Regional Trails Overview

The Park Trails Plan is not only significant for access to diverse recreational experiences within the Park, Coyote Lake–Harvey Bear Ranch County Park, but is also integral to numerous regional trail alignments that either cross through, or are adjacent to the Park, as identified in the 1995 County Wide Trails Master Plan update, and as noted below and shown on Figure 9:

Regional Trail Alignments within or Adjacent to the Park

- **Bay Area Ridge Trail**
  (Regional Trail Route R5-B in the 1995 Countywide Trails Master Plan)
  A trail system that follows the ridges and mountains that circle San Francisco Bay, including the Diablo Range where the park is located.

- **Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (Southern Expedition Route)**
  (Regional Trail Route R1-C in the 1995 Countywide Trails Master Plan)
  This nationally recognized trail commemorates the route taken by Anza from Sonora, Mexico to the San Francisco Bay in 1775–1776.

- **Benito–Clara Trail**
  (Regional Trail Route R3 in the 1995 Countywide Trails Master Plan)
  A loop trail linking recreational resources in Southern Santa Clara County and Northern San Benito County, including the cities of Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Hollister and San Juan Bautista.

- **San Martin Cross-Valley Trail**
  (Subregional Trail Route S-8 in the 1995 Countywide Trails Master Plan)
  An east-west route connecting trails in southwest Santa Clara County (Hayes Valley and Uvas Reservoir areas), to the Anza Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail.
San Martin/South Valley Trail

A north-south trail connecting Morgan Hill with the Anza Trail and the Bay Area Ridge trail.

The Park Trails Plan provides links to existing and future regional trails within the vicinity of the park, and establishes segments for those regional trail alignments that cross through the Park, such as the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

**INTERNAL PARK TRAILS**

The Park Trails Plan strives to provide as many multi-use trails as feasible, and also creates limited use trails where applicable. The trails are proposed to provide loops and access to varying locations and amenities of the park, with differing experiences and degrees of difficulty. Existing ranch roads were used where feasible, but due to steep terrain, soil conditions, sensitive habitats, and safety and maintenance concerns, the trails outlined in this plan do not incorporate all existing routes. Some existing routes are proposed to be abandoned and/or realigned. Of the 18.7 miles of existing ranch roads within the park boundary, 10.4 miles will be retained for trail use, and 8.3 miles will be abandoned or realigned. Abandoned trails will be restored to adjacent natural conditions. In some instances, trails were re-routed or extended to provide access to amenities proposed in the Master Plan.

**Trail Use**

There are eleven multi-use trails proposed for the park. Additionally, there are two trails for bicycle and pedestrian use, five trails for pedestrian use only. Additional pathways to future camping, picnic and other proposed Master Plan amenities may be needed but are not identified as a part of the Park Trails Plan. These minor trails will be designed as a part of phased implementation.

There are a total of approximately 30 miles of trails proposed for the park: 21 miles of multi-use trails, 7.2 miles of pedestrian only trails, and 1.75 miles of bicycle/pedestrian trails.
Access
Equestrians are allowed on most trails in the park, and on trails leading to equestrian staging and/or equestrian camping as proposed in the Master Plan. A multi-use loop trail is proposed around the West Flat Area. This loop trail is proposed to combine a paved surface for year-round bicycle/pedestrian use with a soft-surface shoulder for equestrian use. Multi-use trails may be accessible to horse-drawn carts by permit. Since equestrians are not allowed to be near the lake shore due to water quality issues, no equestrians are allowed on the spur trails which provide access to the lake.

Bicycles are allowed on most trails in the park, and on the trail that runs parallel and to the west of the paved road in the existing County Park. This two-plus mile trail in the existing park links the proposed trail system and new amenities to existing camping facilities and the boat launch area. Equestrians are allowed on the northern portion of this trail, but not the southern portion, due to steep terrain and narrow trail width.

There are five pedestrian-only trails to provide access to remote locations of the park or connections to other trail segments. These trails are proposed as single-track trails, due to steep terrain and potential impact to sensitive habitats.

Specific interpretive trail elements are not included in the Trails Plan but will be coordinated by the Parks Department Interpretive Program, as a part of phased implementation.

Subregional Trail Connection to be Abandoned
The Countywide Trails Master Plan shows a portion of the San Martin Cross Valley Trail (S-8) to connect to the park south of the Proposed West Flat Area entrance at San Martin Avenue. Since all park access is proposed at controlled entry points, and the intent of the trail connection will be fulfilled at the San Martin Avenue entrance, this proposed trail spur is recommended to be abandoned (see Figure 11).

Seasonal Closures
Some trails may need to be closed seasonally, due to soil conditions, severe weather, and potential impacts to sensitive habitats. Trails closures will be assessed seasonally as part of regular natural resources monitoring proposed in the Natural Resources Management Plan.
**Grazing Coordination**

Fences and water troughs for grazing cattle may be moved from the existing locations, according to the Natural Resources Management Plan. The location of new fencing, gates, and water troughs should not be near trail junctions, in order to minimize potential conflicts between public use and cattle grazing. This effort should be coordinated with the Natural Resources Management Program.

**Trail Phasing**

There are three phases proposed for constructing trails in the park based on trail priorities and ease of implementation. Available funding will be a major consideration in determining when trails are implemented. The first phase focuses on implementing the Bay Area Ridge Trail within the park, providing basic public access from the valley floor to the ridgeline, and realigning ranch roads where needed to enhance public safety and protect sensitive environmental resources. Phase One trails also connect staging and camping areas with the trail system, and provide two loops (two at the northern portion of the park, one in the middle of the trail system, and one at the southern end). All of these trails are multi-use except two segments that connect the lake view trail alignment with the existing boat launch area and dam. These segments are for pedestrian and bicycle use. Some of the Phase One trails or portions of these trails will utilize existing ranch road alignments, which make them easier to implement. Trail segments that are proposed to be abandoned will be removed in Phase One.

Phase Two trails are those that may take longer to construct, as most of these trails are re-routes or new construction. Two of these trails are limited use, one for pedestrian use only and one for pedestrians and bicyclists. Four Phase Two trails are multi-use. While Phase Two trails will enhance the park users experience, they are not essential to basic park operations and access.

Phase Three trails are limited-use trails—four pedestrian-only trails, and one trail for bicycle and pedestrian use that connects to the proposed amphitheater. These trails are shorter, internal connector trails, and provide pedestrian-only (or pedestrian and bicyclist) connections to other trail segments. Phase Three trails are proposed as single-track trails.
Related site improvements will be developed concurrently with phased trail implementation, including signage, gates, fencing, staging areas, water (for people and horses), and restrooms (portable and/or permanent).

**TRAIL MILEAGE SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Ranch Roads</th>
<th>18.7 miles</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranch Roads to be Maintained for Trail Use</td>
<td>10.4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranch Roads to be Abandoned/Realigned</td>
<td>8.3 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRAIL TYPES**

| Multi-Use Trails (equestrian/bicycle and pedestrian) | 21.06 miles |
| Bicycle/Pedestrian | 1.75 miles |
| Pedestrian Only | 7.2 miles |
| TOTAL | 30.01 |

The following maps illustrate the proposed trails plan in greater detail.
FIGURE 9
County Wide Trails Master Plan Routes

Source: Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department
Existing Ranch Road Network - Segments to Retain and Abandon (Proposed)

Coyote Lake - Harvey Bear Ranch

Source: Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department

FIGURE 11
FIGURE 12
Trail Construction Phases

Source: Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department