Calero County Park Trails Master Plan
Community Meeting #3 Summary of Small Group Discussions
Thursday September 15, 2011 • 6:00-8:30 pm • Almaden Community Center

Background/Comment Format: A presentation of the Calero Trails Master Plan work-to-date on the development of project alternatives was made by County Parks staff and design team consultants at Community Meeting #3. After the presentation, meeting attendees were asked to participate in small group discussions, focusing on five topics related to the presentation. Additional comments were also received via written comment cards and direct correspondence to County Parks staff. For reference, the small group discussion topic questions are reprinted below:

1. Please comment on the base trail alignments
   a. Any suggestions to improve the trail alignments?
   b. Comments on staging areas?
   c. Comments on regional trail connections?
   d. Any other comments?

2. Please comment on the alternatives evaluation criteria and checklists
   a. Anything to add or delete to the criteria?
   b. Any changes to the checklists?
   c. If you think a different alternative should be the preferred, how would you support your opinion with the evaluation criteria?

3. Please comment on the draft Preferred Alternative
   a. Any suggestions to make it better?
   c. Anything to add, remove and/or modify in the draft preferred alternative?

4. Please comment on the ideas to incorporate user safety into the plan
   a. What information is useful on a trails map to help you decide which trails are appropriate for you? Trail steepness? Trail width? Trail users? Trail surface?
   b. Would you participate in an education program to train bicyclists and equestrians on shared trail safety and etiquette?
   c. Do you know any groups that might help organize such training in partnership with County Parks? Where/how often should such training occur?

5. Any other comments on the Calero Trails Master Plan?
Calero Trails Master Plan –

Community Meeting #3 Summary of Small Group Discussions

Almaden Community Center - September 15, 2011

Table #1

- Was Alternative 3 pre-determined and the criteria established to make that the preferred alternative?
- There was a concern that there are no public members on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Many participants at the table felt that Alternative 3 is the least safe
- Most accidents go unreported
- Bicyclists do not control their speeds on trails
- Consider an external multi-use trail (outside of the Park) to make the regional connections
- Bicyclists have been banned from Griffith Park due to safety concerns
- The walking trail passes near a shooting range
- Trails are too steep for bikes and horses to share
- The culvert is large enough to walk a horse through
- Common theme – future trail connections
- Wherever prohibition of bikes to horse trails, there should be a physical barrier
- Use topo maps to show landscape/height of trails
- Signage needs to be clear
- Open Rancho San Vicente!
- Designate areas for trailers (Equestrian only)
- Allow bike representatives and horse representatives on a Task Force or Technical Advisory Committee
- Get information out at all staging areas when trail use is changed
- Post speed limits on hills/steep trails
- Design trails properly – forcing bike to not go fast if condition of trail is steep
- Look at profiles of trails especially for bikes
- At gates post signs that users are liable for injuries of others
- Do exterior trail and leave inside of park alone – cost savings
- Don’t do multi-use trails until all regional connections can be made
- Leave trails more natural
- Curves and bumps slow down bicyclists
• Develop an annual trail user safety program – involve ROMP
• Air ambulance difficult to get into park
• Cut foliage next to trail where needed to improve site lines
• Alternative 3 is least safe and should go in shredder
• Will special events (endurance rides/bike events) be allowed?
Calero Trails Master Plan - Community Meeting #3

Almaden Community Center - September 15, 2011

Table #2

- Narrow trails with switchbacks are good for horses.
- Equestrians wanted a place to go without bikes (Young horse owners)
- 6 miles is not a lot of trails for a horse
- Is there an option of all multi-use?
- Consider more dog access
- Consider alternate days for bikes/horses, etc.
- Quantity of trails needs to be balanced with natural resource needs. All linkages and trail density within reason.
- More trails leads to more dispersal of trail users.
- Staging areas will help disperse uses.
- Open up South of Bailey to loop for dogs.
- Alternative 2 also meets parks direction/policy
- Young horses are startled by something coming out of "nowhere" fast
- Make it obvious that the area has use restrictions
- Print trail etiquette on maps
- Trail watch is key (staff to educate users)
- Trail watch is key (verbal) bikes coming up horses and other users
- Separate entry points at Calero Entrance – what does that mean?
- People shooting guns; any issues?
- What are the amounts of different types of trails (single track vs. roads)?
- Prefer single-track
- Showing trail ratings on trail maps is a low priority. Education is more important with different user groups: equestrians, bicyclists, hikers, dogs on leash, etc.
- Consider separate rule print-outs for each type of trail user vs. all on rules on map on multiple pages.
Table #3

Participants: 4 Hikers/Bicyclists; 1 Hiker/Bicyclist/Equestrian

- Some felt that the extreme alternative was taken – Alternatives 1 and 3 seen as extreme, 2 would have been less extreme.
- Others were comfortable with Alternative 3, the 'Preferred Alternative'. The mix of trail uses was reasonable.
- Representative from Bay Area Ridge Trail commented that the goal of his organization is full multi-use trails throughout the Bay Area Ridge trail and connector trails.
- All in favor of regional connector trails - Notably to Santa Teresa, and along McKean Rd.
- Multi-use trails are better overall - Easier to manage, from an enforcement point of view, and from perspective of explaining the park use. Also simplifies the design and maintenance of trails.
- Need for bike trails that are flat enough for more elderly riders. She biked when younger, but is concerned that the routes in preferred alternative would be too steep for older bicyclists. To address that concern, she made one comment on the Preferred Alternative map, expanding multi-use onto 28A and part of Javalina Loop trail, to create a flatter bike loop.
- In favor of the new Fortini Road staging area. Good way to connect to Santa Teresa Park and beyond.
- The problem is not bikes and dogs, but *irresponsible* bikers, and dogs off leash - A small, but visible minority. Enforcement of trail use for bikes and dogs could be difficult.
- Build gates to keep bicycles out of equestrian areas, with signs that say "equestrian training" to emphasize that these trails are designated specifically for equestrian use.
- Penalties for violations of trail use should be higher, to make a stronger disincentive - for example, confiscating bicycles when riding on non-bike trails.
- Catamount Trail is very steep and windy. Is it really drivable for patrol access or for emergencies?
- Several participants agreed that multi-use trails are built too wide, wider than necessary. Tend to be 8 - 12 ft, when single track 2ft width would be fine, with wider areas (6 ft) for passing or blind zones. Over time, the width of the use pattern determines with width of the trail anyway. So a 6-foot trail may narrow to 2 feet over time, for example. The destination is more important, narrow trails are fine. Suggestion that narrow trails can be created with roto-tillers, don't need large equipment.
- The proposed new entrances at Almaden Rd and Bertram Rd are hugely valuable to the community.
- Close trails when a major event is occurring on those trails, to avoid conflicts with regular users.
- Conduct a survey on equestrian use at Calero, for example the Rangers can count parked horse trailers. Need to know the number of equestrians to evaluate the proposal better.

- Would like to see back country camping in Calero along a multi-use trail (eg. Cottle trail?) To connect with future back country camping at other parks accessible by connector trails.

- To improve the park experience, get Rangers out of trucks. It's intimidating to be passed by trucks when hiking. Rangers are less approachable. If authorities were on the ground (on foot, horse, or ATV) it would also be easier to spot illegal activity (eg. marijuana growing).

- To provide challenging opportunities for bicyclists where they won’t conflict with other users, carve out a small Skills Park in Calero, for bicycle stunt practice.

- Dogs on leash policy has worked well at other County parks - Should continue this policy at Calero.

- A fast moving bike can disrupt the hiking experience. It would be nice to have a single track trail for hikers only.

- Despite the disagreements, in the end a multi-use plan works out. There will be people who sometimes violate the rules, but overall it works out.
Table #4

- Why do all users have/need access to all trails?
  - Equestrian only
  - Bicycle only

- Mandatory training: Understand implications and severity of possible and occurring injuries

- Volunteer trail patrols, sometimes hikers are the problem with crosscutting

- ROMP & IMBA: Possible training providers

- Harvey Bear seems to be successful: Set culture early

- Like design strategy: prevent conflict

- Casa Loma Road deteriorating: Who is responsible? City has no money.
  - Environmental impact created by more users
  - Diffuse by multiple staging areas

- Casa Loma Meadow is in view shed of adjacent resident
  - Does not want expansion/other staging areas


- Single track trails do not offer a way out.

- 34A is a beautiful trail - don’t want it changed but not suitable for shared use.

- There is a shooting range in proximity to one of the trails.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am impressed with the thoroughness and rigour of the evaluation based on clearly stated goals taking into account established principles and user-population trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really wish we had one local park that was equestrian only. If that can't be done educate users to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to see one single track hiker only trail ala the New Almaden Trail in Almaden Quicksilver. Bicycles dramatically alter the experience of hikers as well as equestrians. If you hike for peace and quiet to experience nature, a fast moving bike can be very disruptive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No multi-use trails if can't provide an out for safety. Enforce rules! Don't leave it up to the people to choose which trails they go on. Training regarding trail etiquette. #2 alternative is more equally balanced between users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer alternative #1. Any new use of Casa Loma Road will continue to deteriorate a road which is already in poor condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for alternative #2. Trail use rule cards for each specific user type. Much improved trail signs: large; clear rules of the trail; emergency instruction; split trails where conflicts often occur (small graphic on comment card); Room for 5-6 camp sites on ridge above Fish Camp; Fire management - prescribed burns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please ratify proposed plan (#3). More multi-use = better. Bikes need access to narrow trails, and should not be subject to a presumed closure for proposed trail plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9-16-2011: Here is my update, which I posted to MTBR: <a href="http://forums.mtbr.com/california-norcal/calero-park-planning-meeting-708614-post8453435.html#post8453435">http://forums.mtbr.com/california-norcal/calero-park-planning-meeting-708614-post8453435.html#post8453435</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save $ create an exterior shared connecting trail when other parks are ready to connect. Alternative #3 is not good, not safe. Needs more signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culverts are big enough for horses! No equestrian on technical task force! No task force - so we need to express our feeling loudly tonight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate horses, I hate bikes &amp; I hate dogs. Close the park! Oh yeah - I hate hikers too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Calero Trails Master Plan
### Public Outreach Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would like a bit more equestrian only trail something between Draft Preferred &amp; Alt 2 - maybe including Cottle as equestrian only. Alt 2 is implementing mulit-use that’s a lot of trails to open to bikes. Make it clear where equestrian only not only by signage but also physical barriers to make it clear its not multiuse. Education key; good signage key. Maybe single page per user group as education handout so its very clear. Should do a &quot;Romp-Stomp&quot; event when go mulit-use for education &amp; publicity about mulit-use/cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter, dated 9-16-2011 summarized: Open SVC first; use minimal money to create perimeter trail potentially to connect to vicinity parks; maintain Calero uses as are. Current park trails are not maintained to allow for emergency vehicles; unidentified heli pads. Parks should focus on maintaining existing facilities (more cost effective): water troughs, parking lot (mole/gopher holes). Use for income: existing arena and proposed Bailey-Fellows House picnic area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter, dated 9-23-2011 summarized: writer is an equestrian but also uses parks for hiking and biking; feels she represents equestrian community opinions. Calero previously underutilized: good to add many new trails. Alt #2 satisfies needs and wants of all users, feels that Alt #3 favors bicyclists. In the past Calero has provided the ultimate in trail riding experience. Has had some bad experiences with fast approaching, discourteous bicyclists resulting in ambulance rides for equestrains. Regardless of how a calm horse reacts to a courteous bicyclist, it is nearly impossible to predict how a calm horse will react to a discourteous bicyclist. Therefore, equestrians can never completely relax when riding in a park that allows bicyclists. Suggestion: accept Alt #2, or retain core trails of Calero Park for equestrians/hikers only plus designate RSV trails for bikes/hikers only with regional connections open to all users. Suggests monetary savings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The County presented three alternatives. Alternatives one and three are the extremes - the fair solution would be to choose alternative two. Right now it is the one refuge equestrians have to ride w/o fear of bikes and/or dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been riding in this area for 35 years. Only can feel save in Calero because I've had bicycle accidents in Quicksilver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an equestrian for my entire life, I support all phases of multiuse trails, hikers, bicycles, horses, etc. but with rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like us to continue to focus on connecting trails throughout our parks. I would like us to incorporate Calero tunnel in the plan. I would like us to be able to camp overnight in the future. Focusing on some trails without bikes is good. A dedicated horse camp would be lovely. We also need a rental stable as well. Let's incorporate Rancho San Vicente into the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety, safety =&gt; courteous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to see Calero remain for equestrian use only. If that is not possible, trails should be designated &quot;equestrian only&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a horse owner, I beg you please do not approve this. Horse owners have few places to ride. We get along fine with hikers and joggers. Bike riders often do not yield to the horses. I avoid parks that have bikes allowed. I believe this will cause grief for both parties. Bike riders can ride everywhere, horse riders cannot. Please keep Calero BIKE FREE!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young rider, I don't like the idea of bike riders with horses. I've fallen off on the trail because a bike rider spooked my horse. Bike riders don't respect the equestrian only trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since I am young I feel that bike riders on trails are scary. I hate when horses spook so it doesn't help when you are in an unusual environment and your horse spooks. I think that there should not be any bikes on the trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned as a horse rider: the bike riders are going too fast and I have come close to being hit several times. This worries me greatly. I would no longer be able to ride with my daughter on her horse. This is a bad idea, bikes have the right to ride everywhere. Horse owners do not. Please consider my right to ride a horse safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/24/11: Again, on the meeting, well done. A class act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/17/2011 (in response and supplemental to ...): I'm glad Chris wrote such a thorough account. A few additions. I was impressed with the clear presentation of the proposals and their systematic rigor considering environmental effects, user access, safe and enjoyable trail sharing, access to neighboring trails, consistency of rules with neighboring land managers, lessons learned from trails built in the county, trail experience preferences among user groups, macro trends in recreational usership, etc. Plan 3 is SCC's preference, as was clearly stated in the presentation and presented at the discussion tables. Discussions in our group included education of the user groups who will be sharing these wonderful resources, (auto) traffic and parking consideration, and details of Plan 3's possible implementation. Our friend Bern Smith from the Bay Area Ridge Trail was there. He, John from SCC and I discussed a few other topics a the end including the wonderful success of ROMP and Stomp in the past, the power of volunteer trail building. Personally, I am very pleased with Plan 3. It includes a trail like wheel-chair friendly Llagas Creek Loop in Rancho Canada der Oro, a couple of loops for less experienced equestrians (slightly more extensive than the current multi-use trail system in RcdO) and many miles of multi-use trail offering good connectivity with friendly Llagas Creek Loop in Rancho Canada der Oro, a couple of loops for less experienced equestrians (slightly more extensive than the current multi-use trail system in RcdO) and many miles of multi-use trail offering good connectivity with neighboring trails. Well done, SCC!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/17/2011: I do have a suggestion for foot path in Calero. At the junction of the Pena Trail and the Javalina Trail, there is an unofficial path that goes straight up the hill. This leads up to a hillside that has one of the best displays of wild flowers in the Bay Area. Besides the usual flowers that grow everywhere, I have found flowers that are rare enough to force me to my flower books to identify them. It is steep and may not be possible but I did want to mention it. I also noticed in your master plan there was a possibility to lower the grade of some of the steepest trails. I am sure that would be nice. However, some of the Calero trails such as the Chisnantuck Peak Trail or the Bald Peaks Loop is one of the best training hikes for my annual backpack and I would miss it if it became too much of a wimpy hike. It will be nice to hike between Quicksilver and Calero when they become connected. As these trails become longer and more connected, is there any thought to build some backpacking camps along the way? A week long backpack would appear to be more possible on the Bay Ridge Trail if so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/24/2011: Again, on the meeting, well done. A class act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/6/2011: I live in the east bay. I went to Rancho Canada del Oro recently for the first time to ride my bike and enjoyed it a lot. I found the trails to be pleasant and very well maintained. The only downside was that there was not much to ride. This is why I would like to go on record to support opening Calero County park to cyclists. As an aside, I understand that there is strong resistance from equestrians to opening Calero to cyclists. My one time at RCDO, we shared the trails with a horse riding group, and the encounter was pleasant for all involved. So, if equestrians can share the trails at RCDO with cyclists, they should be able to do the same at Calero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/12/2011: I will be traveling on business and unable to attend in person. I have been a fan of Calero for many years, and was one of the volunteers who helped build the Valecity Trail (a few years ago). Just this past weekend, I ran the Pena, Javelina, Cottle House, Bald Peaks and Figueroa trails. (A good workout). I did see the announcement of the meeting posted on the marquee at Calero. Is there anything you can send or post to the website so I could review and voice my opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/13/2011: I am an endurance horse rider and LOVE how Calero is closed to dogs and bikes. I have been told that no matter how many folks I get to sign or fill out forms explaining why having one safe park for horses, it doesn’t matter. Can you tell me if that is the case? Will bikes be coming to Calero? I wish I could come but have to work that night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/15/2011: Great presentation!!! You are such pros !!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/16/2011: Thanks for hosting the meeting last night. I’ve enjoyed being part of the planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/16/2011: The public meeting last night was pretty good, I thought. Your staff has done more than enough preliminary work, so the comments from the public are more about details than broad themes (except for the basic like/dislike that always crop up).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/16/2011: The Parks department presented a proposed plan -- Alternative #3. Two groups approved the plan. Two wanted it shredded because it only provided 6 miles of exclusively equestrian trails. Needless to say Horse persons (primarily ladies) outnumber mtb 2 to 1. The way the small group discussion groups worked out was the two parks commissioners that were there end up a the tables that were almost exclusively horse persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail 9/16/2011: I attended the first public hearing on Calero County Park but didn’t make it to yesterday’s. I understand there are three options under consideration, and of course I favor the one with the most generous bicycle access. Here’s my problem, though. I feel that I can’t comment intelligently on any of the options (except maybe the virtually - no-bikes option) because I have no sense of the trails that would remain off-limits to bikes even under option three. It would be laborious to spend all day out there hiking around them, and even then, one doesn’t get the feel for them that one does on a bike. It could be that even under option three, the trails that cyclists most would like to use will remain off-limits. Without seeing them, it’s impossible to know if this might be the case. Could cyclists not have one day of total access so that we can survey all of the trails and be able to offer more valuable input? With advance posting at trailheads and other means of communicating this event to the public, it out to be workable. It wold be very helpful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Calero Trails Master Plan  
| Public Outreach Comments |
| We should do this now, while planning is actively underway. Once the plan is set in place, it'll probably be a generation until the county parks staff will have the energy and desire to once again undertake the necessary work. |
| E-mail 9/16/2011: I thought of an alternative proposal. Maybe you could informally allow two or three of us to ride the Calero trails on a designated day. This would spare the effort of arranging for access by all interested cyclists for one day and having to post it trailheads. You could alert park staff and send me an authorizing e-mail, which the two or three of us would then carry and show to any other park user who asks why we're on the trails. In June of 2003 the Assistant General Manager for Operations at EBRPD followed this procedure and a group of mountain bikers surveyed the no-bicycles Ohlone Wilderness Trail, carrying the letter of authorization. |
| E-mail 9/16/2011: Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1994: [http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm](http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm). It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking ... A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see [http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm](http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm)). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions. Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). |
| I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless. Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT? |