



REPORT

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: December 08, 2010

REPORT NO: 201

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board
Agenda of January 20, 2010

SUBJECT: Otay Valley Regional Park Update

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE BOARD

BACKGROUND

Established jointly by the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego, and the City of Chula Vista in 1990, Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP) is located in the southern part of San Diego County four miles north of the international border with Mexico and eight miles south of downtown San Diego. As described in the 1997 Concept Plan, the OVRP planning area includes 8,869 acres of land and extends 13 miles through the Otay Valley from the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge west of Interstate 5 at its west end and along the Otay River to Lower and Upper Otay Lakes to the east. Currently the western part of the park (west of Interstate 805) is primarily publicly owned and the eastern part (east of Interstate 805) to Otay Lakes is primarily privately owned. Most park acreage is within the City's and County's Multiple Species Conservation Program Habitat Preserve.

The OVRP is a unique urban river parkway that has a rich history of Native American occupation and both historical and modern day resource use. The OVRP serves some of the most demographically diverse communities in San Diego County and is a valuable asset for both neighboring communities and the San Diego Region. The multi-use trails provide recreational opportunities for various users including anglers, hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, trail runners, and nature lovers. In addition to recreation opportunities, the OVRP also provides community members routes from home to work and school.

A Concept Plan was adopted for the OVRP in 1997. Although most of the park's planning area is identified as Open Space/Core Preserve Area, other key elements of the plan include a trail corridor, staging areas, viewpoint and overlook areas, an interpretive center, and active recreation areas. Active recreation areas currently in use include Coors Amphitheater and Knott's Soak City. Initial planning on an active recreation area west of the Interstate 5 at Saturn Boulevard by the City of San Diego is on hold due to lack of funding for additional plans and environmental

permitting. The County of San Diego has completed a concept plan and is actively pursuing grant funding for a recreation area on County-owned land east of Hollister Avenue and north of Palm Avenue. Planning for trails east of Interstate 805 has been started.

In the western portion of the park between Interstates 5 and 805, staging areas are located at Saturn Boulevard, Hollister Street, 27th Street, Beyer Boulevard, Beyer Way North, Mace Street, and Rios Avenue. The Beyer Boulevard staging area features the Ranger Station, where visitors can meet with a ranger and get additional information. The Ranger Station also contains an interpretive panel that gives a brief overview of the different parts of the river valley and the wildlife in those areas. The Mace Street Staging Area is a multi-use staging area offering parking for horse trailers. Anglers can fish for bass and bluegill at Hollister, Fenton, and Le May Ponds only (California Fish and Game laws apply). Eight-miles of multi-use trails, seven staging areas, and an overlook have also been developed.

East of Interstate 805 are the Otay Lakes County Park and the Otay Lakes Reservoirs. The 78-acre Otay Lakes County Park in the eastern OVRP offers visitors a playground, horseshoe courts, hiking trails, lawn area, barbecue areas, picnic tables, and a native plant/demonstration garden. The Lower Otay Reservoir offers visitors opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, and picnicking.

OVRP is operated and managed pursuant to a 2006 “Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement” or “JEPA” between the City of Chula Vista, City of San Diego, and the County of San Diego. The JEPA is a cooperative agreement and differs from a Joint Powers Agreement, in which the adopting agencies lend their powers to a separate agency/entity.

The Park and Recreation Department’s Open Space Division manages the 1,400 acres of publicly-owned land in the park from west of Interstates 5 to Interstate 805. Currently there is one Senior Ranger and one Park Ranger assigned to this area. Management for the central section of the park is assigned to the County of San Diego. The eastern portion of the park around the Otay Lakes Reservoirs is owned and managed by the City of San Diego’s Public Utilities Department. In accordance with the JEPA, the City of Chula Vista reimburses the City of San Diego and the County for a portion of the management expenses.

A Policy Committee consisting of three elected representatives appointed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, the Chula Vista City Council, and the San Diego City Council, set the policies for the administration of the park. The Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) for the park is appointed by the Policy Committee members to make recommendations to the Policy Committee. Currently ten CAC members are appointed from each jurisdiction, although proposed by-laws changes would reduce this number to five from each. Ranger and planning staff from the three agencies meet nearly monthly to address park planning and management issues. An Executive Management Team, consisting of the directors of the three agencies’ park and recreation departments, meets quarterly to approve the budget and address management issues in the park.

The Friends of Otay Valley Regional Park is the officially recognized friends group for the park. Friends of OVRP is dedicated to the establishment of public recreation and habitat protection within the corridor of the Otay River. More information on the Friends is available at: <http://www.ovrp.org/index.php>. Partnerships with other non-profit groups, educational and private entities also provide valuable resources for the park. In particular, the non-profit WiLDCOAST has an Otay River Conservation Program dedicated to outreach and conservation in the Otay River Valley, providing education and outreach materials and hosting events in the park that focus on reaching the area's underserved communities. A grant application is under consideration by State Parks to design, fabricate and install interpretive signs and benches throughout the park. A grant application developed in cooperation with WiLDCOAST and submitted by San Diego Park and Recreation Department is under consideration by State Parks to design, fabricate and install interpretive signs and benches throughout the park.

One of the challenges for the park is the creation of a safe environment. The rangers have worked extensively with volunteers, probation crews, the Alpha project, Urban Corps, and the California Conservation Corps to remove tons of trash and homeless encampments from the park, remove non-native species, and restore areas of the park. These efforts, in combination with the opening of the trails, ranger station, and staging areas in two phases in 2008 and 2010 to invite users into the park, have resulted in a significant increase in park use. Park Use/Community Perception studies conducted by WiLDCOAST from 2008 to 2010 suggest an overall increase in daily park use of 61% from 2008 to 2009. "In addition, more people are receiving information about the park, as evidenced by the survey completed in 2010, in which the response for not visiting the part due to lack of information decreased 20%." Community responses about the park being used for negative activities dropped from nearly one third to 13%.

The OVRP is a unique park within the region. It offers a variety of amenities and opportunities for increasing community involvement and conservation in the South Bay region.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Zirkle
Deputy Director, Open Space Division

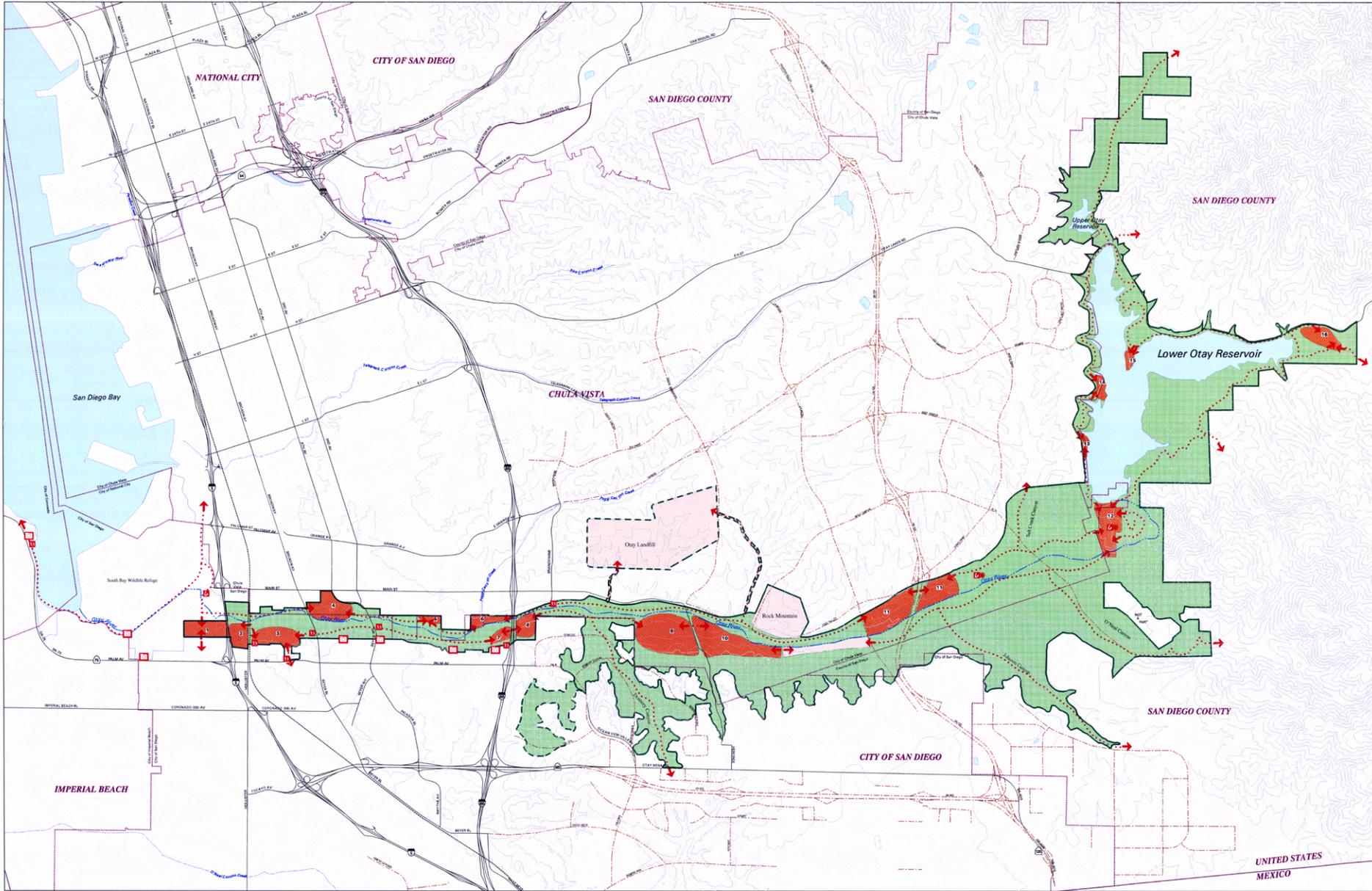


Prepared by: Laura Ball
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Attachment: OVRP Final Concept Plan Map

cc: Council District 8
Otay Valley Regional Park Citizens' Advisory Committee
File

OTAY VALLEY REGIONAL PARK



Concept Plan

Legend

Plan Elements

- Boundary
- Alternative Boundary
- Trail Corridor
- Open Space / Preserve Area
- Recreation Area
- Park Study Area
- Staging Area
- Viewpoint/Overlook
- Interpretive Center
- Interpretive Center - Alternative Sites

- Existing Roads
- Future Roads
- Trolley Lines
- 20' Contours
- Rivers
- Municipal Boundary
- Lakes/Bays



DRAFT
 April 19, 1999
 City of San Diego
 Planning Department GIS

Participating Jurisdictions:
 City of Chula Vista
 City of San Diego
 County of San Diego



Vicinity Map



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 MEXICO