

**Santa Barbara County
Parks and Recreation Department
Maintenance Management Plan**



Santa Barbara County Parks and Recreation Department

Executive Summary

Based on multiple day observations, park tours with County staff, and discussions with staff, it appears that the level of maintenance is currently in the lower range of Mode III to IV maintenance mode as established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This is considered a low level of operating standard for municipal parks and recreation systems, generally caused by significant budget restrictions. Complicating this level of maintenance for Santa Barbara Parks is the intense and ongoing high level of use by county residents and non-residents of the County park system. Additionally, Santa Barbara County is faced with a capital infrastructure maintenance backlog in excess of \$30 million dollars

The Department maintains a significant number of parks with general fund dollars augmented with revenue from Lake Cachuma, Jalama Beach, and concession operations. Overall, the current level of resources available for park maintenance is strained and/or inadequate to fully fund both operation, maintenance, and long-term capital upgrades. The Department is currently backlogged in their ability to deliver on all elements of park maintenance, deferred maintenance, and proper attention to public safety.

This report analyzed standardized and regular maintenance (productive tasks) requirements of the Department, based on actual inventory of facilities. This will assist in quantifying workload and establishing the number of staff hours that will be required to maintain existing facilities as a Mode I agency. Regular on-going programmed and planned maintenance activities were measured such as mowing, landscaping, pruning, general maintenance, and trail work.

Results of this measurement showed that to move into a Mode I level, Santa Barbara County would need a total of 238,024 productive hours of labor annually. The Department is currently showing a workforce deficit of 72,817 hours or the equivalent in productive hours of over 46 full-time employees.

Santa Barbara County is faced with serious challenges and decisions to close this gap and improve the condition of the park system. This report recommends actions in three broad categories:

- Additional Staffing
- Reduction in Facilities and Facility Maintenance
- Adoption of New Maintenance Standards

The NRPA standards are thru CAPRA—
Commission for Accreditation of Park and
Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

MODE I

- State of the art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape.

MODE II

- High level maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.

MODE III

- Moderate level maintenance-associated with agencies that, because of budget restrictions, are unable to maintain at a high level.

MODE IV

- Moderately low level of maintenance.

Introduction

The focus of this report was directed towards the identification of infrastructure needs, maintenance levels, and the resources required to maintain Santa Barbara County Parks. Hours required for basic maintenance of the County system at a NRPA Mode I level was identified as 238,024 total hours. Based on available staffing levels the County currently shows a workforce deficit of 72,234 hours or the equivalent in productive hours of 46 full-time employees.

The level and quality of service standards for a park system can be viewed in a variety of ways in addition to infrastructure and maintenance needs. Population ratios of land acres per thousand people has been one of the most commonly used standards, but can present a limited evaluation of a park system. Broader approaches to level of service standards, beyond the scope of this project, could also consider the distribution of land and facilities in the county, the availability and distribution of programs for all populations, and demographics of the users.

The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) 2014 City Park Facts compared park jurisdictions based on employees per 10,000 population and acres maintained per employee. Santa Barbara County was not included in the TPL study. Table 1, **Comparison with Other Jurisdictions**, summarizes data from several west-coast agencies with Santa Barbara County included for comparative purposes. Data from Table 1 supports the fact that the County is significantly under-staffed for the acres of parkland within the system.

Table 1
Comparison with Other Jurisdictions
Employees per Acre of Parkland
Trust for Public Land 2014

Employees are full-time and part-time employees, counted as Full-Time Equivalent (FTE); seasonal staff are not counted.

Jurisdiction	Employees	Employees per 10,000 Population	Designed Parkland	Natural Parkland	Acres Maintained per Employee
Seattle, Wa	951	15.0	4,709	837	5.8
Santa Ana, Ca	66	2.0	479	36	7.8
San Francisco, Ca	726	8.8	2,600	3,085	7.8
Anaheim, Ca	271	7.9	230	623	3.1
Portland, Or	411	6.8	3,433	10,771	34.5
Riverside, Ca	196	6.2	837	2,850	18.8
Sacramento, Ca	236	5.0	1,740	3,340	21.5
Los Angeles, Ca	1,397	3.6	10,022	26,090	25.8
San Jose, Ca	306	3.1	1,988	14,475	53.8
Fresno, Ca	50	1.0	1,573	---	31.5
Irvine, Ca	321	1.4	8,163	---	25.4
Santa Barbara County, Ca*	73.2	1.7	1,045	7,496	116.7
Santa Barbara County excluding Lake Cachuma*	63	1.4	2,141	---	34.0

*Santa Barbara data added and includes seasonal employees.

Purpose of the Maintenance Management Plan

The purpose of the *Maintenance Management Plan* is to clearly define the requirements and actions of Santa Barbara County's Department of Parks and Recreation ("Department") to maintain public usefulness and the investment into park and recreational facilities. This includes recommendations for increased staffing, reductions in number of facilities maintained, consideration of sustainability factors, existing conditions of the current inventory, as well as implementation of necessary systems to reduce costs.

The *Maintenance Management Plan* will enable the Department to improve the identification, justification, and prioritization of maintenance requirements for park and recreation sites and assets. This is achieved by establishing a clear quantification of resources necessary to maintain the current system as high-quality, accounting for aging facilities, and deteriorate that have occurred from insufficient funding and heavy public use.

Estimated Labor Hours and Cost for Maintenance

An initial important first step is the evaluation of standardized and regular maintenance requirements of the Department in order to quantify workload. This initial step measures regular on-going programmed and planned maintenance activities, also termed productive tasks, examples such as mowing, landscaping, pruning, facility cleaning, park patrol, and trail work. (See the report, *Santa Barbara County Park Estimated Hours* for full details on estimated hours required.)

There will remain many aspects of the workload that is difficult to accurately quantify, including non-productive tasks. Research by this consultant and industry standards indicates non-productive tasks can amount to 20% to 30% of the annually available 2080 working hours. Non-productive task include items such as:

- Holidays
- Vacation
- Sick Leave
- Other Leaves (Family)
- Safety Training and other Training Programs
- Workmen's Comp/Disability
- Vandalism/Graffiti Repair
- Miscellaneous Administrative Duties
- Special Event Coverage
- First Aid
- Minor Repairs to Systems (Irrigation, restroom)

For the purpose of this report, without hard data from Santa Barbara County, a non-productive rate of 25% is utilized, or 1,560 available productive hours. For seasonal staff, a non-productive factor of 5% is utilized.

Table 2, **Positions and Hours Available**, summarizes current staffing levels for Santa Barbara County Parks and the hours available for productive work task. Several staff are identified as not involved in completing productive work tasks as they are responsible for administrative duties, planning, budgeting, human resources, arts, or the coordination of other programs. Currently, at current budget levels, the

County has available 94,340 hours of staff time to complete productive work task within the County Park system.

**Table 2
Positions and Hours Available
To Perform Basic Maintenance**

Category	Number of Positions	Performs Basic Maintenance Tasks	Total Hours Available for Basic Maintenance	Productive Work Task Percentage	Productive Work Hours Available
Administrative	9.5 FTE	No	0		
Planning	2.5 FTE	No	0		
IT	.5 FTE	No	0		
Arts	3 FTE	No	0		
Naturalist	1 FTE	Yes	2,080	75%	1,560
Park Rangers	27 FT	Yes	56,160	75%	42,120
Skilled Trades	11 FT	Yes	22,880	75%	17,160
Seasonal	12.2 FTE (24,469 Hours)	Yes	24,469	95%	23,245
Aquatic Coordinator	.75 FT	No	0		
Lifeguard	4.89 FTE (10,181 Hours)	Yes	10,181	95%	9,672
Total	72.34 FTE		119,120		93,757

The *Santa Barbara County Park Estimated Hours* Park spreadsheets, (contained in a separate report) is based primarily on industry and Santa Barbara County Park maintenance standards. This report

provides the estimated total hours required in productive tasks for each individual park and the system as a whole, based on the actual park inventory and at a level necessary to achieve NRPA Mode I.

Table 3, **Recommended Annual Hours Required to Perform Basic Maintenance**, summarizes the total number of hours required to maintain the park system at a NRPA Mode I level as 238,024 hours and is based upon the actual inventory of each park unit. Table 3 further identifies workforce hours available from Host, contracted labor, and County employees in productive hours.

The net result for the County of Santa Barbara is a deficit of 72,817.21 hours annually or the equivalent in productive hours of 46.3 full-time employees.

Table 3
Recommended Annual Hours Required
to
Perform Basic Maintenance

	TOTAL HOURS RECOMMENDED	HOST/CONTRACTED HOURS	DEFICIT
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	23,565.54	5,154.18	18,411.36
COMMUNITY PARKS	23,803.25	6,124.27	17,678.98
REGIONAL PARKS	131,384.46	49,674.62	81,709.84
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE & TRAILS	4,206.52	277.44	3,929.08
MISCELLANEOUS TASK	44,844.95	0.00	44,844.95
TOTAL HOURS	238,024.72	61,230.51	166,574.21
COUNTY PRODUCTIVE HOURS			93,757.00
WORKFORCE DEFICIT			72,817.21

72,234 Hours divided by 1,560 = 46.3 FTE
FTE = 2,080 x 75% = 1,560 Productive Hours

Santa Barbara County does track hours for three facilities, Lake Cachuma, Jalama Beach, and Guadalupe Dunes. **Table 4** displays, for the most recent fiscal year, the hours recommended compared to the hours tracked for each of these facilities. Host and contracted hours are also displayed.

Table 4
Tracked Hours vs.
Recommended Hours

	Maintenance Hours	Miscellaneous Hours	Total Recommended	Full-Time Hours	Extra Help	Host Contract	Surplus/ (Deficit)
Lake Cachuma	39,155.00	29,829.75	68,984.75	33623.4	15,771.30	21,840	2,249.95
Jalama	20,341.29	2,496.00	22,837.29	11,014.3	6,393.00	4,160	(1,269.99)
Guadalupe Dunes	1,098.14	1,895.00	2,993.14	1,960.00	4,235.50	200	3,402.96

This table indicates that Santa Barbara County is adequately staffing these three facilities although there are a number of factors that should be considered impacting the County's ability to fully maintain these three parks. These factors include:

- Host are counted at 100% of potential time. Staff indicates that vacancy rates for hosts may be as high as 25%, thus reducing those hours significantly.
- These three facilities are heavily used by the public. The result is a dramatic increase in non-productive hours including vandalism, first aid, etc.
- Lake Cachuma and Jalama Beach both suffer from aging infrastructure requiring significantly more hours of non-productive staff time to maintain in an operational status.

Finally, **Table 4** shows that Santa Barbara County is utilizing the majority of available labor in the operation of three facilities. While this is necessary due to high public use, the net result is fewer hours available for the remaining portions of the park system for basic maintenance and infrastructure upkeep.

Park System Recommendations

Resulting from years if not decades of inadequate funding, Santa Barbara County is faced with serious challenges and decisions to close this gap and improve the condition of the park system. Overall improvement will occur only by the County taking broad actions to increase staffing, reduce number of facilities, and to adopt new maintenance standards. This report recommends actions in these three broad categories:

- Additional Staffing
- Reduction in Facilities and Facility Maintenance
- Adoption of New Maintenance Standards

Additional Staffing

**In addition to current staff, fund an additional skilled trade crew to repair, renovate, and maintain infrastructure of current parks. This crew should be dedicated to renovation of existing facilities, preventative maintenance, and repair or replacement of existing systems. The crew should be funded to include vehicles, supplies, and a dedicated park renovation fund. Recommended staffing composition includes:

- 1--Supervisor
- 1--Lead
- 1--Electrician
- 2--Plumbers
- 2--Carpenters
- 1--Miscellaneous—welder, etc.

**A recommended increase in staffing levels of park rangers, seasonal help, and administrative staff as follows:

- Increase Park Ranger Staff by a minimum of 10 full-time employees.
- Increase Part-Time help by 15,000 hours.
- Increase Administration by minimum of 3 FTE staff—(1/2) Director, (1/2) Administrative Assistant, (1) Planner to assist directly with infrastructure repair and renovation, (1) Maintenance Specialist responsible for system upgrades, system standardization, and sustainability recommendations.
- Due to the extent of gopher damage to turf throughout the park system, a dedicated crew should be created for the short-term (2-3 years) to control and repair gopher infestations.

Reduction in Facilities and Facility Maintenance

**Explore transfer of operation and management of those facilities located within the boundaries of incorporated cities or park districts.

**Explore transfer of open space areas to local land trust conservancies, other non-profits, or to another local jurisdiction.

**Close selected facilities Monday-Thursday from November-February. This could include Live Oak, Nojoqui, Ocean Beach, Rocky Nook, Toro, Tuckers Grove, and Guadalupe Dunes.

**Reduce turf in areas of low use and naturalize with low maintenance native plantings.

**Transfer beach facilities located within Isla Vista to local jurisdiction.

**Close Santa Rosa Park—Explore transfer of ownership to non-profit such as Audubon Society.

**Transfer ownership of Rocky Nook and Arroyo Burro to City of Santa Barbara.

Adoption of New Standards

**Adopt recommended efficiency and maintenance standards—detailed within this report.

**Adopt sustainability recommendations—detailed within this report.