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Executive Summary



Regional Resource Based Park

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park (SCNP) constitutes one of the unique coastal environments in San Diego County. By its name-sake, people have gathered at this special location over the years to seek temporary relief from urban living, engage in passive recreation activities and, often, reflect on evening sunsets.

Coastal resources at the Park feature dramatic cliff formations shaped by forces of erosion, terraces, promontories, rugged vertical cliff faces and sea caves. The terrace and promontories offer informal pedestrian paths, native vegetation and expansive ocean views. Below the cliffs are pocket beaches, tidepools, reefs, surf and the Pacific Ocean.

It is the beauty of nature that clearly draws people to this environment. On any given day, the Park attracts a wide cross-section of people engaged in enjoyable activities - walking, reflecting on sunsets, surfing, jogging, exploring, bird watching, plant study, photography, art, sight viewing, tidepooling, sunbathing, and fishing. Indeed, the Park's diverse resources and available activities serve a broad range of neighborhood, community and regional recreational needs.

The location of the Park within the City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) area and adjacency to the Point Loma Ecological Reserve combine to create a unique setting and priority of restoration and preservation.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Master Plan is, in essence, adeptly expressed by the SCNP Recreation Council's adopted vision statement for the Park:

“Create a Park where people can enjoy San Diego’s natural coastal environment as it once was, free from the effects of man and intended to inspire the user to reflect on the grandeur of the sea, and the beauty of the cliffs that are Point Loma.”

To accomplish this goal, the following objectives and/or planning principles are forwarded as guidelines to direct Park planning decisions regarding development and preservation.

- *Do no harm; protect, conserve and enhance.*
- *Maintain focus on the unique coastal resources.*
- *Allow public access with minimal environmental impacts.*
- *Maintain planning integrity/strategy for resource preservation.*
- *Restore areas of neglect and damage to their previous condition and visual quality.*

Plan Recommendations Summary

As a natural, open space park, SCNP plays a key role in sustaining the quality of the regional environment in an urban setting. This regional based park's role is supportive of coastal public access and viewing, the Local Coastal Program, the future Point Loma Trail, Multiple Species Conservation Plan, Multiple Habitat



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Preservation Area, and the Point Loma Ecological Reserve. In this context, specific recommendations in this Master Plan focus on the accomplishment of three primary objectives:

Protect the Park

The Master Plan recommends implementation of a Park protection policy for use in guiding all future proposals that might affect the Park. SCNP represents a legacy - an irreplaceable coastal resource - that must be protected for future generations. The beauty of the cliffs, their unique features and our ability to observe nature's sculpting process must be protected from obtrusive, unnatural structures; native vegetation and wildlife within the Park must be protected from surrounding development; and near shore waters protected from pollution.

Restore the Park's Natural Beauty

The Master Plan recommends corrective measures for past and present Park abuse and neglect that may have degraded the Park's natural beauty. These measures include removal of man-made elements such as structures, construction debris, excess pavement and the athletic field; implementation of a comprehensive on-site drainage system, eradication of exotic invasive plants and a revegetation program for restoring native vegetation.

Enhance the Park's Safe Use and Enjoyment

Proposals recommended by the Master Plan to this end include: Access and circulation improvements such as redesigned parking lots to enhance safety and security as well as minimize runoff; new beach access at Garbage Beach and refurbishment of existing Ladera Street stairs; observation points with unobtrusive seating and/or resting forms of natural materials; and a comprehensive signage program to include unobtrusive entry identification, directional, and regulatory signage, as well as interpretive signage to communicate the Park's unique history and features to the public.

Park Expansion

The Park and Recreation Department shall seek opportunities to expand the park. This includes annexing land as it becomes available and the elimination of private easements across parkland.

