in California**, including Sonoma County. We have noted no significant changes to the plans in light of the current conditions, which is extraordinarily cause for concern when considering the consequences. We have learned that **Lofted Firebrands are a significant cause of spotfire ignition – and the mountain.**

- We have learned the park has existing hazardous conditions that should be reflected in the **environmental setting of the CEQA document**, which are not, such as adopting measures to mitigate fire dangers, conforming to the latest standards of good practice set by the National Fire Protection Association Standards 1051, 1143, 1144 and the National Wildlife Coordinating Group.

- We have learned that Wildland Urban Interface is where people often ignite wildfires, as **humans are the number one cause of wildfire ignitions**

- **We have learned the road system to the parks do not meet state regulations for fire safe roads**, meaning that fire mitigation equipment cannot come up the road at the same time that people are evacuating fire areas.

- We have learned the Board of Forestry and the Deputy Attorney General have established that the SRA Regs apply to all existing roads. In an October 23, 2020 letter to Sonoma County Counsel <sup>[3]</sup>, the BOF legal counsel Jeff Slaton stated: "Throughout the certification process, Sonoma County has repeatedly maintained that Public Resources Code section 4290 and the Fire Safe Regulations do not apply to existing roads. Sonoma County's position is incompatible with the plain language of PRC § 4290, the Fire Safe Regulations, and opinions and letters issued by the Attorney General of California. More importantly, the Fire Safe Regulations themselves – which constitute the basis for the certification determination – **clearly provide no exemption for existing roads**, and it is these regulations that the Sonoma County ordinance must equal or exceed. This represents a fundamental and intractable disagreement between the Board and Sonoma County. **Sonoma County's position on existing roads, standing alone, is a legitimate basis for determining that the ordinance does not equal or exceed the Fire Safe Regulations."**

- Given there are such significant environmental impacts, **additional CEQA analysis should be undertaken, and considering the new fire mitigation standards being adopted increasingly by counties.**

- We are asking for your responsible leadership on this matter, our communities desperately need and deserve this.

#### References

Firebrands and spotting ignition in large-scale fires Eunmo Koo<sup>A,E</sup> , Patrick J. Pagni<sup>B</sup> , David R. Weise<sup>C</sup> and John P. Woycheese<sup>D</sup>.

[https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/weise/psw\\_2010\\_weise\(koo\)001.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/weise/psw_2010_weise(koo)001.pdf)

Syphard AD, Keeley JE, Massada AB, Brennan TJ, Radeloff VC (2012) Housing Arrangement and Location Determine the Likelihood of Housing Loss Due to Wildfire. PLoS ONE 7(3): e33954. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0033954

Balch JK, et al. (2017) Human-started wildfires expand the fire niche across the United States. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 114:2946–2951

Daniel Swain, Very strong offshore wind event to bring extreme wildfire risk Sun/Mon, esp. NorCal, Filed in Weather/Climate Discussion by Daniel Swain on October 22, 2020

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I lived off of Sonoma Mountain Road for 10 years and know the dangers of the narrow windy road where N Sonoma Regional Park is located. I am opposed to the Proposed Master Plan to allow overnight camping, fire pits & BBQ usage in the park.

Sonoma County since 2017 has had devastating fires year after year killing many of our residents and destroying hundreds and hundreds of buildings and properties. We all live in the danger of fires and power outages and need to be vigilant in planning for the safety and protection of all the citizens of Sonoma County.

If a fire broke out in N Sonoma Regional Park, how would the residents near the park be able to rapidly evacuate on the narrow road with firetrucks trying to reach the fire in the Park?

My vote is to maintain N Sonoma Park for Day Use Only.

Thank you for hearing my concerns as a 40 year resident of Bennett Valley, Sonoma County.

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My name is **Name** and I'm a resident of Windsor. I was told that this was the email to use to register my comments on the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park planning process.

I write in favor of allowing camping in the area and for night access. The idea that we as a society should limit our access to nature in order to allay the fears of vocal neighbors is damaging to the well being of the majority of us in this county. Spending a night amongst the natural world heightens our appreciation of its grandeur in unique and important ways. It brings us away from the stresses of the day to day. By



spending time camping we can return to the world with a heightened appreciation of what we have. Giving people another great camping option, in own small way, makes this County a better place to live.

Thank you for considering my comments,

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I've attached Sonoma Mountain Preservation comments on the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Plan—both the overview of environmental issues in our letter, and the attached document with detailed remarks from our Board members.

Sonoma Mountain Preservation offers these comments on the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Plan—both the overview of environmental issues in this letter, and the attached document with detailed remarks from our Board members.

All of these comments are based on our knowledge of the mountain, from working to preserve and protect it for twenty-eight years as an all-volunteer, community, non-profit organization.

CAMPING: Because the area is an acknowledged wildlife corridor from the Snow Mountain Wilderness to Mt. Tam, and an environmentally sensitive and pristine area, keep camping to a minimum and only allow camping at the developed Jacobs Ranch area.

DOGS: for the above-stated impact-on-wildlife reasons, keep dogs in developed area at Jacobs, at picnic area, and on Umbrella Tree trail. JLSHP and Osborne, the two neighboring parklands, do not allow dogs. Keep dogs out of other pristine areas and concentrate impact for as long as possible.

FIRE: Many neighbors of the Park (as well as our founder Pat Eliot) are opposed to any camping or recreational fires on the mountain, as you know. Our specific requests due to fire potential and environmental damage include:

- Development only at Jacobs Ranch, no camping on top.
- Any added infrastructure must be fire resistant.
- An unmonitored fire pit at Jacobs is asking for trouble.
- Any camping fires (graveled and installed firepits) at Jacobs must be limited to non-fire months (currently November to April or May).

Additional comments from our Board members are attached. Some of them conflict, and we want to share the full range of comments based on our long and deep knowledge of the mountain. Thank you for your consideration.

#### **Board Comments on North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Master Plan**

#### **Support:**

- The trail that takes a gentler grade to getting toward the summit of Sonoma mountain makes both environmental and accessibility sense.
- The loop at the top of the mountain will provide a glorious overlook of the surrounding terrain.
- The camping in Jacob's Ranch if kept limited is a reasonable use of already developed public land.
- Support new trails and alignments for daytime public access at the summit.
- Limited car camping at Jacob Ranch.

**Do Not Support:**

- Do not build bunkhouse or other lodging structures. Those are difficult and expensive to maintain and would need regular housekeeping and cleaning. Before long any bunkhouse is likely to become homes for birds, rodents, bats and other creatures in the long run, setting up a need for intrusive prevention and controversial decisions about killing, trapping or otherwise dissuading the creatures that live in the park from utilizing the new manmade structure.
- No capacity for accommodating large RVs having access to the park on the narrow windy road as it is inadequate to handle cumbersome vehicles, much less hordes of people if the site is overdeveloped. Large RVs should not be allowed primarily because of the impacts on campground from lights, generators, and other noise and disruption usually associated with big rigs.
- Other trails that open up undisturbed areas to access don't seem justified when considering the potential for wildlife connectivity. There is no explanation of why each option is necessary, or good.
- Camping on the mountain top should be prohibited. It is a wonderful idea in the abstract, but it opens the space to all kinds of access, disturbance and maintenance issues regarding porta potties, light, noise, water access, cooking fires, and events. People can enjoy the space without sleeping there. It might make the space more precious if it can't be so easily utilized. It is rare to have an area without light to enjoy the night sky. So guided hikes at night make more sense than camping in terms of upkeep, numbers allowed access, and protection of the wildlife corridor.
- Oppose camping of any type at night on top of mountain. **Backpacking:** Do not allow or provide for backpacking on Sonoma Mountain at this time for these reasons:
  - o Disruption of wildlife habitat and critical wildlife corridor by the presence of humans in backpacking camp that will create noise, lights, smell and other impacts on an area that is currently free of such impacts. It is also likely that backpackers may bring large intrusive lightweight LED lamps that you now see in campgrounds that are very bright. Even headlamps can be disruptive to a place with a very dark sky as it is now.
  - o Monitoring and maintenance of a backpack site at top of mountain will be difficult if not impossible to enforce standards. In other backpack sites operated by Regional Parks, specifically Azalea Camp on Mount Hood, the area has been

essentially abandoned with no maintenance or improvements for the decades. It does not appear that Regional Parks has the capacity to maintain or operate remote back country sites effectively.

- Campfires – many citizens in Sonoma County are now terrified of fire. However, Sugarloaf has had many years as a camping park without a fire incident. Can Regional Parks staff consult John Roney and other parks about best practices in avoiding fire incidents and what has caused whatever incidents have happened. The public is going to be very reluctant to add another source of fire ignition to the area.
- Concerned about new trails through mature oak woodland, old-growth bay forests and steep hillsides particularly where there are existing trails nearby. Various new trails around Jacobs Ranch through oak woodland and otherwise undisturbed areas don't seem necessary given the existing trails in the area. Those could be improved and maintained as necessary. Meadow Loop – crosses wetlands and high drainage areas coming off slopes below Umbrella Tree.
- **Wildfire Risk:** Allowing backpackers on top of remote Sonoma Mountain even while prohibiting open fires is too high at this time. Not all backpackers are experienced with white gas or cannister stoves, and some actually smoke cigarettes. Wildfire risk along with access and egress
- Do not allow for-profit events or corporate or political or industry (wine or other or other) fundraisers, no private events such as weddings or reunions or graduations. Do not allow organized events such as marathons or runs, bike races of any kind, horse events or others.

#### **Recommendations/Improvements:**

- For ease in evaluating the three proposals, Regional Parks should utilize an overlay map/diagram system that clearly shows how each proposal built on what was provided on the previous one and what was added.
- Some Board members had a negative reaction to the limited choices presented by Regional Parks. There was no room for alternative suggestions or not agreeing with any of the proposals. This is not a true attempt to get feedback from the public. It is more like well we've decided that A, B, or C is best and we don't care if you have any other ideas, proposals or objectives.
- **Alternatives and Process:** The proposed master plan draft is very difficult for the public to read and understand. It is challenging to understand what is new and what already exists. There is no explanation for any of the alternatives and their differences. For example, why a bunkhouse? Why more trails around Jacobs Ranch? What are the pros and cons of each alternative?  
Also, the alternatives are all based on intensification of use of the park without any low-use alternatives such as no camping. The alternatives and a low impact alternative need to be provided.

- **Wildlife Corridor:** Sonoma Mountain is part of a critical wildlife corridor allowing wildlife passage for large predator species such as mountain lions and bears from the Snow Mountain National Monument to Pt. Reyes National Seashore. While these lands are not wilderness areas, they are one of last fragments of natural and little-used stretches of open space in the southern end of Sonoma County. The master plan did not discuss, address or identify the wildlife corridor. The protection and impacts to the wildlife corridor must be prominent and prioritized in the master plan.
- Utilizing existing fire roads for horse and bike use makes the most sense in terms of the least disturbance and easiest maintenance.
- Develop a fuels management plan to reduce risk of high-intensity wildfire, with evidence-based tree and brush management.
- Lease to ranchers who use rotational grazing allowing pastures time to rest and recover, restrict livestock access to creeks and ponds when possible, and utilize livestock to mitigate fire risk through fuels reduction. It is preferable to use goats and sheep as opposed to cattle which can have a heavier impact on grasslands. Avoid overgrazing which could damage native grasses and promote invasive species.
- **New Trails:** New loop trail to access top of Sonoma Mountain for day hikers is an important improvement. The alignment should be improved to a location that is easier and less steep and less disruptive than the proposed alignment.
- The best overall approach is the fewest possible and high-quality trails possible to prioritize hikers and single-track trails. Horse and bike use should be limited to multi-use trails and existing fire roads if possible.
- **Park Entry Trail:** Valuable riparian corridor along Matanzas Creek confluence. Potential midden sites and archaeological site.
- **Sonoma Mtn. Ranch** - Connect to Jack London via fire road/access road to the south NOT on knoll at the top of Jack London – there is considerable amount of erosion being caused by people going straight downslope to the Hay Trail junction within Jack London. Trail grade much more efficient connection via the PGE road/access point.
- Connect to Jack London Access Trail + Mountain Loop trail.
- Summit trail connection to North Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail – beware of General Vallejo era corral and old growth Bay stand.
- Dogs should be allowed on leash only and/or prohibited if they disturb wildlife habitat, bird nesting and wildlife corridor. Matanzas Creek – hike only trail – good option for no dogs because of riparian habitat. No dogs past bridge – okay to Redwood picnic site and Umbrella Tree trail.

- **Camping:** Car camping at Jacobs Ranch should be allowed but limited and mostly low-profile. Allow tent camping and small campers. Limit open flame fires with permits to wetter season, but prohibit during fire season. Allow porta-potties, possibly flush toilets, but no showers, kitchens, or community buildings. Small visitor center may be OK. No vendors or snack shops or equipment rental. Sugarloaf State Park campground is good model.
- Group camps may provide benches and simple covering for unlikely event of rain or bad weather. Limit group size and type to school groups, youth groups, non-profits, churches and other community organizations. No corporate, business, political or wine industry use.
- **Events at Group Camp or in Park** - Allow for scientific or citizen science overnight camping and day-use events such as BioBlitz, nature classes, bird walks with Audubon and the like, hikes led by park rangers or non-profit naturalist partners with primary mission to be protection of park and natural resources. School class field trips.
- Nighttime hikes for stargazing or full moons could take the place of backpacking to allow people to experience the remote darkness on a limited basis.

#### Alternative-Specific Comments:

1. Alt 1, site O —no program-led campfires or fire pit because of fire danger. An unsupervised pit is asking for trouble. yes to Alt C.
2. Too few “hiking only” trails—.4 miles—when public opinion in 2017 was divided pretty equally on shared/non-shared. Suggest adding some of the bike coalition’s trail ideas.
3. Multiuse N Sonoma Mtn Ridge trail, too narrow for horses, fragile for bikes. See #2. (page 10 in use plan refers to public input)
4. Alt 2 item Q, agree with smaller parking expansion
5. FIRE: allow ONLY lanterns and stoves powered by gas, jellied petroleum, and pressurized liquid anywhere in park, especially at Son Mtn Ranch camping. No smoking or target shooting. This is consistent with National forest modified fire restrictions.
6. Natural Play area: *use natural features only—logs, rocks, places to build forts with sticks—and no commercial play structures, to encourage interaction with nature.*
7. Summit item J—no trail through center, where rockpile is. Leave rockpile cairn in natural state, it's recent historic. Circle top with trail, and put benches in appropriate view places at outer edge of trail. Visitors should be able to be at the top-top without disturbance.
8. Son Mtn Ranch camping & bunkhouse use fine so long as always docent-led.
9. Include *all* camping and bunkhouse use in county reservation system to control usage.
10. Don't include Park entry trail.
11. Alt C, agree with no equestrian vendor and Reduced equestrian parking.
12. No generators or trailer camping at all. Access road too narrow.
13. In the built & accessible area of Jacobs, add a simple circle about 20 feet across using gravel (same as under picnic tables) for ceremony. Maybe some boulders in the four directions.
14. Low, wildlife-friendly lighting.
15. Install inaccessible trash boxes to prevent wildlife from scavenging.

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Hello Steve & Karen, I've been following the North Slope park plan discussions.

I understand the neighbors' concerns over fire as we have been evacuated several times.

I do wonder if there is any historical data on fires being started from campgrounds at Sugarloaf, Spring Lake, Austin Creek, Bothe, Hendy Woods and other locations in the area.

If there is historical data on this issue it might be worthwhile to publicize it.

I support the Park's effort to have accessible places for people to spend the night outside.

Thank you for all of your work.

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I have done a lot of thinking about this new park and while I am excited about the concept I do have concerns. The number one concern is fire.

As I understand it, the plans for the new park were made before the 2017 wildfires, but we have all learned a great deal since that time. The fast moving fire that took out the Los Alamos Rd area is a more recent lesson to all of us. I am quite familiar with Sonoma Mountain Rd and how narrow and windy it is. Imagining fire engines trying to negotiate this road while people are evacuating the other direction seems impossible.

No fires at this park is the best decision. We are now racing towards a disaster with climate change and if there is ever a time to sit back and evaluate the whole project from a fire standpoint it is now. I do not see how to justify any open flame. We are all tired of evacuations. Allowing any open flames in a dry grass park is just asking for disaster.

Thank you for all your hard work on this project!

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I will be concise.

Day use only is imperative. The encroachment on wildlife and the danger of fires both are involved in this.

Picnic tables and restrooms should only be adjacent to parking.

Absolutely no campsite development.

Use of hiking trails for domestic animals should be only specific trails. I tire of disruption for hikers their presence brings—even if they are beautiful and cute.

Let us preserve these areas by only having the very non-intrusive hiking trails.

I live in Bennett Valley and have sacrificed some of my freedom for the sake of mountain lions in particular. Please allow the preserve areas to **preserve** by strictly limiting development of human activities there.

Your consideration is sincerely appreciated,

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We live at **Address** Sonoma Mountain Road and are directly adjacent neighbors to the regional park, with two sides of our property sharing a fence line with the Jacob's Ranch portion of the Open Space Preserve. The lower park trail comes within 25 yards of our property and the proposed Group Camping site as presented in the Park's recently distributed Master Plan comes within approximately 125 yards of our property.

As you may be aware, we went through a lengthy vetting process to approve a winery, tasting room and farmstead creamery within the 150-year-old farm complex footprint on our site. That process allowed for ample input from the community related to the project, Sonoma Board of Supervisors hearings, litigation and a full Environmental Impact Report. In our process we would characterize the concerns of the community (including those of Supervisor Gorin) as:

1. Traffic / road safety
2. Water quality / usage
3. Community quality of life related to noise and operating hours
4. Preservation of wildlife migration through the Open Space Preserve

After this lengthy process we made significant concessions in regard to our project plan to accommodate the concerns of neighbors and Supervisor Gorin. Those concessions include:

1. Limiting Agricultural Event gatherings to eight annually and required to end by 9:30 pm.
2. Zero amplified outdoor music/sound
3. Requiring the modification of our building plans to relocate an enclosed chiller to the opposite side of a building and further from the property line we share with the Open Space Preserve. The requirement was made solely to limit any possible impact the chiller's noise might have on wildlife migration in the Open Space Preserve. A sound expert had provided input suggesting the sound level of the originally placed enclosed chiller would not rise above ambient noise levels at the property line.
4. The requirement to direct visitors to travel to our site from the west, and to avoid traveling on the eastern spur of Sonoma Mountain Road through Cooper's Grove.
5. The requirement to display a "No Right Turn" sign at the exit of our property to limit travel on the eastern spur of Sonoma Mountain Road.

We have been living on Sonoma Mountain for fifteen years. We are huge proponents of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. We feel it is an amazing resource for the local community and Bay Area at large. We love the fact that people of all ages can enjoy the beauty of Bennett Valley, gain an appreciation of nature and get some healthy exercise while doing so.

In reviewing the Park's Master Plan, we are generally supportive of most elements.

We have concerns that would be mitigated by the following:

1. limitation on group size and event type for any group picnic.
2. Exclusion of amplified sound

We feel the following should not be part of any alternative:

1. Overnight stays / camping
2. Open Campfires
3. BBQ's during times of year that pose fire risk.

Given the noise concerns in the county generally related to overnight stays (AirBnBs, etc.), as well as the noise concerns voiced during our project approval - consistent large group gatherings and overnight camping go against the desires of the community. Fire concern is no surprise given the changing environmental landscape, very real and experienced fire danger in Bennett Valley, and heavily wooded area within the park. The desire to modify the ranger home to a bunkhouse implies no oversight and it is hard to imagine full compliance in relation to any prospective campfire restrictions without such oversight. Seemingly any activity on the property would impact wildlife migration.

In summary, we feel any park development should be consistent with current use, allowing for trail expansion and increased daytime enjoyment.

We appreciate the time and effort this process takes. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

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As the Vice-Chair of Sonoma Mountain Preservation and a 30+ year resident of Glen Ellen, I would like to express my support for the letter recently sent by our Chair, *Name*, concerning the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Draft Plan Alternatives.

Whatever plan is adopted, it should closely conform with the easements originally established by SCAPOSD when the properties were acquired by the county

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I apologize for getting this letter to you so near the cut-off date but was unable to handle prior to now.

I find numerous areas of concern in the three alternative proposals. Of the three the third comes closest to being acceptable. But, there are major concerns that need to be addressed that are included in all the proposed alternatives before selecting even that alternative. To wit:

1. An open space preserve must "preserve" - not change, introduce new and, to varying degrees, detrimental uses.
2. The preservation of the upper portion of the mountain was, in my understanding as a member of the Sonoma Land Trust, to protect the visual amenities/backdrop of the mountain - a focal point of much of Sonoma County (and even Napa) and preserve its natural state as well as protect its non-human occupants.
3. Several aspects of the proposals infringe upon the lives and habitability of residents - threaten the lives and welfare of residents, i.e. potential fire, large additional traffic, degradation of existing (and additional) trails, plus introduction of uses that are more appropriate to urban and easily accessed parks, etc.



4. Negative impacts of proposed new usage and features that perhaps have not been considered, i.e. added traffic including large trailers, etc. would appear to prompt upgrading (size) of the two basic rural routes to the park, namely Pressley Road and Sonoma Mountain Road. These roads were identified in the planning document as “scenic by-ways” and were to be kept as such. Only upkeep to be allowed.

Also, the entry road into the park is essentially a one-lane road which would certainly seem to be inadequate for horse trailers along with other vehicles.

Following are the areas which I feel strongly should be eliminated from the planning proposals in order to protect and preserve the mountain for current and future generations as well as the wide variety of wildlife that call it home (and have no other place to go.)

1. No equestrian usage.
2. No bikes.
3. No dogs.

Why not, you ask? First, none of them are conducive to protecting the environment - the land, flora & fauna, the wildlife.

Horses, while beautiful, are large beings whose traffic wears and degrades earthen paths and pollutes the area with their droppings. They can also be a threat (or frightening) to encounter when walking alone or with family and smaller children. Also, the requirements to transport create traffic problems both onsite and offsite.

Bikes - Are also not conducive to a quiet landscape of nature, are destructive to trails, tend to move fast and, often, without regard to those on foot.

Dogs - Again, like horses, are a threat to wildlife through their nature, their smell and their inclination to defecate and urinate which upsets the balance of nature as well as others who use the trails.

4. No camping, natural play area and no fires or cooking of any sort! This is a wildland interface area. The area needs to be off-limits to any usage which might create a fire danger, period. Camping and play areas are more appropriate to less “nature preservation” areas.
5. No overnights - this should be a day use park preserve only.
6. No campfires, cooking, cabins, group camps or special boy scout (or any group) erected buildings.
7. No extensive trail in Cooper’s Grove - it’s a wonder of nature that has been preserved by the dedicated owners over many years with very little internal traffic.
8. No equestrian vendor.
9. No additional parking (current) or elsewhere.
10. No usage that appears to be “commercial” or urban.

I realize that this seems to be a good bit of “no’s” but we need to keep foremost that we are trying to “preserve” the natural landscape and habitat. You can’t include so much other usage without strict enforcement of the rules which would take lots of added manpower, and the unfortunate destruction of or detriment to what you’re trying to preserve, etc. Unfortunately, not all humans think of others (or other species) or the land and we wouldn’t want to destroy the very treasure we now have or endanger those who live in the area just to create more widespread usage, by creating so many options/usages which, to some, is not appropriate or necessary.

Thank you for letting me provide input. Having lived here a long time, we have worked to preserve the beauty and integrity of the land and natural habitants. We are happy to share this beauty but not at the expense of endangering or harming "Mother Nature and her children."

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Thanks you for taking the time to meet with the neighbors from Coopers Grove a couple weeks ago- the outreach was greatly appreciated.

Please see below NEIGHBOR COMMENTS pertaining to the Master Plan from the **NAMES** of **Address** Sonoma Mountain Road:

**IN SUPPORT:**

- Development of select Park Trails - (**including items 1 and 4-15** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area + Sonoma Mountain Ranch Summit)
- Development of all Park Features - Picnic, Play, Explore and Gather (**including items A-D and F-I** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of select Overnight Stay (**including item K** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of all Parking Expansion (**including items Q-W** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of all Park Operations and Livestock Management (**including items X-Y and AD** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of all Park Features - Picnic, Play, Explore and Gather (**including items J and AF** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Sonoma Mountain Ranch Area)
- Development of all Park Operations and Livestock Management (**including item AC** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Sonoma Mountain Ranch Area)

**NOT IN SUPPORT:**

- Development of select Park Trails - (**including items 2 - Campsite Trail and 3 - Coopers Grove Trail** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area + Sonoma Mountain Ranch Summit)
- Development of all Park Features - Picnic, Play, Explore and Gather (**including item E - showers and kitchen facilities** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of all Park Operations and Livestock Management (**including item Z - equestrian vendor** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of select Overnight Stay (**including items L-O** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Jacobs Ranch Area)
- Development of select Overnight Stay (**including item AA** from Conceptual Plan Alternative Option 1 - Sonoma Mountain Ranch Area)

- Development of **ANY Outside fire related facilities or activities** (campfires, BBQ pits, outdoor cooking, etc).

Please feel free to connect back with any questions or concerns

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I am concerned that the master plan does not account for the threat of wildfires in our community.

I support increased day use and additional trails, although not a large increase in parking.

I oppose any overnight stays including camping, bunkhouses, fires, BBQs, or cooking.

It is important that we keep our parks and park users safe while in the parks, and this park has a narrow access road that would be dangerous during a fire.

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Please do not authorize any camp fires in this park. We in Diamond A have been working very hard to make our neighborhood safer from wildfires. Allowing camp fires in this adjacent park could ignite a wildfire and destroy our neighborhood and homes, given global warming and drought conditions which are both prevalent now every year.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits at North Sonoma Mountain Regional park on Sonoma Mountain presents an unacceptable wild fire risk to those living on Sonoma Mountain..

Sonoma Mountain is a tinder box during wild fire season. There are large areas of undeveloped land on the mountain side which have a considerable fire load as it has there has not been a wild fire in decades.. Combine this with steep mountain slopes and frequent high winds and it is a disaster in-waiting.

There are 2 communities on Sonoma Mountain. I reside full time in Diamond A which has over 200 homes. There is a substantial senior population with many residents in their late 70s and 80s. The other community is George Ranch which has 54 homes. Both of our communities share a single narrow steep and twisty exit similar to what the community of Paradise faced in 2018 from the Camp Fire. That resulted in 85 fatalities.

During wild fire season even the smallest spark can quickly cause a deadly and disastrous wildfire. Times have changed due to global warming and the opening of parks too over night camping and camp fires is ignoring the new risks and will endanger near by communities .

Many Californians now face a double threat from wild fires. The potential loss of homes and lives and the much broader threat of loosing fire insurance because insurers deem there is too much risk to any given zip code. We have been lucky so far but a Sonoma Mountain wild fire deem this location uninsurable.

Given its proximity to steep mountain terrain with substantial fire load, allowing the park to encourage overnight camping and camp fires is a step away from making our communities and California in general

safer from wild fires. Any decision to allow over night camping and camp fires should be postponed until such a time that California has a been able to mitigate the current terrible risk.

---

**We are residents of Diamond A and support the concerns expressed below by our neighbor NAME**

**Sincerely,**

**NAME.**

**Address Grove Street,**

**Sonoma, Ca. 95476**

Dear Ms. Davis-Brown :

The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community.

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

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We lost our home in Gen Ellen in the 2017 fires, and have lived for the past three fire season in a constant state of fear of a repeat in our replacement home on Sonoma Mountain in the Diamond A area. I am writing to voice my opposition to allowing any camp fires of any kind in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park.

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- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are being lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
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- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating an additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

---

I am a retired architect, living with my family in the Diamond A area of Sonoma County. I am writing in opposition to any proposal for camping on Sonoma Mountain. It would provide only a small benefit to county residents, while increasing the risk alarmingly for our community.

Diamond A is located high on the southeast side of Sonoma Mountain, and the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park sits on the northwest side of our mountain. Most prevailing winds in this area will blow from NW to SE, which makes us particularly vulnerable to a wildfire that originates in that regional park. It is only five miles away, as the crow flies (or the wind blows)

We are a community of about 175 homes with only one way off of the mountain: down Grove Street for three and a half miles to the valley floor. This is precisely the same conditions that caused the huge loss of life and property in Paradise in 2018. We urge you and county planners to learn from this history in considering any expansion of camping or campfire opportunities on Sonoma Mountain. Please keep this park for day use only with all fires prohibited.

---

I live in the Diamond ‘A’ neighborhood on Grove Street. As many others have pointed out to you, we are close enough to the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park’s proposed campground that its existence

will directly threaten us. A wind-driven wildfire moves through dry fuel at 30-40 miles per hour, more if it's going upslope. A fire in that campground can be upon us with no time to evacuate on the one road available to us. Many of Diamond 'A's residents are older and have mobility issues. They will not have time to evacuate. You will create a life-threatening hazard by putting a campground in the middle of the Wildland-Urban Interface.

Frankly, it is incomprehensible how the notion of a campground in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park is even being considered. Leave aside, for the moment, the obvious dangers of campfires. There are limitless other sources of ignition in such a setting. Cars parked on dry grass, cigarettes thrown into dry grass, still-burning charcoal dumped into dry fuel, firecrackers set off by thoughtless campers, and children who just like to play with fire are but a few. It is easy to imagine any or all of these incidents in such a setting. No matter how many rules, fines, guidelines, and park rangers you have, these campgrounds will see such activity because people will behave like people despite the rules.

As the President of the Grove Street Fire Safe Council, Inc., I hear our community's concerns regarding fire risks, even without campfires just upwind. Many are so concerned and frightened that they are considering moving from homes that they have lived in for 20 to 40 years. The campground may be the final straw for them. Are the passing recreational indulgences of a few campers worth risking the life and property of a community?

I respectfully request that the campground planned for the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park not be completed or opened and that all plans for it be terminated.

---

I write this email to join my community in voicing concern over the possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park. Our concerns include:

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a "choke point" at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this "one way in/one way out" access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
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- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real "slap in the face".

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

---

I'm writing to express my thoughts and concerns about the proposed changes on the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park trail.

I have been able to enjoy the use of the trail and enjoy the trails leading to the overlook vista points and approve of the prospect of extending the trail to the top of Sonoma Mountain. However, I am quite concerned about other expansion plans for the usage of the park. I have been able to stay with friends on Sonoma Mountain and know how present the fire danger is in the area. As such, I believe it is not reasonable to allow overnight stays and fires.

On overnight stays, people will be having fires for cooking and for their other activities (authorized or not). Overnight stays will also bring several concerns:

- ☐ People drinking and thus lowering their inhibitions and reducing their concentration on safety.

- ☐ Noise will be notably higher as the result of overnight stays. During my stays on Sonoma Mountain, I made note of how far noise travels.

- ☐ People will be smoking, which is one of the highest causes of fires.

- ☐ Campers will not stay within the confines of the park's camping areas after dark.

- ☐ Oversight of these campers is inadequate, as it is done by temporary personnel that are not on call at all hours and do not have any enforcement authority/capabilities. In addition, the Park Ranger is not within sight of the campgrounds and has other responsibilities beyond this park.

Camping at the top of Sonoma Mountain also seems quite ill-advised as adequate supervision is not clear, the fire danger is high with no clear fire breaks and evacuation of youths in the case of emergency will take considerable time. I note the road is very narrow and in poor shape getting into the park. Sonoma Mountain is an area of extremely high fire danger and extremely high danger of fast spread of fire given that the surrounding area is filled with high grass fields and areas of woods that have not been cleared or burned in decades. There are few areas where fire breaks can be established and defended. Also, the area is highly exposed to the strong winds, particularly in the higher elevations. Water sourcing is also wholly inadequate to extinguish even small fires. Accordingly, overnight camping stays and fires should not be permitted.

Thank you for considering these serious concerns.

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North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park is in a high fire risk area, and is accessed by a one-lane road that does not meet state standards for concurrent evacuation and fire equipment ingress or unobstructed traffic circulation in case of a wildfire. Sadly, wildfires are becoming increasingly common in Sonoma County. It is a known fact that most wildfires are human caused; it would be extremely negligent for the county to allow overnight camping and campfires in this park. Adding bunkhouses is completely uncalled for, and also would be in blatant violation of state law concerning the access roads.

Adding more hiking trails and allowing dogs would be beneficial, but please do not expand to equestrian use. The park is much too small to accommodate both.

I live near Hood Mountain Regional park, which is now closed indefinitely due to the Glass Fire. Our local parks are increasingly becoming decimated due to wildfires, and we need to be all the more vigilant on reducing fire risk and to keeping remaining parks fire-free.

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i support the expansion and inclusion of camping and additional hiking trails. the proximity of this park to our most populated areas allows for residents to be introduced to the outdoors, camping, and have a local respite. additionally, as a backpacker i request the option for backcountry permits, ideally near water, which can be in designated sites. the opportunity for a quick weekend getaway w/o considerable driving is appealing and would be greatly appreciated.

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I am attaching a photograph taken at 4:00 a.m. on October 9, 2017 from my front driveway.

Starting at midnight my wife and I began getting ready to evacuate.

The winds were from the North at 50 mph with higher gusts and the smoke was a thick as a fog bank.

AT four o'clock I took the the attached picture with the fire coming our way at 50 mph. We self-evacuated 30 minutes later.

Subsequent research showed the line stopped at 1.3 miles to the North of our home on Meadowview Lane in Penngrove.

The fire took some 6 properties on Presley Road in this picture.

Since then, we have prepared to evacuate, once in 2019 and again this year. We now refer to our motorhome as "The Lifeboat".

My wife and I have day hiked in the park and enjoyed it, but the proposal as described in your article, in these times, is very ill advised.

It should be restricted to day use, no camping and absolutely no fires, camp or bar-b-que, at any time.

Feel free to send this to anyone associated with speaking against this proposal.





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**Against** - Overnight Camping, Group Camping, Camper or RV sites, Campfires, Firepits, BBQ's, use of Camp Stoves – concerned of increase in fire danger, park and community safety and disruption to native animal and plant habitat. Adding invasive, recreational camping and group overnight functions changes the unique nature of Sonoma Mountains' specific rural and underdeveloped quality and open space *forever and should be seriously considered*. Not adding any additional impact from night traffic, noise, human recreation interventions and fire danger would help steward the open space both for wildlife and our community specific to this location for *everyone* to enjoy, equally undisturbed. Nearby Annandale park just this year was negatively affected by fire, which illustrates how human encroachment for development, leisure or convenience has the potential to adversely impact a parks value and can conceivably place California open spaces at risk.

**For** - Nature educational day use, community space, clubhouses and gathering areas for nature/hiking groups, educational and community groups. Opening access or additional hiking trails preserving the parks natural habitat corridor. Maintain natural wildlife and historic California ranch experience. More trail and hiking access to Jack London Park. Consider minimal access to mountain biking and equestrian if not invasive. Adding tables, benches and new destinations to enhance hiking and education, while protecting the parks ecosystem.

The scale of this park is perfect for destination hikes and day hikes and its proximity to cities and towns may not warrant any added risk connected with overnight camping, group camping or its negative impact. Taking current environmental changes of fire danger, drought, extreme heat and

loss of water resources into consideration it may now be more important to put resources towards *protecting* the park ecosystem versus creating *additional development risks* and focus our efforts towards stewarding the essence of this park for its future.

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I appreciate being able to contribute my input, even though it probably doesn't fit in very well with the proposed development of SMRP. Another issue I'm sure will need to be considered is the additional traffic flow in and out of the park entrance, and how it would impact residents on Sonoma Mountain Rd and Pressley Rd/Roberts Rd. Seems to me that Crane Creek RP meets the needs of family-oriented activities just fine, without over-developing SMRP.

---

We have lived at 4393 Pressley Road for over forty years. When the North Sonoma Mountain Recreation area opened, we agreed on the day use plan. That people would want to walk and hike within the Parks boundaries seemed reasonable in an area that is so spectacular and home to the Coopers Grove of magnificent redwood trees.

The recent proposed plan to allow overnight camping and camp fires is simply not tenable. The proposed plan is based on community input from 2017 prior to the Tubbs firestorm; which burned across our property and destroyed homes very near us. In the following three years our community has been threatened by uncontrolled wild land fires each year.

Many of the residents of this rural residential community that surround NSM have lived here for decades and now live in fear of being burned out each new fire season. PTSD is a real thing here, which I fear many respondents to this proposed plan don't understand.

Introducing overnight camping and campfires is not realistic given what appears to be the new normal for our fire seasons. We strongly oppose this plan and urge the North Sonoma Mountains Recreation Area remain strictly for day use with no fires allowed.

---

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Introducing overnight camping and campfires is not realistic given what appears to be the new normal for our fire seasons. We strongly oppose this plan and urge the North Sonoma Mountains Recreation Area remain strictly for day use with no fires allowed.

---

I write this as a 20 year resident of Sonoma County living in our home across Sonoma Mountain Road from Coopers Grove.

The purpose of this letter is to transmit for the administrative record my grave concerns about the existing hazards in NSMP, and the significant risks associated with the likely increase of wildfire that would result from any overnight stays, barbeques or fire pits.

I respectfully submit that the Regional Parks' alternatives analysis and the CEQA analysis should include and analyze:

- It is known that the park has **existing hazardous conditions** that should be reflected in the **environmental setting** (baseline) of the CEQA document. This would include but not be limited to a data-based analysis of habitat, topography, climate, fire history, fuel types, density, arrangement, anticipated fire behavior, the risk to adjoining properties, and the region. Unlike Sonoma County, other "model" counties require a technically defensible Assessment of Wildfire Hazard Potential and Fire Protection Plan to be prepared by qualified professionals. These plans further require that the wildland fire terminology used to prepare Fire Protection Plans and Wildfire Hazard Evaluations for attachment to development review shall conform to the latest standards of good practice set by the National Fire Protection Association Standards 1051, 1143, 1144 and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Note, while the latest standards referenced above are a start, yet we must recognize that we are in changing environmental conditions as seen with the burning of Sonoma County and the Western US in a more general sense. This must be taken into account and any analysis of a rigorous CEQA must include modeling of the risk and impact of Firebrands along with the mountain winds and fuel loads. **Spotting ignition by lofted firebrands is a significant mechanism of fire spread, as observed in many largescale fires<sup>III</sup>**. Firebrands were a key factor in the speed and breadth of fire spread in the Tubs and Nuns Fires. This analysis must also consider the risk and impact of fire to the surrounding communities and residents. The CEQA must consider the Firebrands which have were documented with collected embers and burnt portions of my residence during the 2017 Nuns fire, directly across Sonoma Mountain Road from Coopers Grove. **I, Namei, am willing to provide access** to first-hand knowledge, videos, collected embers and retained burnt residence materials. All of this was the result of the inferno that started of a Redwood Grove canopy ignition and thermally induced winds which then sent redwood Firebrands one-quarter mile starting other fires. Worse yet this occurred on a calm wind afternoon. NSMRP has several groves of Redwoods mixed in the ladder fuels of Oak, Bay, and chaparral of which fire spread must be understood and mitigated.

- It has been well-established that the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is where people often ignite wildfires[2], and **humans are the number one cause of wildfire ignitions**[3].

- **Risk assessment requires measurement of the fire hazards plus the mitigations that reduce these hazards.** This combination is a risk.

- Allowing campfires only when a Ranger is present will not mitigate the hazards and risks of campfires and associated wildfires. Mitigation measures should be both feasible and effective. In the case of wildfire, the **wildfire mitigations that result in negligible or acceptable risk to lives, homes, and**

**communities must be substantiated.** If there are fire pits and overnight stays, park users will inevitably make fires irrespective of posted rules or accidentally ignite fires.

- **Allowing overnight stays only in the winter season does not mitigate the significant fire risk with the trend of increasing droughts, as can be seen with the North Coast wildfire fuel moisture data,** Filed in Weather/Climate Discussion by Daniel Swain <sup>14</sup>. It must be noted that the maximum observed values, lack of moisture, will be exceeded in various points of time in the future during the winter season.

- **The road system to the park facilities and surrounding the park do not meet state regulations for fire safe roads. This includes the roads surrounding the park as the expansive nature of the park and need of nearby residents to evacuate as well as Fire Fighting Equipment to access the various sectors of the greater park require that all of these roads are included in the analysis.** This should include but not be limited to NSMRP Access Road, Sonoma Mountain Road from Warm Spring Road, Sonoma Mountain Road from Adobe Road, and Lichau Road from Pressley Road. The standing rules governing fire safe roads for all new development pursuant to SRA Regulations. From Article 2 Emergency Access and Egress § 1273.00. Intent:

*“Roads and driveways, whether public or private, unless exempted under 14 CCR § 1270.02(d), **shall provide for safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, and shall provide unobstructed traffic circulation during a wildfire emergency** consistent with 14 CCR §§ 1273.00 through 1273.09.”*

- Furthermore, the Board of Forestry (BOF) and the Deputy Attorney General have consistently established that the SRA Regs apply to all existing roads. In an October 23, 2020 letter to Sonoma County Counsel [3], the BOF legal counsel Jeff Slaton stated: *“Throughout the certification process, Sonoma County has repeatedly maintained that Public Resources Code section 4290 and the Fire Safe Regulations do not apply to existing roads. Sonoma County’s position is incompatible with the plain language of PRC § 4290, the Fire Safe Regulations, and opinions and letters issued by the Attorney General of California. More importantly, the Fire Safe Regulations themselves – which constitute the basis for the certification determination – **clearly provide no exemption for existing roads**, and it is these regulations that the Sonoma County ordinance must equal or exceed. This represents a fundamental and intractable disagreement between the Board and Sonoma County. Sonoma County’s position on existing roads, standing alone, is a legitimate basis for determining that the ordinance does not equal or exceed the Fire Safe Regulations.”*

**The core of a CEQA decision is based on whether the project can meet a defined need for mitigation(s) so that the project impacts are either negligible or acceptable.** Unequivocally, there are potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the park’s project alternatives. There is a plethora of data available for a robust and substantiated analysis by qualified professionals, and this should be done.

Sonoma County desperately needs mature leadership like that of “model” counties to advance the evaluation of fire risk and best management practices for better land-use

decision-making and the CEQA process. The residents of Sonoma County deserve better.

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I am writing to express our opposition to the plans for N. Sonoma Mtn regional park as they stand today. We are residents of Bennett Valley (along Bennett Valley Rd) and have been through many devastating fire seasons, including 2017 when the fire burned through our property, and while it caused significant damage (e.g. well, septic, water, vegetation, etc), we were very fortunate that our home was spared.

As everyone in the area is well aware through another devastating fire season this year, the risks to the region are very high and the stakes could not be higher. Bennett Valley is a remote agricultural and wildlife area, and any fire started in the area poses a tremendous risk to all residents in the area since it is much less practical for firefighters to stop a blaze than it is closer to cities.

We have been to N. Sonoma park many times, and I love the plans to expand trails and facilities. However, there is little justification to allow high risk overnight activities including permitting fires. Whether fires are permitted or not, overnight activities would pose a high risk since it is likely that campers would illegally start fires to cook regardless, and likely do so in a less safe manner. Any fire that is started and spreads in the park, especially during fire season, is likely to result in the loss of property and/or life. The risk is not worth the benefit when there are numerous other options for camping and outdoor enjoyment in the region.

Thanks for your consideration.

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I grew up on Sonoma Mtn Rd, very near to the park, my father lives there still, and I live only a few miles away. Being very familiar with the area, my sister and I volunteered with Land Paths to help monitor this open space land when it was newly acquired, before it became part of the county park system. We were thrilled that it had become an area to be preserved.

However, on review of the plans for this park, I have some serious concerns.

1. We are in a pandemic. If the county parks department cannot hold open public meetings for people to voice their objections or their support, then any decisions made should be postponed until a time when such meetings can be convened. Otherwise, it would appear that they are taking advantage of a terrible situation to avoid public criticism of their plans. My father received only one notice from the County Regional Parks, a small and difficult to read postcard (due to

large, dark postmarks) sent at the end of October 2020, extending a comment period that he had never even heard about in the first place. He never received any other information regarding plans for developing the park, and as a near neighbor to the park, this lack of outreach is unacceptable. How many other people in Bennett Valley are unaware of the plans for the park? We have made so many sacrifices in this county due to covid19, I think postponing this decision would be in keeping with life during a pandemic.

2. We are in a drought and under constant threat of wildfires. No campfires should be allowed within the park under any circumstances. It is insensitive to even suggest it. We have been traumatized enough, and if climate predictions prove to be true, the risk will only increase over time. To introduce yet another source of ignition in steep and difficult terrain would be irresponsible, not to mention dangerous. It only takes ONE ember. The park can still be enjoyed without this added risk.

3. The land was intended as a preserve. Hiking trails, parking lots, benches, picnic tables, signage, and some accessibility accommodations are all understandable improvements that will allow people to enjoy the land safely while keeping human impact to a minimum. However, many of the ideas presented in the Alternative Draft Plans do not support the objectives of a preserve. Bunk houses, playgrounds, cabins, group campsites, showers, meeting spaces, kitchens, barbeques, horse rentals... all of this sounds very invasive and disruptive, and counterproductive to the enjoyment of a beautiful natural setting. It will destroy the very serenity that people seek coming to the park. There are plenty of urban park settings more suited to this type of usage. I wonder, if preserving the natural land is not the main objective of the County Parks, what is? Perhaps creating a revenue stream for the county? The land should be left undeveloped as much as possible. Let the creatures live in peace for future generations to enjoy.

And as a special note, the redwood grove is fragile and will require particular protections. In the early 1970s, things were different. I remember natural springs in parts of the grove that bubbled up all summer long. Huge ferns covered the ground under the trees. Water ran in the south fork of the Mantanzas Creek year round, albeit at lower levels in the summer. Today, the springs are gone, the ferns are far fewer, and the creek goes completely dry in the summer. This leaves not only wildlife at a disadvantage, it puts the redwood grove under stress. Use of this sensitive area should be kept to a minimum. In recent years, there has also been a significant decrease of summer fog in the area. Redwood trees with shallow roots, so far inland, rely on the fog drip to make it through the increasingly hot summers. The drier climate, along with all the new homes built in the valley and proliferation of vineyards, have all put increased pressure on local water resources, significantly dropping the water table in many areas. Adding showers and flush toilets to the park will only make the situation worse. Preservation should be the overarching goal of the park.



Please do what you can to preserve the land without the artificial trappings of civilization. I was fortunate to have spent my childhood roaming the hills, playing in the creeks, and enjoying the wildlife of this beautiful area. I would like to think that kids can come to this park and have the same adventures and be equally amazed at the magic of nature. I did not need a playground or any fancy accommodations to experience nature at its best. In fact, all of those artificialities diminish the experience. There are so few precious places left that are undeveloped. It is my hope that everyone can continue to roam Sonoma Mountain and experience it in its most natural state.

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The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are so very alarming for my community, especially given the horrific fire seasons we have had the last 4 years.

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face” and is completely irresponsible of the County.
- *Have we learned nothing from the previous horrific fire seasons. By allowing this campground project to go forward, you are putting this entire mountain and all of our homes at risk!*

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

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Thank you for your time.

Attached is my letter with my thoughts on the proposed changes to the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. The park is of special interest to me, for the entrance is down the street, and the park surrounds all sides of our property,

Thank you for taking the time to download and read this, and view the pictures it includes.

As part of the Cooper's Ranch private properties, I'd like to say thank you for making the trails throughout the forest preserve on our Sonoma Mountain. They are beautiful, well-made, and provide a wonderful place for people to get to know our beautiful part of the world. I believe that they embody what the original owners wanted when they sold the land. Instead of selling it to be turned into a housing development that could have made them more money, they wanted to preserve the area for generations of people to enjoy, as they did, and we do now.

As a current occupant of our property, we too have done all we can to make sure that the forest on our property remains beautiful, but also have taken every step to make sure that we do all we can to make it so that we aren't a cause of fire that could destroy the whole mountain for everyone, cause millions of dollars of damage, and possibly injury/death to not only people, but to the animal and plant inhabitants who call Sonoma Mountain home.

The plan to bring people who want to bring campfires to one of the most flammable places on the planet is not ok with me. I understand that this plan was made before we started to experience fires. It might have sounded like a good idea at the time. But times are changing, and your plan should evolve accordingly. Both my husband and I stayed home to fight the fire here in Santa Rosa, to put out hot spots, and help the firefighters and police. We were complimented, on the side, by both police and firefighters on the good job we were doing. I caught one fire myself and reported it to the fire department. The fire burned to our Sonoma Mountain Road – super close to where you have designs to help people bring fire to our side of the road. We caught and stopped the fire from trying to cross the road to our side of Sonoma Mountain road five times. I am distraught that our park district would advertise for and allow people, some probably responsible, and many who aren't, to allow fires, whether they are supervised or not. Accidents do occur no matter how responsible one is. Some people don't care about laws and will break them.

There are numerous times we have walked into the redwood forest in Cooper's Grove to find abandoned smoldering fires from people who obviously don't care about what could happen should sparks start the nearby brush or redwood trees on fire. We put them out, but it is upsetting the stupidity of some people. Why would the forest preserve want to invite people who bring in alcohol, become stupid, and cause an accident that will wreck the lives of so many, and what you are trying to preserve?

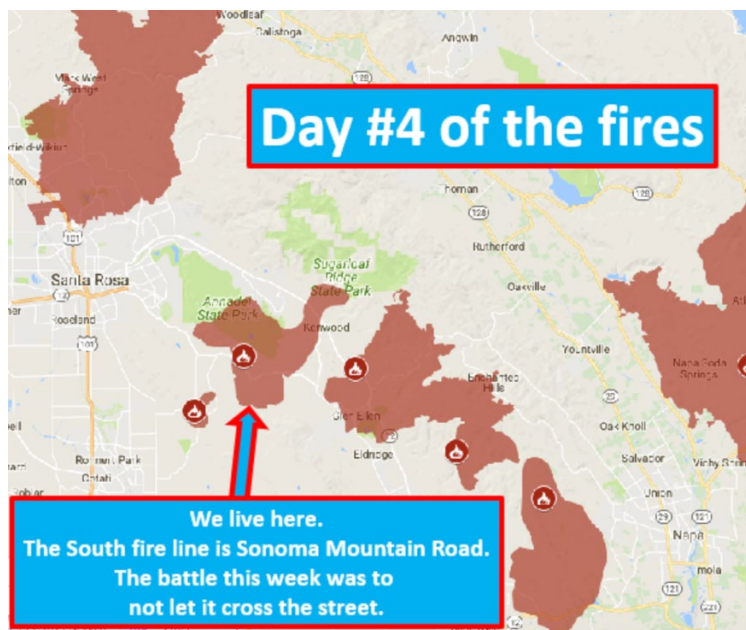
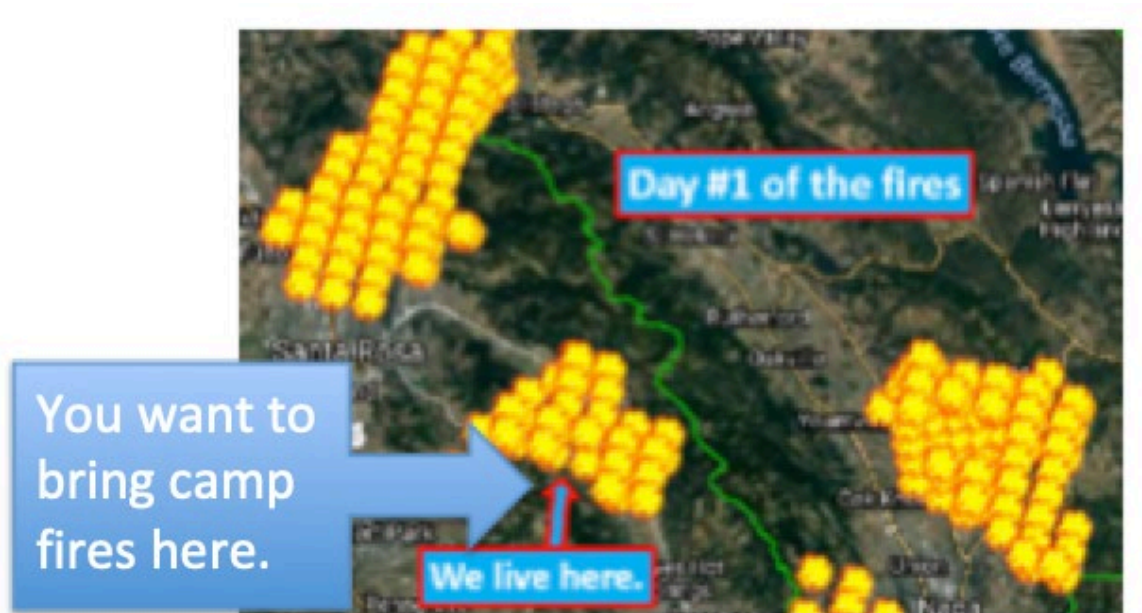
Your allowing fires would affect my enjoyment of the mountain twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The peaceful place I have loved and cared for will become an area of stress. I will not be able to sleep knowing that just a short distance away, strangers to this area are possibly causing the fire that will destroy our house, our neighbors, and the view of the beautiful trees and forest that has taken generations to build and grow.

PLEASE DON'T ALLOW FIRES! Can't the people enjoy the area without them? If not – they can choose another vacation spot and be happy.



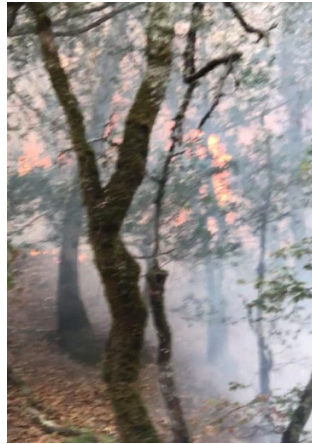
If you need to contact me, my contact detail is below.

Some pictures from the trauma from the fire across the street from where you wish to allow people to bring fire.





There were hundreds of brush fires just like this everywhere.  
We stomped them out with feet, and wide shovels.



The fire was up in the trees too.



Here we are putting out hot spots before the new winds started.



Firemen stopped their truck to help us put out tough hot spots that  
we couldn't stop without water.





Me trying to get some sleep on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of fighting fires.

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I read about this proposal in the local paper today and believe today is the last day for comment .

We ( 4 of us ) have lived on Grove St and Najm Lane in Sonoma for 20 years , the last 3 of which in mortal fear of being burnt into toast from wildfires that came as close as 5 miles into Glen Ellen just last year .

We have spent a ton of money for fire prevention including a contribution by all residents in the Grover St Fire Cooperative to buy a new \$ 250,000 Fire Engine . We had to evacuate once for 2-3 days and I cannot describe the sheer terror each year from August- November.

So much so that we are thinking of leaving California altogether because of psychological fear on our young children .

Sonoma ( and Napa) are dedicated to land use for a global industry and as a county official know there are enough zoning laws to discourage land use for home building which we wholeheartedly support .

It's incongruous therefore that with plenty of campsites already in place and in use throughout the county you need to make a place for one more .

Camping and Fires are synonymous whether you overnight or Day Campers . Any additional fires pose truly additional risk and unexpected

consequences and ,directly or indirectly , will put additional pressure on all residents , budgets, staffing , and fighting these risks .

Psychologically we can't bear any more risk , real or imagined . We used to believe Wildfires and the loss of life annually was a

Southern California problem .It's not true now .

We very strongly oppose any new Campsites . We would rather you focus on mitigating Climate Change initiatives and this certainly is not one .

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### My feedback on Alternative 3 of the Master Plan:

1. No fires under any circumstances. No bbq and no campfires.
2. DAY USE ONLY. Dawn to dusk. No overnight camping.
3. Hiking trails kept to a minimum to preserve our wildlife corridors and migratory birds and animals. Human activity will have a negative aspect to the natural flower, fauna and animals who rely on that region to survive, particularly around ponds and streams. This area has seen an increase of wildlife seeking refuge from the recent fires in Napa and Sonoma counties. Sonoma Mountain is home to multiple animals - the wildlife corridors are a major factor to keep North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park as it was intentionally created - OPEN SPACE PRESERVE.
4. Noise pollution. Keep it controlled as a day use park so people can enjoy the quiet and solitude of the surroundings..
5. Manage the traffic in and out of the park with parking that can handle the number of visitors to conserve serene and tranquil area.
6. Trails-No electric bikes in the park. Mountain bikes restricted to certain trails. Horses and bikes on separate trails; some trails just for hiking.
7. Horses enter through Jack London Park only.  
Grove-2nd growth Redwood Grove, identified as a cultural and sacred place to Native Americans, to be entered by groups led by a Ranger or Docent only.
1. No dogs.

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My family and I live at **Address** Sonoma Mountain Road, and like all residents of Sonoma County, we have lived through four years of catastrophic wildfires that have changed the lens with which we view life in Sonoma, including our wonderful regional parks.

I am writing to express my objection to plans that would allow (1) overnight camping, (2) campfires, and/or (3) charcoal BBQs in this park.

Reading over the materials, it appears that many of these plans were made based on public comments that occurred prior to the 2017 fires. As noted above, now that we know we are living in an area subject to **yearly** wildfire threat, we need to look at how we manage the land differently.

As a camper, I know that camping overnight in tents or cabins invariably involves some form of fire whether that is a campfire, camp stove or BBQ set up of some kind. Lighting a fire and cooking your meal over a flame is part of the joy of camping. But in this region, the risk of inadvertently setting off a wildfire is real. I believe that risk and the harm that could come to human and animal life outweighs the benefit in this case.

I also do not support a plan that would build cabins in areas that are hard to access and do not have adequate emergency roads. In addition, the idea that no camping would be allowed during red flag warning days does not really address the threat. Many of these fires did not just occur during red flag warnings. Moreover, given how understaffed the park system is (through no fault of its own) I wonder how the park would adequately manage camping reservations, evacuations, and the like.

This area of Sonoma is beautiful, and we should encourage people to enjoy our regional parks. But one can enjoy them while day hiking and packing in a picnic lunch. I would encourage the regional park system to look at other areas in Sonoma where the fire risk is less to put in new campgrounds.

Thank you for your time.

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In the plan for North Sonoma Mtn and camping, does camping include tent and RVs?

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**Re: Comments to Sonoma County Regional Parks Re: North Sonoma Mountain Master Plan**

**Date: November 12, 2020**

Re: Comments to Sonoma County Regional Parks Re: North Sonoma Mountain Master Plan  
Date: November 12, 2020

The purpose of this letter is to transmit for the administrative record my grave concerns about the existing hazards in NSMP, and the significant risks associated with the likely increase of wildfire that would result from any overnight camping activity or fire pits.

I respectfully submit that the Regional Parks' alternatives analysis and the CEQA analysis should include and analyze:

-It is known that the park has **existing hazardous conditions** that should be reflected in the **environmental setting** (baseline) of the CEQA document. This would include but not be limited to a data-based analysis of habitat, topography, climate, fire history, fuel types, density, arrangement, anticipated fire behavior, and threats to adjoining properties and the region. Unlike Sonoma County, other "model" counties require a technically defensible Assessment of Wildfire Hazard Potential and Fire Protection Plan to be prepared by qualified professionals. These plans further require that the wildland fire terminology used to prepare Fire Protection Plans and Wildfire Hazard Evaluations for attachment to development review shall conform to the latest standards of good practice set by the National Fire Protection Association Standards 1051, 1143, 1144 and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

-It has been well-established that the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is where people often ignite wildfires<sup>1</sup>, and **humans are the number one cause of wildfire ignitions**<sup>2</sup>.

**-Risk assessment requires measurement of the fire hazards plus the mitigations that reduce these hazards.** This combination is risk.

-Allowing camp fires only when a Ranger is present will not mitigate the hazards and risks of campfires and associated wildfires. Mitigation measures should be both feasible and effective. In the case of wildfire, the **wildfire mitigations that result in negligible or acceptable risk to lives, homes, and communities must be substantiated**. If there are fire pits and overnight camping, park users will inevitably make fires irrespective of posted rules.

-Currently, we live in a county that refuses to enforce wearing masks to protect the public from a Covid-19 pandemic, despite the fact that Sonoma is the only one of nine Bay Area counties in the most restrictive pandemic purple tier, per state standards. Predictably, this county will not effectively enforce rules pertaining to fires in the park, and certainly not at a level to determine this mitigation is feasible or effective.

-Screening mitigation measures for their feasibility and enforceability is not a novel concept. In the 1980's, a controversial residential development adjacent to SF Bay proposed to mitigate potentially significant impacts to rare and threatened wildlife in the saltmarsh by providing a mitigation that prohibited residents from owning outdoor cats, known to be predators of protected wildlife, by requiring that all cats remain inside at all times. A fourth grader could inform us that such a mitigation is not feasible to enforce, and therefore unable to reduce the potentially significant impacts. Further, in issuing their 404 wetland fill permits, the US Army Corps of Engineers refuses to include mitigation measures (reasonable and prudent measures) that they cannot enforce, without exception. **It is simply not feasible to rely on foreseeable non-compliance or ineffectual enforcement to mitigate wildfire impacts.** Therefore, if the mitigation is not feasible, it will not effectively mitigate impacts.

<sup>1</sup> Syphard AD, Keeley JE, Massada AB, Brennan TJ, Radeloff VC (2012) Housing Arrangement and Location Determine the Likelihood of Housing Loss Due to Wildfire. PLoS ONE 7(3): e33954.

<sup>2</sup> Balch JK, et al. (2017) Human-started wildfires expand the fire niche across the United States. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 114:2946–2951.2

-The road system to the park facilities do not meet state regulations for fire safe roads, which are the standing rules governing fire safe roads for all new development pursuant to SRA Regulations. From Article 2 Emergency Access and Egress § 1273.00.

Intent:

*“Roads and driveways, whether public or private, unless exempted under 14 CCR § 1270.02(d), **shall provide for safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, and shall provide unobstructed traffic circulation during a wildfire emergency consistent with 14 CCR §§ 1273.00 through 1273.09.**”*

-Furthermore, the Board of Forestry (BOF) and the Deputy Attorney General have consistently established that the SRA Regs apply to all existing roads. In an October 23, 2020 letter to Sonoma County Counsel 3, the BOF legal counsel Jeff Slaton stated:

*“Throughout the certification process, Sonoma County has repeatedly maintained that Public Resources Code section 4290 and the Fire Safe Regulations do not apply to existing roads. Sonoma County’s position is incompatible with the plain language of PRC § 4290, the Fire Safe Regulations, and opinions and letters issued by the Attorney General of California. More importantly, the Fire Safe Regulations themselves – which constitute the basis for the certification determination – **clearly provide no exemption for existing roads**, and it is these regulations that the Sonoma County ordinance must equal or exceed. This represents a fundamental and intractable disagreement between the Board and Sonoma County. Sonoma County’s position on existing roads, standing alone, is a legitimate basis for determining that the ordinance does not equal or exceed the Fire Safe Regulations.”*

**The core of a CEQA decision is based on whether the project can meet a defined need for mitigation(s), so that the project impacts are either negligible or acceptable.**

Unequivocally, there are potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the park’s project alternatives. There is a plethora of data available for a robust and substantiated analysis by qualified professionals, and this should be done.

Sonoma County desperately needs mature leadership like that of “model” counties to advance evaluation of fire risk and best management practices for better land use decision-making and the CEQA process. The residents of Sonoma County deserve better.

---

Hello,

Do we really need another park?

Thanks

---

Hi, I would like to see more camping. It would be ok with me if a no campfire policy during the summer was enacted. Also, more mountain bike trails would be nice

---

I am writing this in regards to the Sonoma Mountain Regional Park Development. I am thrilled to see that there will be more open trails for the residents of Sonoma

County, and I would say that most of the plans for trail expansion seem valid. Where I am concerned is the seemingly disregard for the current state of Sonoma County and the very real fire risk we have lived



through every year since 2017. I am surprised that the park department would not have completely rethought this plan due to that current climate and recognized that Sonoma Mountain is rated as one of the most high risk areas for fire, along with other factors such as lack of road access in and out of the park, and would therefore have had the judgement to pivot the park plans to either include a premeditated plan of how to defend the park and surrounding communities should a fire be started by a camper or frankly not have included any kind of camping situation. It seems to show a lack of caring and consideration when this county has suffered tremendously under fire conditions regardless of the culprit that caused them. I will keep this short as I believe the statements made by the Bennett Valley Community Association and Sonoma Mountain Road Neighbors clarifies all that needs to be said, but I would be greatly disappointed to see anything other than day use go ahead with these park plans. I will continue to be an advocate for the safety of the lives that I feel are unduly being put at risk by the notion of any camping, bbq pits, or any fire related instigator, and I hope the parks department will find it in themselves to recognize that being flexible does not mean defeat but rather the champion of the people lives are built here on Sonoma Mountain and County

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I'll make this brief. Please do not allow overnight camping or any BBQs, campfires, and anything regarding fire in the expansion of Sonoma Mountain Regional Park.

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We live in Highland Estates off Crane Canyon Rd./Inverness/Perth Avenue

In 2017 the Nunns fire burned right down to Crane Canyon Road and our Highland Estates community is very fortunate that the winds calmed and did not cross over to our Community because at 3:30 AM all Fire Fighters were were north dealing with that horrific situation.

Please do not jeopardize our community or any community with these plans, they are not responsible in these new times of heat, winds and dryness!

There is so much stress in Sonoma County each fall already with the previous years of EXTREAM FIRE DANGER, we hope the Committee will choose NO overnight camping and NO FIRE apparatus. This expansion lends to more

fire danger when you introduce camp stoves & camp fires - These things are not needed to enjoy our wonderful parks! We want our Regional Parks to stay with the concept of opening at dawn & closing at dusk.

---

I live on Sonoma Mountain Road and the Tubbs fire in 2017 was the most terrifying time of my life.

We understand that we live and work on this mountain and have to accept that natural disasters occur. However, we can avoid disaster by not allowing camping/barbecue facilities in the park.

Why is conversation even happening? Why are these issues on the table? Any sensible human being can see, this s a disaster just waiting to happen.

Please, let's just shut this down, now. We should not be wasting time on this issue.

---

My name is **Name**. I am a longtime devotee of the parks in Sonoma County. I think it would be a great idea to allow this relatively new park to welcome campers. I do understand that climate change has increased fire risk. We should limit any use of fire to cooking stoves.

---

We live in Highland Estates off Crane Canyon Rd./Inverness Ave. Our property ends at the north side of Crane Canyon Rd.

In 2017 the Nunns fire burned right down to Crane Canyon Road and our Highland Estates community is very fortunate that the winds calmed and did not cross over to our steep bordering property as all fire personnel were up north dealing with that situation.

Please do not jeopardize our community or any other community with these plans, they are not responsible in these new times of heat, winds and dryness!

We hope that the committee will choose NO overnight camping and NO FIRE apparatus. This just lends to more of a fire danger element with camp stoves that our communities do not need. Our Regional Parks should stay with the same concept of opening at dusk and closing at dawn.

Thank you for the committees' consideration and feel free to contact us with any questions

---

Opposed to the use of any recreational fire (camp fires, barbeques, etc.) in Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. Climate change and the demonstrated fire risk in Sonoma County over the past three years support updated consideration of traditional thinking about park use.

I am a property owner and resident in Sonoma County, tax payer and regional parks member. Do not put my family's lives at risk by allowing campfires or BBQs at Sonoma Mountain.

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I so appreciate all that the SCRP Planning Department is doing to educate and include the public in these changing times. The virtual documents are overall really great, thank you!! I found the maps difficult to view -- they didn't enlarge so I found myself nose-to-screen on the laptop and squinting to try to read. This reader would have liked to have some text in addition. On the final comment map, I am not sure if all my comments saved, and I apologize for triple yellow balloons at the JLSHP property boundary! I didn't think it had saved.

I am not in favor of any overnight accommodations on this property. It is an access nightmare for all staff, emergency responders, and law enforcement -- at any of the locations proposed. There simply is not enough appropriate property to allow for the camping needs of this community. We really and truly need a place with room like SLR or Doran -- to accommodate even small travel trailers, because that is the demand. How much do hike-in campgrounds (like were at Hood) truly get used? Are they worth the upkeep? Especially considering the LONG drive for staff all the way up SMR from Adobe Rd to access the summit area. I am also really concerned about wildfires and campfires. And I don't want to see the Umbrella Tree area cluttered with campsites and overnight disruption.

The main park access road continues to concern me greatly: it is simply not wide enough to accommodate passing traffic in passenger cars both directions, and certainly not for horse trailers. Currently the parking is way too small for any horse trailers -- impossible if any passenger cars are parked there at all. Proposed equestrian parking is appreciated, but must be large enough like Taylor Mountain -- is there sufficient space? Again, market demand requires space for large trailers nowadays and dually trucks -- that's the reality. I am happy to be a consultant for this like I did for Taylor Mtn at PetHillRd. I also consulted with Sugarloaf Ridge for the prospective horse camp required in the Master Plan.

I put in a lot of bubbles for interpretation -- and just thought of one more: WILDFLOWERS!

I wasn't sure about having to somehow save or update the comments on the map? I hope you have more input than just the few commenters I saw.

Please feel free to reach out to me if there are any questions about my comments.

---

As residents of Bennett Valley for the last 20 plus years, we were strongly in favor of the development of a regional park in our beautiful valley. We believe the park to be a great resource for the community, both in Bennett Valley and beyond.

We are opposed to the recent proposal to allow overnight stays, program lead campfires and BBQ pits. The risk of fire is just too great to enact these proposals. In addition, the possibility of noise from campers during the night, would take away from the unique rural character of the area.

We would like to suggest that dogs be allowed in the park. We think that opening up the park to visitors with pets on leash would make the park much more accessible to the many park goers who enjoy walking their dogs while exercising in our bucolic county.

Thank .you for your consideration.

---

As a resident of Bennett Valley homeowner who drove through the flames of the 2017 fires, I do not support the expansion of uses for the park. It's not a matter of NIMBY for me. It is a matter of climate change and the increased fire risk.

Until the county has a master plan for controlled burns and other wild fire mitigation actions in place I oppose expanded access to the park. These include but are not limited to:

- *No overnight stays*
- *No fires, including BBQ facilities*
- *Day use only*
- *Environmental impact study (including fire safety, road evacuations etc)*

In this day and age it is simply too risky.

Thank you for inviting input.

---

I am writing about our wonderful new regional park on North Sonoma Mountain. My neighbors and I, as well as many visiting guests, have enjoyed our visits to this park since it's opening.

I fully support day use of this park through sunset, but disagree with the overnight usage proposed.

My home was miraculously saved in the 2017 wildfires only two miles up the road. I know personally how rapidly a wildfire can get out of control on Sonoma Mountain. This area is a critical risk with limited water resources and access that qualifies as narrow, failed roads. While I would support lean-to type accommodations for day groups, overnight camping is synonymous with campfires and fire cooking of many types. Without a literal fire station and adequate water supply on site, staffed by qualified personnel, overnight camping is a fire disaster waiting to happen as our climate increases the danger each year.

Evacuation and first responder traffic would be in conflict on our dangerous Sonoma Mountain Road to the top of the mountain as well as all the way to Glen Ellen. Camping increases the number of Rangers necessary to keep this park safe for guests as well as the surrounding neighborhood.

Campfires are not safe in our parched grasslands and tree cover here. We saw in the wildfires how floating embers can travel long distances before setting down on perfect fire starting locations all over the Mountain. At night, fire mitigation is far more difficult than daytime.

The Park should not be allowed to expand beyond Day Use unless the County, Region, and/or State are willing to provide an expanded and rebuilt road in either direction, a Manned Fire Station with adequate water supply and equipment to protect the park and it's surrounding area, and enforced regulations to eliminate open fires of any kind at the park.

I don't know of a single Mountain neighbor who supports overnight use of the Park. The expansion of the Belden Barns Property to on-site retail activity and expanded traffic with wine tasting was a blow to the safety of this community. This overnight use proposal is again against the wishes and will of our neighborhood. We do not feel heard, other than by our own Supervisor Susan Gorin.

Please reconsider what you are proposing here. For it to work there would have to be a substantial investment in infrastructure. Even if this was affordable, it would again stretch the bucolic nature of this area. Expanded Day Use is far more feasible and in character with this area.

---

The possibilities of creating facilities for overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park are quite alarming for my community.

- Diamond A is a community of over 200 homes. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

Please, until Sonoma County has a far more rigorous plan for wildfire mitigation, do not proceed with creating additional source of anxiety for residents of not only Diamond A but for all of the communities on and around Sonoma Mountain.

---

I want to offer my objections to any proposed changes to the park's usage and regulations that would allow people to camp overnight and especially allowing fires. I'm very concerned that these ideas will only add to the fire danger in that corridor - and frankly, the neighborhood has had enough of that danger already without the county thinking of ways to raise the risk. The county should know that there are too many times when the area's hills are extremely dry and subject to high winds which together pose very high fire risk. We've seen enough woods burning, enough homes lost, enough days out of our homes fleeing fires and enough expenses to think these regulations would be anything more than reckless and heartless. Keep the park for daylight use only. Some have suggested that the real motivation for these rule changes is to provide for homeless encampments. I sincerely hope not.

---

As longtime residents of Sonoma Mountain Road, we would like to express our support for the position of the Bennett Valley Community Association regarding camping in this area:

- There should be no overnight stays
- NO FIRES or BBQ facilities should be permitted
- Day use only
- An environmental impact study is imperative.

After yet another season of fires and toxic air quality, it seems only logical that this beautiful area should avoid undue risk of a catastrophic regional fire.

---

I already emailed you one of the comment “postcards” but I want to reiterate my opposition to allowing camping and ANY TYPE of fire or bbq in this park.

I don’t know if you camp but this year has been one of the worst to try and camp. The number of new and completely uneducated(as in how to camp and not trash, destroy or annoy your neighbors) has been horrific. People DO NOT follow rules!!!! They don’t care about rules!!

I am a former Ranger for this county and I have talked to many current Rangers in state, federal and county positions. They are all exhausted and overwhelmed not only by the pandemic but the sheer numbers of campers, the lack of staff and horrible behavior of campers.

Regional Parks is and has been horribly understaffed for YEARS. This will not change. You don’t have the manpower to staff this park now, much less try and police campers.

I emailed Burt Whitaker and James McMillen a couple of months ago about the possibility of banning ALL campfires in all county parks. We have all breathed enough wildfire smoke, without having to be inundated by our neighboring campers. The wildfire risk and the unhealthiness of having to breathe MORE smoke is too much. The county has banned smoking in parks(ignored by smokers) banned wood burning appliances in new homes and is seems to be trying to reduce it’s carbon footprint. Why is it “ok” to burn wood when camping??? A campfire is an outdated “sacred cow” that needs to be eliminated for many reasons.

Take the lead-NO MORE WOOD BURNING CAMPFIRES! Help eliminate our wildfire risk. You DO NOT have to have a fire to have fun! And please, NO CAMPING in this park!

---

I have now had an opportunity to familiarize myself more with the park proposals on the table and to give feedback.

Of the three plans my husband and I strongly favor alternative 3 with modifications.

Modifications:

1. Only day use is allowed. No camping or camp Stoves, no BBQ pits, no campfires, no backpacking overnight use and especially no backpack stoves. Anything that requires a match or lighter should not be allowed. No bunkhouse for overnight purposes.

Fire prevention is basically impossible in this park that has not burned in over a hundred years. Fire response is inadequate due to the roads in and out of the park and for residents on Sonoma Mtn. Rd. on both sides of the park or on Lihue who would not get evacuation help if it is directed in the park and because the narrow roads would be overcrowded and prevent orderly and efficient evacuation.

2. Parking lot increase limited to 50 cars so that traffic is not increased too much; road deterioration does not increase more rapidly and dangers on the road do not increase dramatically. Traffic to and from the Zen Center and to and from Belden Barns must be included in roads analysis.

3. Some trails should be hiking only and not multi-use. No electric bikes or bikes with motors that make sound.

4. Horse trailers should enter only through Jack London rather than traveling over Sonoma Mountain Road which is ill equipped for two cars at the same place in the road no less horse trailers.

5. The Wildlife Corridor should not be impacted in any way including night time activities at the park when animals would be moving through.
6. Funds should be allotted for trash clean up. Drive up Sonoma Mountain Road east of the entrance.
7. Funds and personnel have to allotted for enforcement - no parking on Sonoma Mtn Rd; no littering in park or on the way: no fires; no smoking etc.
8. Keep the park as intended as a place for hiking and preserving the rural and natural setting with little or no development.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

---

I am responding to emails and information on the Park planning.

We are neighbors of the park, we have 28 Acres on the south side of the park on Sonoma Mountain. Our address is 6480 Eagle Ridge Road, Penngrove, CA. We have a fire access road to the Park, which we have verified with Park Ranger Kep Eng. We have shared this information with all the neighbors on Eagle Ridge Road, many of whom are long term residents. Just this fall we had a fire on Gravity Hill, which is the only egress for the ~80 families living on upper Llchau and Eagle Ridge.

We support access to the park, the wonderful trails, the viewpoints. We appreciate the Park and all it has to offer, including the views, the past 4 years have given us views of fires. We cannot over express our concerns on fire concerns. The rugged terrain and remoteness heighten these concerns. The high tension lines running past our property and through the park are constant reminders of the fire risk. Many of the neighbors on Eagle Ridge share this concern.

Our number one concern is backcountry overnight camping. The fire risk is alarming. Please do not open up camping to overnight. I was a back country camper for years, having lived 3 years in Yellowstone National Park. I know how people can create problems, even with the best of intentions.

The Park, Jack London Park, Fairfield Osborn preserve and all of Sonoma Mountain are far too precious to lose due to one small unwatched spark. The risk is much too great.

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I am commenting on the changes to the draft Master Plan for Sonoma Regional Parks.

I live in Santa Rosa, a few miles from Spring Lake and a mile from Bennett ridge. I have now evacuated twice, in 2017 and this past August when the smoke and ash from the fires off of Hwy 12 was so thick it looked like snow. My neighborhood, the Doyle Park Community, was covered in ash, soot and charred leaves. When it comes to the master plan, most certainly add trails and whatever else is needed to bring more people into the magnificence of our parkland, BUT NO FIRE PITS, BARBEQUES OR ANY OTHER MEANS OF USING FIRE!! Please, think about the fact that we are in a permanent drought with diminishing water availability. It's time to not be short sighted about climate change, our vastly increased fire season and the now yearly fires we have and will continue to experience in the future. Someone in the PD was quoted saying that the camp grounds will, in part, be used by people who don't know how to camp. True! And you certainly don't want to make fire's of any sort available to people who are novice campers.



People can enjoy the parks without using fire. Please keep us safe

---

We are aligned with and in agreement with the Bennett Valley Community Association in their opposition to camping in North Sonoma Regional Park:

- No overnight stays
- No fires, including BBQ facilities
- Day use only
- Environmental impact studies are needed (including fire safety, road evacuations, etc.)

We cannot believe the above uses are even being considered by the Sonoma County Regional Parks with all the destructive fires California has suffered, with particular emphasis on Sonoma County! This is wrong on multiple levels.....including human error in practicing safety while camping, increased traffic hazards, and wear and tear on Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain Roads. We are of the opinion that this overnight camping is being prioritized for financial gain, without considering the safety of others in the surrounding areas as well as the increased potential of the destruction of property as demonstrated by these devastating fires we have endured.

---

I have attached the comment card for the North Sonoma Mountain Master Plan. The fillable form didn't allow for formatting, so in case the text is cut off I've also included our comment directly in this email below.

Please let me know if there is anything else I need to do, and thank you for taking the time to review our comment. I'm excited to follow this project and see how the park develops!

Facilitating circumnavigation and multi-day treks through overnight camping has been a key element of the Ridge Trail mission since the beginning: it's a priority in our original Trail Management Guide and is prominent in our Strategic Plan. Providing overnight facilities has grown in importance over the last five years as longer stretches of Ridge Trail are connected and interest in long-distance trail travel grows. The Ridge Trail Council prefers Conceptual Plan Alternative 1, as it seems to offer the greatest range and amount of overnight facilities including camp sites (both group and individual), bunkhouses and cabins near the entrance to the Ridge Trail. This alternative also provides the most car, equestrian, and ADA parking, enhancing accessibility to the Ridge Trail. We also support making any new trails that may be included in this project multi-use when possible (hiking, biking, and equestrian), and providing sufficient equestrian facilities. Alternative 1 and the additional features listed here align with not only the Ridge Trail's goals, but Sonoma County Regional Parks project goals, especially

- Providing a trail system that gives access to inspiring experiences for multiple user types with varying abilities
- Providing the opportunity for an outdoor overnight experience within a short drive from town centers, and
- Providing an inspiring wildland experience for recreation, respite, celebration, and community.



---

I support Bennett Valley Community Association's North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park recommendations:

- *No overnight stays*
  - *No fires, including BBQ facilities*
  - *Day use only*
  - *Environmental impact study (including fire safety, road evacuations etc)*
- 

First - Karen, thanks so much for presenting to the Parks Foundation Board of Directors.

Second - I don't know how to fill out a comments card on a PDF because you can open the document, but you can't (or at least I can't) type on it.

Echoing the article in today's Press Democrat, I am DEEPLY concerned about any overnight camping at North Sonoma Mountain.

I live in Penngrove and the Park is not only one of my favorites but also one of the closest to me.

I believe it exposes the park to too much risk in allowing overnight camping. It is unrealistic to think that even groups let alone individual families can be adequately supervised. Hey, teenagers will be teenagers and break rules. And God knows plenty of adults break rules (Hey we have an about to be former President who considered it a badge of honor to break rules.)

I think we need to think of this park for hiking, biking and equestrian use. That's a lot, and that's plenty.

I applaud the upgrades you are planning with the EXCEPTION of any camping.

And am happy to fill out the comments card if you can tell me how. (Do you want me to print it and mail it?)

---

## My comments or wishes regarding the North Sonoma Mountain project:

1. I do not think any camping should be included, given the current apparently repeated fire difficulties. I do not think of any way to police a camping but no fire policy. I would limit the park to day use. If the climate calms down, this could be revisited

2. If camping is to be allowed, fire must be disallowed, even in fire pit.

3. I would like to see access in some way to Cooper's Grove, a rare experience that ought to be shared with many ages. I do not see this mentioned. Perhaps a trail to the grove

4. I would like Dogs allowed as much as possible on trails, on leashes.

5. If I am forced to choose between options I would choose Option 3.

6. I wonder if a traffic study has been part of the planning process? This road has never been engineered for much traffic, and this has been an issue for every proposed use on the road. Use ought to take this issue into account, including parking.

7. I am thrilled by the existence of this public space and hope that safe and reasoy.

My wife and I, and children, have been Sonoma Mountain Road residents for over fifty years.

---

**The proposal to allow overnight camping and for open campfires in the North Sonoma Mountain Regional park in this day of hugely destructive fires is frankly ridiculous and appalling.**

**I live on the Sonoma Mountain hillside and am opposed to allowing any open fires on or near this wild, heavily wooded, mountain.**

- There are over 200 homes on the hillside where I live. The entire community has a single public access road with a “choke point” at Grove and Carriger. Even more homes, including George Ranch and other residences in non-incorporated Sonoma County have access through this “one way in/one way out” access point of Grove Street. I understand that communities like this would not be built again under the current Sonoma County General Plan and State and County Fire Safe Standards, but they have been built and are lived in. We must then further adapt existing Fire Safe Standards where we can to ensure safety to these communities.
- The wildfires of 2017 came very close to triggering an evacuation of Diamond A. The fires triggered evacuations to within 2 miles of the Grove Street/Carriger choke point.
- The distance between the location of proposed facilities for overnight camping and for open campfire pits and the upper reaches of Diamond A is less than the distance between the starting point of the Glass fire and the entrance to Oakmont in 2020. And it is substantially shorter than the distance between the starting point of the Tubbs fire and the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park communities that were severely affected in 2017.
- The Grove Street Fire Safe Council was organized in 2020 to foster efforts for wildfire mitigation in our community. Plans for overnight camping and open fire pits on Sonoma Mountain are a real “slap in the face”.

**Please consider day use only for the proposed recreation area, or ensure that camp fires are forbidden and that the rule is vigorously enforced.**

---

I am writing in response to the proposal for the North Sonoma Mountain Park & Open Space Preserve. Thank you for reviewing my comments in advance.

Although there are positives to the proposal which I agree with, including additional county hiking trails, dog trails/open areas, educational opportunities, etc. I do however, disagree with several attributes as they are a cause for great concern, and could be considered a threat to our community, human life, wildlife, property and first responders.

#### **Wildfires.**

- I oppose ALL BBQs, fire pits, ovens, camping stoves, etc. to be banned from this proposal. No fires should be allowed within this very DRY landscape at any day/night, time of year. Banned completely.
- Do not for one second believe that the public will be smart and responsible with fire. If the gender reveal party doesn't strike a chord...(amongst the millions of other fires humans have started)
- Climate change has proven to ravage Sonoma County with extreme fire damage, wind and weather patterns and a fire season that is nearing 6 months. Respect the climate, prevent the annual damage by all means necessary.

#### **Sonoma Mountain Road**

- This road is far from fire-safe. Before any proposal like yours is approved, Sonoma Mountain Road would need to be overhauled, and aligned with the State's fire safety requirements. It would need to be repaired, widened, trees/shrubs trimmed away from roadsides, etc.
- There have been many times during Red Flag Warnings whereby this road is closed. So, I strongly suggest that the entire road be in compliance with all fire entrance and exit protocols prior to approving this proposal. Without addressing this road, you put human life, including first responder life in jeopardy.

**Environmental/Wildlife Impact. Noise. Pollution. Disruption and further Invasion of wildlife habitat/movement.**

- The additional expansion/development proposed, including additional parking lots, possible construction of additional cabins, play areas, open spaces will further encroach on our local wildlife's habitat and their right to roam.
- The development of additional structures, spaces intended to accommodate more people, children, dogs, cars, trucks, trailers, trash, water demands, etc. will indefinitely lead to noise pollution and environmental pollution.
- Irresponsible dog owners. On-leash is rarely enforced, therefore, in a wildlife-rich environment like Sonoma Mountain, my concern is for all wildlife, especially our Black-tailed deer/fawns.
- Campsites are notorious for leftover trash, including food remnants. Much of our local wildlife cannot consume these things, as it could lead to serious reactions/death.
- I strongly suggest a third-party, impartial wildlife impact study (done by someone other than Fish & Wildlife) to determine the potential effects of this proposal.

**Campsites/Camping/Overnight Camping.**

- Although I agree with small picnic areas, I oppose all campsites, especially overnight camping. See wildfire, environmental and wildlife reasons above.

**Hours/Days of Operation.**

- I strongly suggest that the park/open space (trails, picnic areas should that portion pass) be available for day-use ONLY, November-July.
- If it is day-use only, but year-round, I strongly suggest that if ANY Fire Weather Watch or Red-Flag Warning goes into effect, the park/open space is promptly evacuated and shut down/closed completely. No entrance allowed to anyone. Period.

Lastly, I would encourage this group to understand the sheer number of homes, wineries, estates, communities surrounding this proposal - as it relates to ANY fire-related activity. Park Ranger or not, NO FIRES SHOULD BE STARTED in this area.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

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Thank you, Karen for reviewing my comments.

I'd also like to submit documentation (from today's Press Democrat) that supports my argument that your proposed expansion plan with addl. campsites, cabins, parking lots, food/picnic areas, etc. would absolutely have negative environmental and wildlife impacts.

See article here: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/tahoe-residents-frustrated-by-tourists-feeding-bears-leaving-trash-this-su/>

As a former board member of Fawn Rescue of Sonoma County, I know first-hand the impacts of human interference with our Black-tailed deer. They CANNOT eat what human's do. Their digestive systems cannot handle the toxins. If they consume leftovers/trash, severe illness, starvation and death can occur.

In addition, if water is left for deer and greater wildlife to consume (water bowls, water from campsites, standing water from picnic areas, wash bins, etc.), its a fact that our local Black-tailed deer population will get sick or die. Specifically fawns.

Case in point: Due to locals/tourists leaving water out, or not disposing of it correctly, our local deer/fawn population is being desecrated from a deadly pandemic.

The viral disease, called Adenovirus Hemorrhagic Disease is spread from deer to deer, virally (like Covid) as a result of contaminated water consumption. This year alone, the virus has already taken the lives of thousands of deer and fawns not only in our County, but neighboring Counties as well.

See article here: <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/08/05/deadly-deer-disease-spreading-through-bay-area/>

Please consider the wildlife/environmental impacts of this expansion. Ive mentioned deer being impacted, but our local bears (who roam Sonoma Mountain) would be impacted as well, as the Press Democrat states.

I'll leave you with a quote by a forest ranger at Yosemite National Park on why it is hard to design the perfect garbage bin to keep bears from breaking into it: "There is considerable overlap between the intelligence of the smartest bears and the dumbest tourists."

---

Please, no overnight camping, cooking or campfires on Sonoma Mountain.

---

As a homeowner and resident of Sonoma Mountain, I concur with everything Ms. **Name** has expressed in her email. Guided by rangers or not, campfires should not be allowed in such a high fire risk area, particularly one with very few escape options for residents and visitors fleeing an unexpected wildfire. I lived in Berkeley during the Oakland Hills Firestorm of 1991 and remember vividly the horror of those who were unable to escape down the narrow roads from Hiller Highlands. The fire ultimately killed 25 people, some of them trapped in their vehicles attempting to flee the flames. Further, the burning embers from that fire traveled as far as Candlestick Park. One traveling spark and a gust of wind from a campfire and our entire county is in danger.

I realize that Parks and Recreation and the County have public calls to answer and revenues to gain by offering camping amenities to the public but the safety of the residents as well as those same campers need to come before any other consideration. This is simply not the right place for these kinds of fires.

---

I just read an article about this in the Sonoma Index-Tribune so thought I would send feedback.

It seems less than ideal to allow anyone to use any type of flame in one of our parks given our issues with fires. No matter how many people are responsible, there is going to be some percentage of people who are careless or just not very thoughtful and could start the next Glass fire.

If you allow camping, you will have some kind food cooking going on whether you allow campfires or Bunsen burners or not. People will just do that. It is part of camping. I can see kids running around with their still flaming marshmallows ... starting the next fire. So given people will cook whether allowed to or not because it is part of camping, it seems allowing camping is ill-advised as well.

Just one person's opinions.

## Facebook Comments

I would like to add, however, that I feel strongly that both bike and dog access should be strictly limited to particular trails. I adore dogs and I am an occasional mountain biker (though by no means a die-hard), but I'm also an enthusiastic naturalist and conservationist, and I wouldn't want to see a vital wildlife corridor disrupted by a large increase in two-wheeled and canine traffic. Perhaps the Umbrella Tree Trail (a family favorite of ours – we have boys 5 and 2) and the extension in Alternative 1 can be open to all multi-use purposes, but the rest of the trails that connect to Jack London and skirt the Fairfield Osborn Preserve can be off-limits to bikes and dogs?

---

More dog friendly parks like Hood Mountain. Open all the parks to dogs on leashes!

---

Allow mushroom foraging for personal use! I can't believe it's not allowed! C'mon! 🍄 🍄

---

I love our parks and I love you as an agency, but it looks like you're really going against the grain here. People are offering lots of feedback on Facebook where it's convenient for them, and each time I see

you're informing people how they can "formally" submit their feedback. Please, change tack. Meet people where they're at and don't erect artificial barriers to engagement <3

---

Dogs should be welcome ♥

---

Dog friendly trails!

---

Dogs on leash in all parks and trails

---

Adding camping options at Sonoma Mountain is quite possibly the worst idea ever. It will disrupt wildlife and biodiversity in one of our county's largest habitat corridors. In addition, it seems disrespectful to the tribe and other people working hard to protect the area. It would be great to have the Natural Resource department involved with the planning department. There needs to be someone in those meetings that actually cares about the environment.

---

It is not just mountain bikers in Annadel. If you go up Rough Go there is a trail that cuts straight up the hill and avoids the rocky parts that gave Rough Go its name. I see hikers walking up it all the time. It gets it. It is easier and shorter. Not to mention the trails that cut across from Lake Trail to Rough Go. Every time I'm in Annadel I see some trekking across to Rough Go. Park users- all of them - are not staying on the designated trails.

---

I see a lot of pro-dog, anti-cyclists, and accessible trails supporters, but the truth is we need to be willing to follow the rules and expectations the parks set forth. They are too short staffed to deal with the scofflaws who ruin the experience for others. If you see someone not following the rules politely explain what they are doing is wrong. Unfortunately in many cases you will get an earful of angry. If someone calls you out on something you know is wrong change your behavior.

---

Dog friendly, 3-5 miles, for Golden trained for blue-bag inspiration on entry

---

Dogs on leash, please. Not like at Sonoma Valley Regional Park, where most dogs seem to be off leash and running wild.

---

Dog friendly please!!

---

Pretty sure my family (with our dogs-on leash) hiked this park during an early open house introduction about a year ago. It was spectacular. Amazing addition to the family of regional parks.

---

Camping!!

---

I'm 76 and would going on the trails but use a walker. If I could rent something motorized there that would be great!

---

Are you allowing scouting service projects yet? I know several scouts who would love to help out the parks!

---

Sonoma County Regional Parks inviting people to engage and give feedback in Facebook, and then telling people in Facebook that you're going to ignore what is said here is not a good plan. I recommend that you revisit this strategy and find a way to also incorporate what \*real people\* here are saying in response to your conversation initiation.

---

**Name** to be clear, Annadel is not a regional park. It's a state park, and it suffers from a long history of expanding popularity, and not a single master plan to ensure state staff manage it adequately

---

The problem, **Name**, is that our trails are very limited. Organizations like regional parks haven't kept up with trail development to adequately meet the demands created by the popularity of hiking and biking. Please don't fall into the trap of pitting one user group against the other. Instead, let's provide them



with feedback sufficient that they'll build trails so everyone can enjoy their own little slice of paradise. That might mean more hiking only trails. But it certainly means \*biking only trails\*, as there currently is no such thing in Sonoma County.

---

**Name** no dogs please—our experience in Sonoma Regional Park in Glen Ellen is that people do not keep their dogs on leash, and are insulted when they are asked to do so. And on the Overlook and Montini, they bring dogs even when signs all over say no dogs!

---

When you say dog walking trails you mean on leash? Is there going to be an enclosed dog park?

---

Would love to see backpacking in sites maybe a loop trail for 2 nights of camping. Trails that circle around the mountain

---

Omg !!!! Love dog trails, family trails , camping , easy trails for kids , easy trails for bikes with kids ♥

---

**Name** I'm sorry that's been your experience. However, I seem to have a lot of people in agreement with me. Most dog owners are responsible. Dogs on leash please!

---

In Annadel there are several trails designated as multi-use that have been utterly destroyed by mountain bikes and are no longer suitable for walking/hiking. The Sonoma Mountain trails currently are not in such bad shape but it's only a matter of time. I'd like to see trails dedicated either for hikers or bikers, and fewer multi-use trails. As a hiker, I wouldn't be sorry to give up a trail for the exclusive use of bikes, but in return I'd like to see other trails repaired and made safe and suitable for hiking only. No doubt bikers would prefer not to have to dodge hikers on trails, and I'd rather not have to pick thru loose stones, exposed roots, and narrow gullies eroded by bikes in trails that should be smooth. (Comments on the conversation by other users) Carl Triola I agree that anyone who goes off trail is destroying the area. In Annadel especially, better signage and some strategically placed boulders could help. Jacob Bayless I understand. It does give us a glimpse of what can happen to Sonoma Mountain, though, if there isn't a good plan for use! :)

---

a no mountain bike day! once a month. Imagine being able to enjoy nature without someone flying by, screaming to their friends, blasting music, scaring animals and running you down? that'd be sweet.

---

Id love a camping option

---

Dog friendly trails. So few in Sonoma County. I like Your idea as well Matthew Parks

---

Please allow dogs

---

I wonder if Sudden Oak Death has infested that area, yet? It would be a tragic loss to continue the spread into that area. I would hope plans to prevent it would be considered.

---

One has to wonder about the environmental impact of a 1 or 2-ton dually towing an air-conditioned trailer... that and the parking lot needed for storage of such vehicles.

---

Geocaching challenge in the parks that when completed would be awarded a trackable coin.

---

I have been in Sonoma for six months, but after having heard about all the wonderful walking trails and paths in this area, I STILL haven't been able to go on any of them, because dogs aren't allowed.

---

Dog friendly please! On leash of course.

---

Backpacking and dog-friendly!

---

Sonoma County could really use more campgrounds. It's hard to get reservations anywhere.

## Instagram Comments

Biking the current trail is fun but bike specific trails would be sweet

---

Would like to see some disc golf.

---

I am a member for a few years now and one reason I love being a regional park member is I can share my adventures with my 4 legged dog, we reach the summit together and enjoy our snacks and drinks together. It's always nice to have dog friendly parks and hikes and I'm also a fan of camping which would be great if you can camp and go for a hike during the day and come back to your campsite after to enjoy and relax. I've been to Shiloh regional once before and didn't know they don't allow dogs coz I thought all regional parks allow dogs and had to turn back home and cancel our hike. What is the reason why some parks won't allow dogs and some would?

---

dog friendly trails please!

---

Yes please!. . . to dog friendly trails.

---

Isn't the reason dogs aren't allowed in certain areas due to presence of sensitive wildlife?

---

Dog friendly trails, makes me feel safer if I go alone

---

Disc golf course!

---

Please dog friendly trails! AND dog friendly camping 🏕️

---

More bike trails. Also dog friendly.

---

Bike trails and disc golf course

---

Not a fan of up and backs, so if there are loops involved. BONUS!! Spent a few minutes trying to decipher the plans on your website. Couldn't figure it out. I saw picnic tables involved. In parks w/ those...never really seen those utilized. Don't care about dog friendly, but I know people care about such

things so that's fine...especially if they scare the cats away (saw my only mt lion at N. Sonoma). So yeah, more trails that include loops.

---

Expand expand expand! 📢

---

We don't need trails for dogs, and there are ample studies available to show how detrimental this is for endangered mammals, especially bobcats, cougars, etc. Dogs leave scents on trails that last for weeks. Without Bobcats, area rodent populations increase.

---

Please allow backpacking and dogs! 🙌

---

Camping, camping, camping

---

Embarrassed to ask, but is there a no dog policy because it connects to a state park? I should know this I know 😊 but side note: HUGE fan of the camping/backpacking idea! It's been my favorite park (even though I work for the River) for 10 years now, aside from the no dog policy, and North Sonoma is even where I first learned of the parks hiring! Fast forward 4 years and now I'm a happy employee with one of the best and proudest jobs around. Question: will there ultimately be ONE choice of the three options? And is this a "beautification" project? Or expansion?

---

Yes-dog friendly, expanding bike trails, separate trails for slower speed and higher speed users. Maybe make them directional trails to make for better traffic contro

---

Water!!

---

Bike trails bike trails bike trails !!

---

Yes yes yes!!!! Dog trails please!!!!

---

Dogs and camping please.

---

On leash Dog friendly trails are always appreciated !

---

Dog friendly trails!!! Restrooms?

---

Legal bike trails, please!!!🚲

---

Yes more camping, hiking, and dog friendly areas. We need more local camping opportunities. Thank you for all you are doing

---

Dog friendly loops with inclines and declines not just way up then way down. Okay with bikes too.

---

Anything that's geared to mountain biking and camping would be great.

---

But in all seriousness, dog-friendly trails and camp sites would be very welcomed!

---

Dog-friendly trails at this excellent park would be amazing!

---

Hiking trails preferably loops, dogs ok, and camping would be great.

---

RV Camping?

---

Yes to all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

---

More dog trails

---

Yes please! Both to more hiking options in Sonoma and to dog friendly trails.

---

At the peak, I prefer the more natural of the two alternatives with just a rock wall circle showing what's in the view in that direction rather than a fancy compass at the peak

## Map

Because of the format in which ArcGIS is stored, each comment is entered separately, although many comments many come from a single commenter.

Topic	Comment
Recreational Uses	2-3 small rustic sites at Umbrella tree
Recreational Uses	Group camping site below where one of the barns is located
Trails	Adding this trail to make a loop seems like a great way to get more folks to visit the Umbrella tree
Trails	Adding trail access into the park is a more interesting and safe option for folks coming into the park on bikes
Trails	Would love to see more trails open to dogs (on leash) - there are so many wonderful parks I completely avoid because I'm not going to leave my dog at home when I go for a hike.
Recreational Uses	Provide dispersed camping with central bunkhouse facilities.
Trails	In my experience on the Walsh Property the animals use these woodland edges as travel corridors. While it makes for more interesting trails keeping trails out of those edges disturbs the wildlife and their corridors much more in my experience.
Other	Managing illegal parking on Sonoma Mountain Road will be extremely important. Signage and Towing options will be essential to prevent the snarl of cars prohibiting the large trucks that come up and down the road from being stuck when access is blocked.
Trails	Once again having loop trails is a priority but extra loops toward the edges of an existing trail on further impacts wildlife corridors that have been established on the mountain. Keeping the concentric ring of impact smaller when possible is better for the wildlife.
Trails	Once again, In my experience on the Walsh Property the animals use these woodland edges as travel corridors. While it makes for more interesting trails keeping trails out of those edges disturbs the wildlife and their corridors much more in my experience.

Topic	Comment
Trails	reducing the trail footprint while having a wonderful loop trail is key for the impact on the wildlife corridors. Human use will greatly disturb the functionality of these corridors, so limiting the disturbance while gaining access is key.
Other	Clear boundary markers every 200 feet along this and other fences will be needed to delineate private property, so as to not cause issues with the neighbors.
Facilities	While I am excited about the camping options down lower in the other portions of the park, this specific site adds a number of unique complications to host a camp site. Fire danger on this mountain is real and huge. Being extremely remote on the summit, a fire would be hard to quickly respond to on this site. Additionally the costs of building on this summit will be huge. Additionally the constant construction disturbance and occupancy of that bunkhouse will only further impact the wildlife cor
Other	Extremely important to add explanatory signage of why no dogs on certain trails. The community needs to understand the significance of this park as a wildlife corridor. Since enforcement is tough we need community buy in to create social norms.
Trails	Please open as many trails to dogs on leash as possible!
Recreational Uses	Great to see campsites being proposed as part of this plan!
Recreational Uses	Agree with the other commenter, backpacking sites would be great to add as well.
Trails	Allow dogs on leash on this trail up to the overlook
Facilities	For safe equestrian entry and exit, the actual park access road must be made much wider to accommodate trailers and dually pick-ups. There must be turning radius without going off pavement or into the ditch. There must be safety for oncoming traffic to pass. Equestrian parking must be bigger to allow for the typical larger rigs now used by the public. There must be adequate room to turn around even if other rigs are present.
Trails	What is the purpose for the trail connecting equestrian parking to the campground? No equestrian will be able to camp separately from their rig.
Facilities	There should be a restroom at the equestrian parking lot, too.



Topic	Comment
Trails	I believe in full access, however a trail from the entrance encourages parking along the roadway which is not safe and not feasible. People will do it.
Other	Interpretation of scenic views and history of Bennett Valley/Taylor Mtn as it relates to Native Americans.
Recreational Uses	NO camping. Don't clutter the area. Picnic and day-use only. Hike/Bike/Horse access.
Trails	I agree with Byron. Less disturbance. Opportunity for interp about this subject.
Facilities	NO CAMPING. Concerns about wildfires. Clean-up/garbage/restrooms of campsites by staff will be difficult and time consuming drive. Emergency response by roads is a LONG ways away.
Other	Echoing concerns about increased traffic and parking along SMR. Concerns about people inappropriately accessing FOP and private properties.
Other	Interpretation: wildfire footprints viewed from here; 20+ public lands seen from here; names of mountains visible; historical relevance with Native Americans (Coyote).
Other	Signage that explains the property boundaries and changing use rules for JLSHP. Also, let's get the JLSHP name corrected on signage!
Other	Signage explaining property boundaries and change of use rules between parks. Let's get the name JLSHP corrected on signage.
Other	Signage explaining park boundaries, different use rules for JLSHP, get the JLSHP name corrected.
Recreational Uses	No dogs allowed. Let's leave this a wildlife corridor and a place where people can recreate without dogs. Stated in support of the Veteran with dog PTSD at the public meeting.
Other	Interp about meadow habitat and why the replantings.
Other	Interp about the seasonal pond: habitat, species, why to not disturb it.
Other	Interp about the mixed oak forest
Other	Interp about the redwood forest; creek habitat; species who use both and why they are important.
Other	Interp about the wildlife who live here and why they are important to protect.
Other	Interp about how the trail follows easements as a result of cooperation of private property owners, and how we should respect that.
Other	Interp for ADA parking lot: overviews of history/forest habitats/views/wildlife.
Recreational Uses	Hike/Bike/Horse, multi-use all the way to Eliot Loop!

Topic	Comment
Recreational Uses	Hike/Bike/Horse, multi-use
Recreational Uses	Hike/Bike/Horse, multi-use
Recreational Uses	Hike/Bike/Horse, multi-use
Recreational Uses	No camping at all: too much infrastructure in a small footprint. Let's keep this day-use.
Recreational Uses	Not agreeable to "bunkhouse" -- there simply is not enough space for adequate parking for day-use/camping/group camping/bunkhouse. Need to continue having ranger residence.
Other	The entire access road MUST be expanded in width for any future alternatives. It is simply too narrow for any traffic and not sustainable in it's shoulders, especially for equestrian access.
Other	Interp specific to equestrian use: where and what at NSM and into JLSHP.
Recreational Uses	No overnight camping or Campfires or BBQ or Campstoves
Trails	I wish for more accessibility for hikers with dogs on this trail up to the overlook, preferably linkage to the dog-friendly trails at Jack London State Historic Park .

## Voicemail Comments

Hi. We're **name** and we live in Diamond A. And we want to go on record as definitely opposing the project for Sonoma Mountain Regional Park. I would guess this message is for Steve Ehret, Planner. Anyway, our home phone is **phone**. Thank you very much. And we will be active about the opposition. Thank you very much.

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I am a hiker and I would vote no for any dogs on the trail. I think that they interfere with the natural habitat and the animals. And I also don't like seeing dog poop on the trail or, worse yet, those little blue bags. So my vote is no for dogs on any trail. Maybe at the bottom a little bit but nothing at the top.

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I would say: no glass, no matches. Put a rope around the perimeter. A thick rope that helps keep the snakes away. And common sense, you're going to have to have somebody patrolling and checking their gear like a cop. Cause a lot of people don't care if they start a fire. The whole idea is pretty scary after what we have just been through.