

Marin County Parks and Open Space



PROTECT
RESTORE
GROW
CONNECT

**RTMP/EIR Community
Workshop:
Carrying Capacity, Visitor
Experience and Resource
Protection**

March 26, 2011

The Day

- Welcome!
- Introductions
- Purpose of the Workshop
 - Understand the history of the District
 - Understand the history of human use
 - Discuss trends in resources management and recreation
 - Consider the ranges of appropriate and desired resource conditions and visitor experiences

Agenda

- Welcome & Overview
- History of Open Space & Formation of District
- Where are We Today? Mission, Policies, Laws
- Break
- Public Scoping – What We Heard
- Trends in Natural Resource Protection & Public Use
- Competing Demands & Carrying Capacity
- Lunch
- Range of Appropriate & Desired Resource Conditions, and Experience Conditions
- Next Steps & Adjourn

Meeting Ground Rules

- All participants, including the County, agree to:
 - show respect to all who participate
 - listen to and hear all ideas with an open mind
 - separate individuals and/or organizations from problems
 - focus on interests rather than positions
 - move forward – learn from the past, but do not sacrifice future progress to it
 - work toward solutions with integrity
 - stay on topic

Workshop #1 – Getting Started

- Carrying Capacity (aka user capacity)

Determining the types and levels of road and trail use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and social conditions that fulfill the District's mission and Marin Countywide Plan policies.

When to Use a Carrying Capacity Process

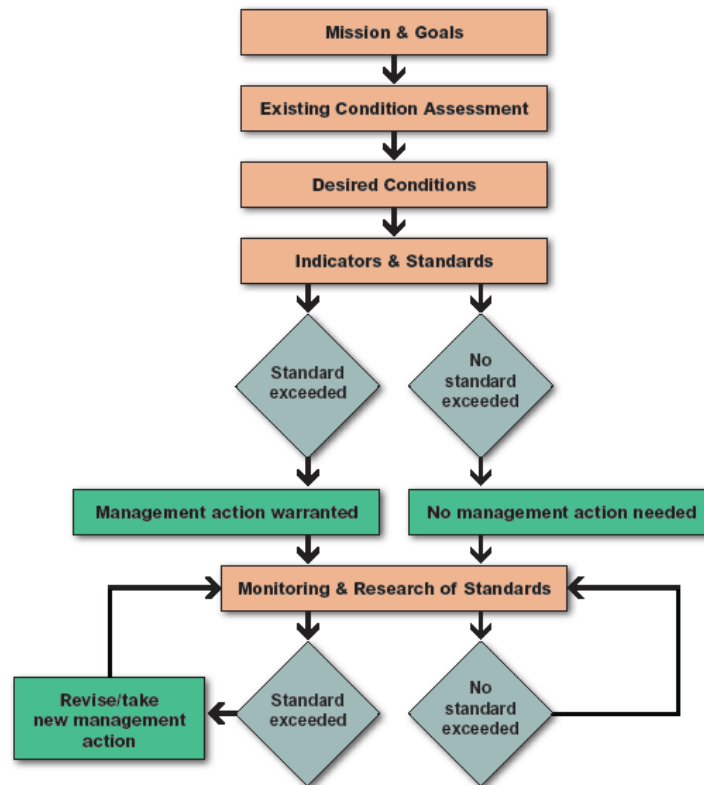
- **Whenever you have mission goals in conflict**
 - protection of resources from inappropriate uses or overuse
 - conflicts among uses and experiences
 - desire for freedom from use restrictions

Process



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Marin County Parks & Open Space User Capacity Process



Planning Basics

WHY – Mission

WHAT – Desired Conditions (aka, goals or objectives) that support the “mission”

HOW – Actions to achieve “desired conditions”

History of Open Space Lands

■ Pierre Joske

- Former Director, Marin County Parks and Recreation Department, and first Director of the Marin County Open Space District

■ Al Boro

- Mayor, City of San Rafael, former Chair of Marin County Parks and Recreation Commission

And Formation of the District

■ John Hart

- Environmental Writer, former Reporter for the Pacific Sun and member of the Environmental Quality Subcommittee of the City-County Planning Council

■ Barry Spitz

- Author, *Open Spaces*, Lands of the Marin County Open Space District; *Tamalpais Trails*; *Mill Valley, The Early Years*; *Dipsea, The Greatest Race*

Where Are We Today?

- Accomplishments
- Challenges
- Mission
- Regulations and Policies
- Plans

Challenges

- Allocation of increasingly limited financial resources to growing list of projects
- Coordination with other public land agencies
- Access and safety issues
- Protection of important natural resources
- Fulfillment of regulatory requirements



Accomplishments

- Over 15,500 acres in 34 preserves
- Supported other open space and farmland preservation
- Connecting communities, Preserves
- Bay Area Ridge Trail, Bay Trail
- Protection of native and rare species

Special Status Species



Northern Spotted Owl



Rare
Plants



Road and Trail Improvement



Mission

“We are dedicated to educating, inspiring, and engaging the people of Marin in the shared commitment of preserving, protecting and enriching the natural beauty of Marin’s parks and open spaces, and providing recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all generations.”



Regulations and Policies

- California Public Resources Code
(Section 5500 et. al.)
- California Environmental Quality Act
- National Environmental Protection Act
- Federal Endangered Species Act
- California Endangered Species Act

Plans

- Marin Countywide Plan (June 2007)
- Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space, Strategic Plan (June 2008)
- Marin County Open Space District Resource Management Framework (September 2008)
- Marin County Open Space District Policy Review Initiative (May 2005)

Break



Public Scoping: What We Heard

- Stay at your tables
- Pair-up, select a topic, and study
- Report out to your group

What is “carrying capacity?”



Rob Pudim

High Country News — March 27, 2000 — 13

Carrying Capacity (aka user capacity)

- *The types and levels of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and social conditions that fulfill the mission of the Marin County Open Space District, and the laws and policies that apply to its lands.*

Carrying Capacity

- The “drivers” for carrying capacity decisions are the ***desired resources & visitor experiences conditions.***
- The “drivers” for actions are the ***variations between existing conditions and desired conditions.***

Carrying Capacity

1960 – 1980: Need realized - Rapid increase in recreational use on natural (& fragile) areas

1978: Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – ensured diversity in recreation types & settings

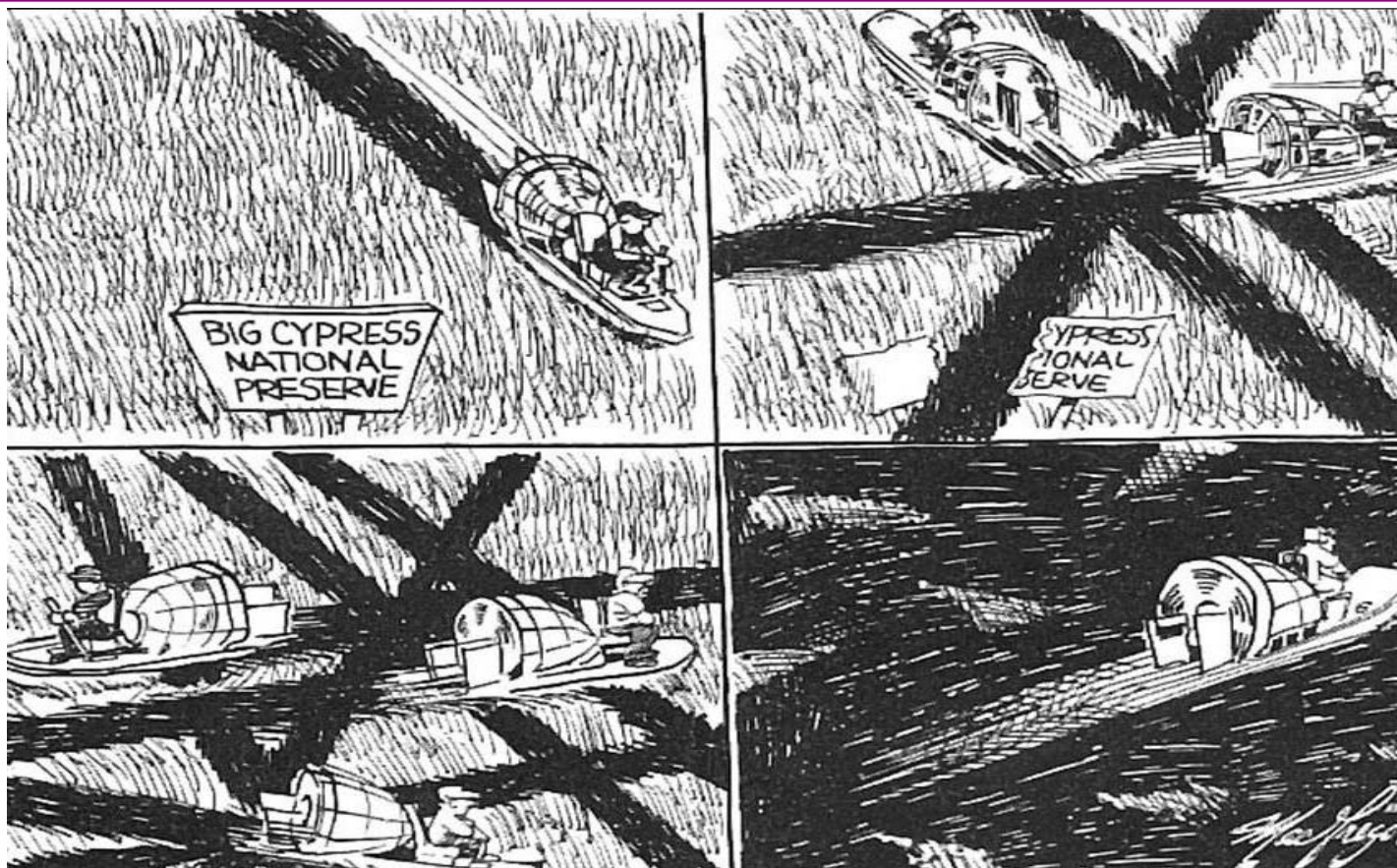
1985: US Forest Service - Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) – introduced concept of indicators and standards to preserve recreational settings

1994: National Park Service - VERP – Integrated LAC concepts into NPS planning framework

1996: State parks systems started adopting variations

Carrying Capacity

- Carrying capacity – amount and type of use that can be accommodated without unacceptable impacts
- Crux – determining what is acceptable and what is “unacceptable”
- A transparent method of deciding what is unacceptable and documenting the decision in the form of indicators and standards
- Provides transparency in managing use and resources once standards have been set



How much change to the resource is acceptable?



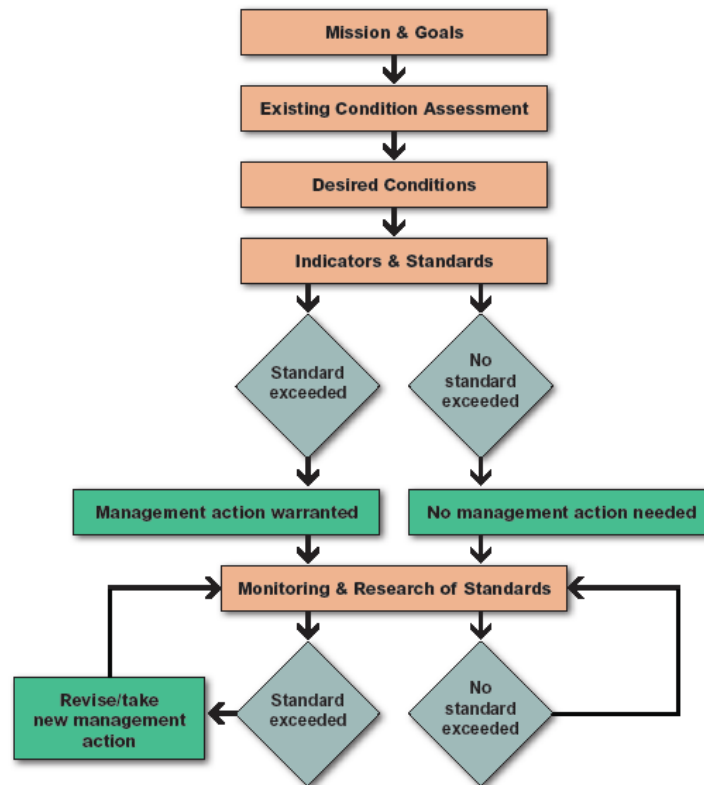
How do we manage conflicts among uses?

Process

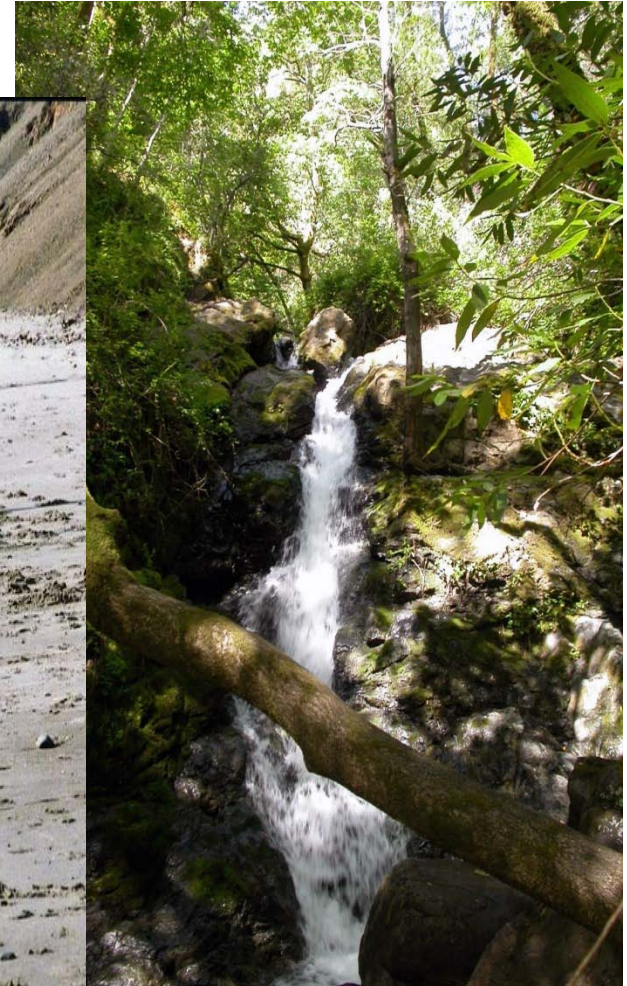


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Lunch Options



Appropriate & Desired Resource Conditions

- Identify natural resource attributes valued by participants
- Identify natural resource conditions desired and acceptable according to the mission, policies, and laws

Appropriate & Desired Uses

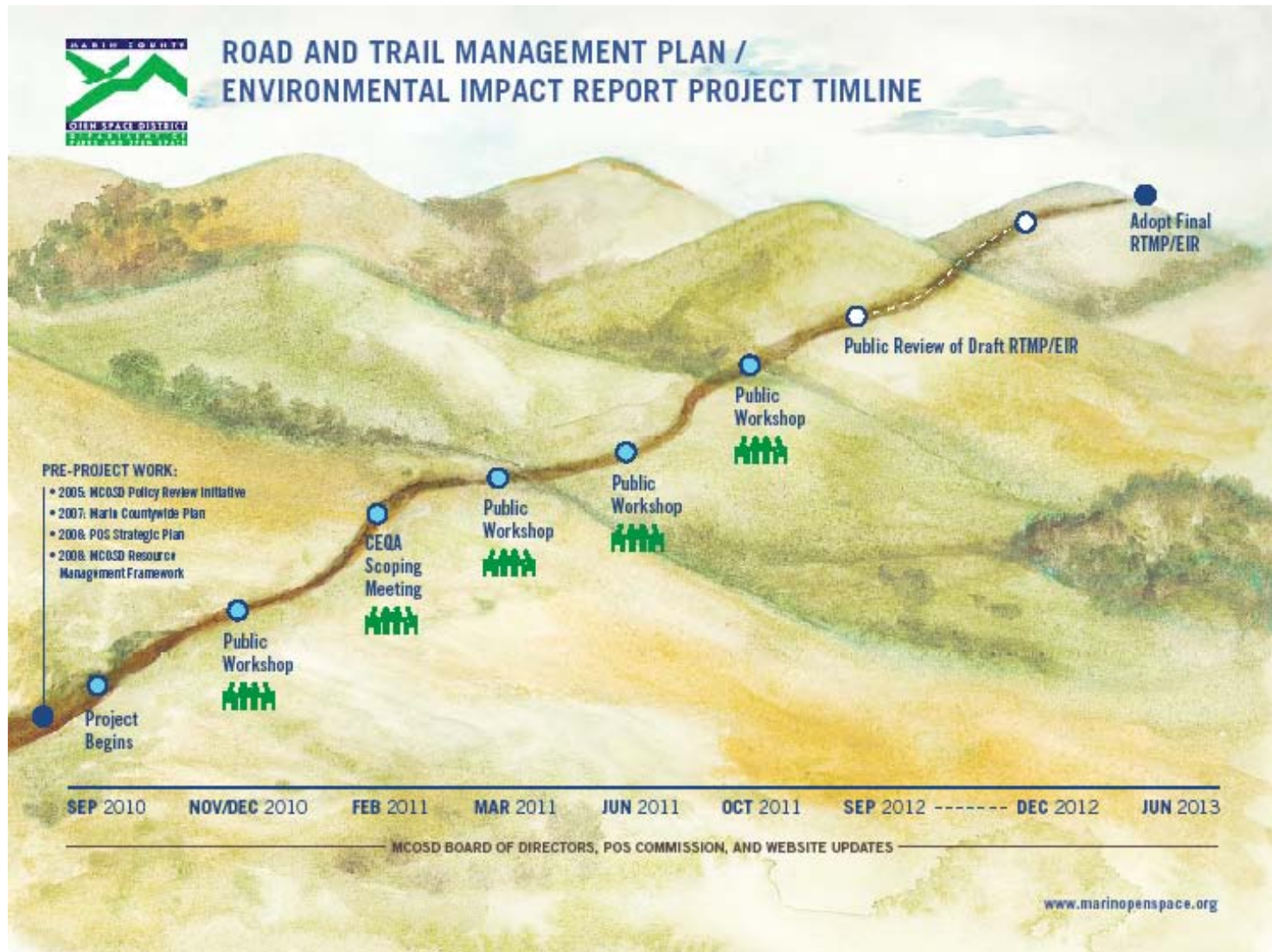
- Describe the types of uses and recreation opportunities valued by participants
- Describe the types of experiences desired and acceptable according to the mission, policies, and laws

“Open House” – Review Group Results

Next Steps

- Complete Road & Trail Inventory
 - Physical condition of roads and trails
- Undertake Visitor Use Survey
 - Census sampling, variability, range of experiences and uses, desired connections
- Integrate Datasets
- Next Workshop – Review data and refine conditions into trail categories to prepare to start mapping changes

Project Timeline



Next Community Workshop

- Saturday June 18th
- Marin Wellness Center
- 9:00am - 3:00pm



Marin County Parks and Open Space

Follow Our Progress at:
www.marinopenspace.org

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