



**STORRER &
SEMONSEN**

FINAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROPERTY
(APN 65-320-04)
MORE MESA, CALIFORNIA

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Appendix A:	Summary of Management Recommendations
Appendix B:	Summary of Relevant County Land Use Policies Specific to the More Mesa Planning Area
Appendix C:	Persons and Organizations Responding to the August 26, 1992 Public Workshop and/or Commenting on the Draft Management Plan

County Park Department at various points during the process. Persons and organizations responding to the public workshop and/or Draft Management Plan are listed in Appendix C.

The Management Authority

The Santa Barbara County Park Department will be responsible for implementing the management plan. The primary objective of the Park Department is two-fold:

- o To protect the natural and cultural resources of the Santa Barbara County Park System unimpaired for present and future generations.
- o To develop and maintain facilities and programs designed to provide recreational and cultural experiences for County Park visitors.

A five member Park Commission has been appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. The Department has developed seven priority programs as follows:

1. Resource Protection
2. Beach Access
3. Historical Sites and Government Centers
4. Art and Cultural Resources
5. Community Parks and Recreation Areas
6. Citizens Advisory Committees
7. Capital Improvement, Planning and Development

The development of this management plan presents an opportunity to integrate each of these priorities into a unified program for resource preservation and public access.

MANAGEMENT AREA

Regional Setting

More Mesa is situated adjacent to the Goleta Valley in South Coastal Santa Barbara County, approximately 1.5 miles southeast of downtown Goleta (Figure 1). The More Mesa Planning Area, as defined by the County's Draft Community Plan Update for the Goleta Planning Area (SBCo 1992), is approximately 300 acres in size. The 34.5-acre County parcel is included within this larger physiographic area (Figure 2).

The More Mesa property is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the south, Atascadero Creek to the north, the residential district of Hope Ranch to the east, and moderate-

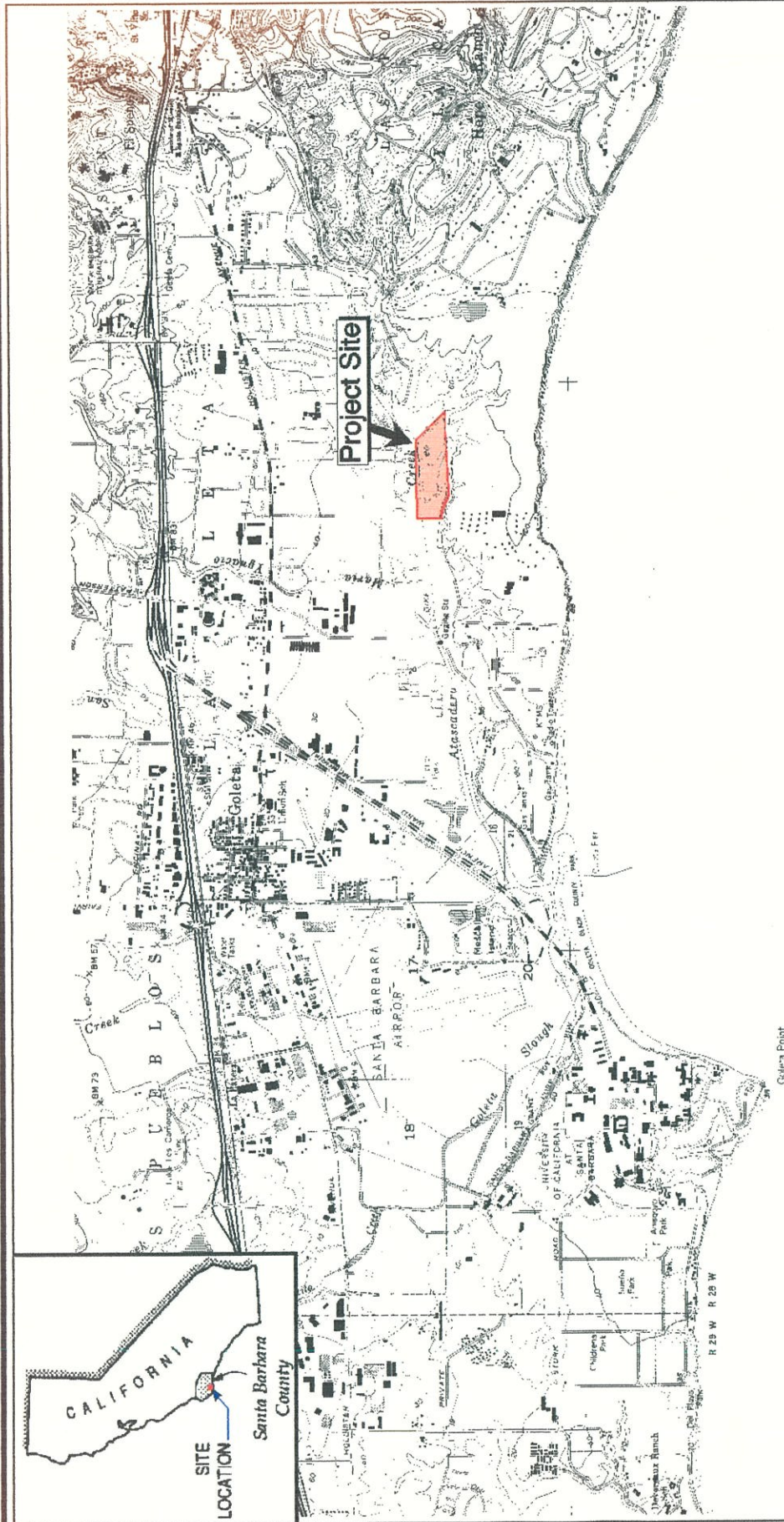


FIGURE 1

**PROJECT SITE LOCATION--MORE MESA
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**



SOURCE: USGS 7.5' GOLETA QUADRANGLE



PROJECT SITE BOUNDARIES--COUNTY PARCEL, MORE MESA,
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



density residential and commercial development along Orchid and Shoreline Drives to the west. The subject parcel is located in the northwestern portion of More Mesa (Figure 2). The parcel is slightly over 0.5 mile in length (east-west) and is 0.17 miles in width (north-south).

Geographic Boundaries

Atascadero Creek forms the northern perimeter of the County property (Figure 3). A 40-foot wide easement for a natural gas pipeline parallels the southern bank of the creek channel. A second gas pipeline easement and unimproved roadway lies within an abandoned railroad right-of-way that roughly corresponds to the site's southern boundary. The western property line runs perpendicular to the creek and gas pipeline easement. The eastern property boundary angles southeast from the site's northeast corner and terminates within the southern pipeline easement.

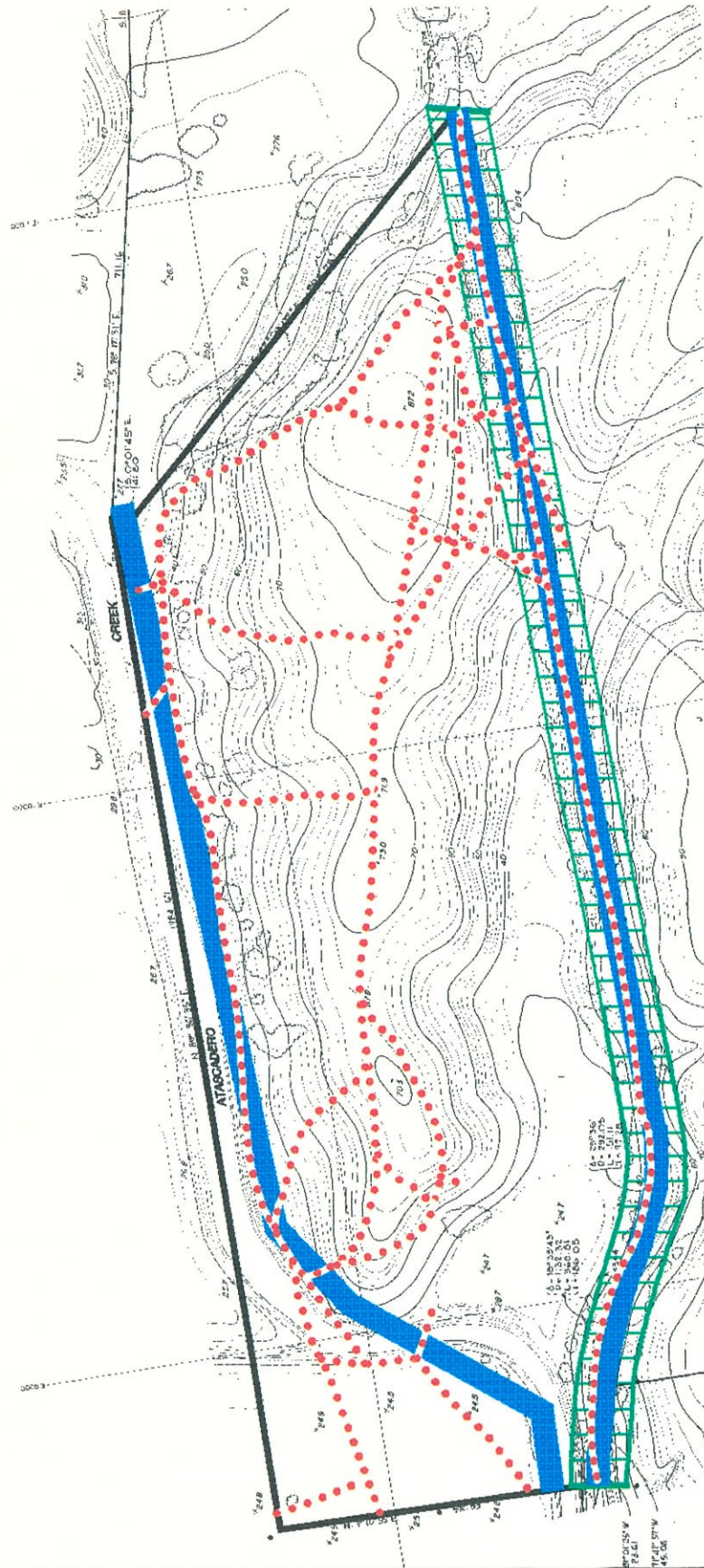
Physical Features

The central portion of the project site is characterized by a wide, east-west trending hill that reaches a maximum elevation of 87 feet above sea level (approximately 60 feet above the adjacent creekbed and its tributaries). The hill declines gently northward toward Atascadero Creek, and southward in the direction of several smaller drainages. This feature was historically connected to the west portion of the mesa, prior to excavation for the historic railroad bed.

A network of dirt roads and pathways connects various portions of the subject parcel with the surrounding properties (Figure 3). The most predominant of these are the two maintained gas line easements described above. A well-established trail trends southeastward across the central portion of the site. There are a number of secondary trails used by vehicles, pedestrians, and equestrians.

Historic and Current Land Use

Aside from the pipelines, current land use is primarily recreational. Among the main pursuits are walking, birdwatching, horseback riding, bicycling, and off-road vehicle use. Historically, the property was used for agriculture and railroad transportation. There is also significant evidence of prehistoric occupation by Native Americans.



0 500
Scale in Feet

FIGURE 3

-  1887 Southern Pacific Rail Road Easement
-  SCGC Gas Line Easements
-  Existing Unimproved Trails & Roads

SOURCE: Penfield & Smith Engineers



NATURAL RESOURCES

Habitat Overview

The More Mesa property supports a variety of wetland and upland habitat types. In overview, the mesa is comprised of a broad expanse of annual grassland broken by several northward trending drainages leading to Atascadero Creek. There are patches of coastal scrub and stands of coast live oaks on the slopes of the mesa. Live oak and riparian woodlands are associated with Atascadero Creek and its smaller tributaries. Large depressions or basins associated with the historic creek channel have soils of high salinity and support halophytic plant species, evidence that this area was once a more integral part of the Goleta Slough ecosystem.

The undeveloped character of the mesa imparts substantial wildlife values. The riparian corridors formed by the Atascadero Creek drainage system provide critical links for wildlife dispersal to and from outlying areas. The most important of these is the Goleta Slough and its environs, located roughly two miles southwest of More Mesa (Figure 1). The importance of More Mesa to regionally rare and declining bird species is emphasized in the biological resources report (Storrer and Semonsen 1992a).

The 34.5-acre County parcel contains a variety of the habitat types represented on the entire mesa. These include: grasslands; live oak woodland; riparian woodland; palustrine wetland; coastal scrub; and non-native (eucalyptus) woodland. More detailed distinctions are typically made for purposes of classifying vegetation types. Subsequent descriptions of plant and wildlife habitats reflect this difference in approach.

Biological Resources

The two major habitat groups, upland and wetland, were further divided into plant communities or associations based on habitat and plant species composition. These classifications are presented in detail in the biological resources report (Storrer and Semonsen 1992a). The characteristic upland "elements" present onsite include "Venturan Coastal Sage Scrub," "Non-native Grassland," "Coast Live Oak Woodland," and "Planted Exotic Grove." Wetland vegetation types are arranged in either of two main categories or "systems," riverine (stream channels and shores) or palustrine (banks, swales, forested wetland, etc.). Various subclasses are defined within these two systems.

Of particular interest are the occurrence of live oak woodland and wetland communities, in addition to several significant stands of native grasses. Each of these habitats is protected by local planning policies. Furthermore, wetlands are under the jurisdiction of state and federal regulatory agencies.

A previously compiled inventory of plants on More Mesa (Steele 1982) was updated for the County property. Field surveys resulted in the addition of 18 species to the list. A checklist of the plants inhabiting the County parcel is included as an appendix to the biological resources report (Storrer and Semonsen 1992a). An analysis of the checklist reveals that of the 175 species recorded, 76 (43%) are native and 99 (57%) are naturalized non-native plants.

The vertebrate fauna on More Mesa has been described in some detail. A study undertaken over a year-long period in 1981 and 1982 described the birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians found within various portions of the mesa (Ferren and Smith 1982).

The greatest diversity of bird species was found in the riparian habitats associated with Atascadero Creek and its tributaries (Lehman 1982). The oak woodlands provide nesting habitat for several species, most notably the black-shouldered kite. The extensive grasslands on the mesa are an important foraging resource for wintering sparrows and birds of prey.

The mammals, reptiles, and amphibians inhabiting the mesa were found to be typical of the habitats present (Fugle 1982, Sweet 1982). The surrounding urban development poses a substantial barrier to dispersal for ground-dwelling animals. This is one reason for the lower diversity of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians in comparison to birds.

Changes in habitat characteristics have occurred on More Mesa since the 1982 study was completed. Factors such as prolonged drought, habitat degradation, and regionally declining wildlife populations have altered the character of the biotic communities. A general increase in the occurrence of weedy vegetation has taken place on the County property. Many of these trends were detected ten years ago during the earlier investigation of the More Mesa property (Ferren and Smith 1982). The fact that habitat values have continued to decline indicates the need for a habitat preservation and management plan.

Cultural Resources

More Mesa was once part of the territory occupied by the Barbareno Chumash at the time of historic contact. The entire extent of the Barbareno territory encompassed the narrow coastal plain from Gaviota in the west to Punta Gorda, in western Ventura County, in the east. The cultural significance of the Goleta Slough (including More Mesa) was first recognized by early Spanish explorers in the 16th century. Nowhere else throughout the two Californias did the Spanish encounter such a densely populated area. Surface and subsurface archaeological findings on More Mesa have yielded

artifact types associated with archaeological deposits thought to be at least 6,000 years old.

A state-registered prehistoric archaeological site, CA-SBa-1588 is located on the County's More Mesa property (Wilcoxon 1992). The surface expression of this site (subsurface excavations have not been conducted) has revealed the presence of two discrete deposits of prehistoric cultural materials. The first is comprised almost entirely of marine shell, indicating an area of food processing. The second area consists of a scatter of chipped stone debris of the type usually associated with tool manufacturing.

There are two hypotheses concerning the significance of the archaeological evidence. If the two concentrations of artifacts were produced simultaneously, it is possible that the site was a rather large habitation with discrete activity areas. Alternatively, the two areas may have been occupied at different times, suggesting that both originated from unrelated seasonal or temporary camp sites. Further investigation would be required in order to place these deposits in temporal context.

The tracks of the earliest railroad in the Goleta Valley once followed a 100-foot wide corridor along the southern boundary of the County parcel (Wilcoxon 1992). Built in 1887, the rails of the Southern Pacific Coast Division Railroad were removed around 1902 when the railroad route was abandoned and realigned north of present day Hollister Avenue. The railroad bed is still visible for a distance of approximately 1,900 feet within the project area where it appears as an unimproved dirt road segment continuing eastward from Shoreline Drive (Figure 3). The Southern California Gas Company obtained an easement along the old railroad route and a gas pipeline was constructed within the former railroad bed in the 1930s.

RESOURCE SENSITIVITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The basic premise of this management plan is that resource protection shall be given the highest planning priority. This proposition is clearly justified by the environmental sensitivity of the project area and is supported by local planning policies. To this end, the site-specific resource sensitivities of the County property were evaluated. The recreational component of the plan was developed in recognition of the constraints posed by the need to ensure necessary protection for the site's biological and cultural resources.

Definition

In general terms, sensitive resources are those features most vulnerable to adverse impacts from human land use. Application of this definition requires that objective

Resource Constraints

Future use of the County property is limited primarily to resource protection and to recreation, in addition to the utility easements previously described. The size of the parcel, its topography, and environmental sensitivities preclude development that might conceivably accompany recreational use. Structural improvements (e.g. buildings, roads, parking facilities) cannot be accommodated onsite in light of these constraints. Furthermore, this type of development would conflict with the primary objective of resource preservation.

Current forms of recreation were evaluated for compatibility with the goals set forth in the introductory section. It is clearly evident that certain activities are not consistent with these goals. These activities should be eliminated entirely. Other recreational uses will have to be redirected or curtailed, in order to provide necessary resource protection.

Entry into habitats that are most vulnerable to disturbance should not be allowed. Access to critical roosting and nesting areas should similarly be prohibited. The trail system proposed in the subsequent section has been routed to avoid the areas of greatest cultural resource sensitivity.

Specific recommendations were incorporated into the plan that take advantage of the site's environmental amenities. To a great extent, the successful implementation of the management plan depends on education, thereby encouraging an appreciation of these resources. Resource preservation can only be ensured with the full cooperation of the visiting public.

Effects of Prior and Current Land Use on Natural Resources

Historic Use

Historic land use has substantially altered the character of More Mesa's native habitats. In some cases, this has resulted in permanent changes in site topography and drainage. Agricultural enterprises may have been present as long ago as the mid-1800's. Livestock grazing, followed later by cultivation were the two most predominant of these practices. The Southern Pacific Railroad, Coast Division, was extended across the mesa in 1887 (Figure 3). The railroad cut is still much in evidence today. More recently, residential development has encroached upon portions of More Mesa. Recreational use of the property has steadily increased since the early 1960's, with the urbanization of surrounding properties. Each of these factors has contributed to a degradation of plant and wildlife habitat values.

Historic maps show that the course of Atascadero Creek has been significantly altered. This was done in order to increase the capacity of the channel to convey runoff during high storm flows. Confinement of the stream to its present course (the northern streambank is cemented) has had profound effects on vegetation.

Motorized Off-road Vehicles (ORVs)

Motorcycle (i.e. dirt bike) use was recognized in the 1982 study of More Mesa (Ferren and Smith 1982) as highly detrimental to plants and wildlife. Recent field surveys indicate that this activity has not subsided and in fact, appears to have increased in scope and intensity. Direct impacts include an increase in the number of trails, damage to vegetation, and disturbance to wildlife. Widespread erosion damage is a cumulative and lasting result of these impacts. The effects of motor vehicles are even more devastating when they occur during the winter storm season, when soils are saturated and most vulnerable to rutting and erosion. Erosion is found at various points on the slopes of the central hill, within the railroad cut at the east end of the property, and at several points along Atascadero Creek that are used for access to the site. Cars and trucks often travel the dirt roads on other portions of More Mesa, however this is not presently a major problem on the County parcel.

Mountain Bikes

A demand for dirt road and trail access has accompanied the phenomenal increase in popularity of mountain bikes. With its proximity to urban and residential areas and ready access via the established bike path, More Mesa has become a major use area for mountain bike enthusiasts. Although generally not as damaging as motorcycles, mountain bikes nonetheless contribute substantially to the erosion problems on the property. This is primarily due to the number of riders and their propensity to explore new trails.

Erosion

Erosion is a cumulative result of historic and current land uses. Vegetation has been denuded through agriculture, vehicular traffic, and unregulated trail use. Grade cuts for the railroad bed and dirt access roads have exposed large areas to erosional processes. Alteration of surface drainage patterns has also contributed immensely to the problem. Excessive vehicle traffic (both motorized and non-motorized) has exacerbated the situation, resulting in chronic slope erosion. A review of aerial photographs shows that soil erosion has become progressively worse over the last twenty years.

Trash Dumping

Aside from the obvious aesthetic impacts associated with illegal trash disposal, there is the indirect effect of habitat degradation. Dumping of vegetative refuse (i.e. clippings and cuttings) is common place. This practice introduces undesirable weedy vegetation that can compete with and may eventually replace the native plant species. Portions of "old" Atascadero Creek along the northern gas line easement appear to be most affected.

Weed Infestation

Weed invasion has been facilitated through a number of avenues, in addition to dumping. Several species of introduced, invasive plants have colonized the County parcel. The eucalyptus trees on the north-facing slope are effectively competing with the native oaks that once predominated. Eucalyptus were likely intentionally introduced many years ago. Many additional weedy species have become established as a direct or indirect result of grazing and cultivation. Some of these are dominants or could eventually dominate sites to the exclusion of native species.

Flood Control and Utility Company Maintenance

The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District conducts periodic maintenance along the lower portions of Atascadero Creek. These activities include dredging and removal of vegetation, both mechanically and through use of herbicides. Segments of the creek adjoining the County parcel are affected by these operations. If not done in a controlled manner, loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat on County property may result.

The Southern California Gas Company maintains easements for their pipeline facilities that follow the northern and southern site boundaries. These easements measure forty feet in width. Routine maintenance consists of blading the ROW with a motor grader or track-vehicle (e.g. bulldozer). This procedure was performed within approximately one month of the field reconnaissance undertaken for the management plan. Vegetation had been removed from the entire easement for most of its length. Much of the debris was pushed to the edge of the historic stream channel. The equipment used had also travelled a dirt road traversing the slope of the central hill in order to gain access between the northern and southern easements. Oak trees had been limbed in order to allow passage of equipment. This type of activity also has the potential to impact archaeological site deposits.

Potential (Future) Impacts

Public use of the subject parcel is likely to increase given that the property has been recently purchased by the County. Continued recreational use of the County property has the potential to further degrade the character of the site due to all of the current sources of impact discussed above. In general, human visitation to the greater More Mesa area can be expected to increase (barring attempts by private property owners to limit public access) with continued population growth in nearby urban areas. The goal of the management plan is to provide necessary resource protection while allowing non-destructive types of public use.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

More Mesa's diverse biological attributes clearly warrant protection. This can best be achieved through responsible land stewardship. In recognition of this goal, the development of the management plan for the County parcel provides an excellent opportunity to meld applicable planning policies with compatible recreational uses.

Opportunities for passive recreation (e.g. hiking, nature study, birdwatching) are severely limited within the urban boundary of the South Coast Region. The demand for this type of open space preserve was overwhelmingly expressed during the public comment process. The desire to maintain open space land adjacent to urban areas has also been supported by local citizens groups concerned with development plans for Ellwood Mesa, the Wilcox property, and Carpinteria Bluffs. There exists a realistic chance of enlarging the More Mesa open space preserve area through acquisition of additional properties or trail easements east, west, and south of the County parcel.

Establishment of an open space preserve that allows passive recreation is the most reasonable use of the property. Trail access for bicyclists and equestrians to other, less sensitive portions of the mesa should be provided in the event that open space easements for these properties are obtained in the future. The following management recommendations are specific to the 34.5-acre parcel currently in County ownership. The proposed guidelines do however, consider the possibility of a much broader application should opportunities for additional land acquisition arise.

Eliminate Sources of Current Impact

Off-road vehicles should be excluded from the property entirely. Motor vehicle access should be restricted to emergency situations or authorized maintenance requirements (i.e. trash removal or revegetation).

continue the archaeological and biological work undertaken thus far. Additional scientific data would be useful in directing the application of the management policies.

Volunteer groups in addition to those mentioned above (e.g. The More Mesa Foundation, Friends of More Mesa, and the Urban Creeks Council) could be used in restoration, public education, and patrol efforts. If properly coordinated, this assistance would provide a dual purpose: realization of management objectives and galvanization of a community spirit of resource protection. The design and direction of restoration and biological monitoring programs should be done by professionals. However, organizing citizens groups for implementation of revegetation programs under the supervision of a trained specialist would be highly beneficial. Other activities for which volunteer participation would be productive include removal of trash, maintenance of trails and sign-in sites, conducting tours and liaison with local schools, patrolling for unauthorized trail use, and removal of invasive exotic plants.

Designate Permanent Trail System

In order to minimize the impact of visitor use, a designated trail system should be established. Only by eliminating the haphazard manner in which the property is currently traversed can the negative effects of human visitation be alleviated. Trails should be designed to avoid sensitive areas (e.g. wetlands, roosting and nest sites, cultural deposits). To the extent possible, existing trails should be used rather than creating new ones.

The trail system should be designed to allow access to some of the more interesting features of the site. To this end, appropriate ingress and egress points and links to access corridors in the surrounding area have been investigated. Trails and roadways that do not fit within this scheme should be closed, abandoned, and revegetated.

Points of Ingress and Egress

There are several access routes to the County property. Current patterns of trail use were considered in developing the scheme depicted in Figure 4.

The locked gate at the intersection of Shoreline and Orchid Drives marks the primary point of access (Figure 5). The gate leads to the unimproved dirt road that is indicated as an extension of "Shoreline Drive" or "Vieja Drive" (whether approaching from the west or east). This road coincides with the historic railroad right-of-way and southern gas line easement shown in Figure 3. This alignment is also designated as a "Proposed Trail" in the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Recreation Element (1980a). Legal rights of passage along this route were obtained with title to the County property.

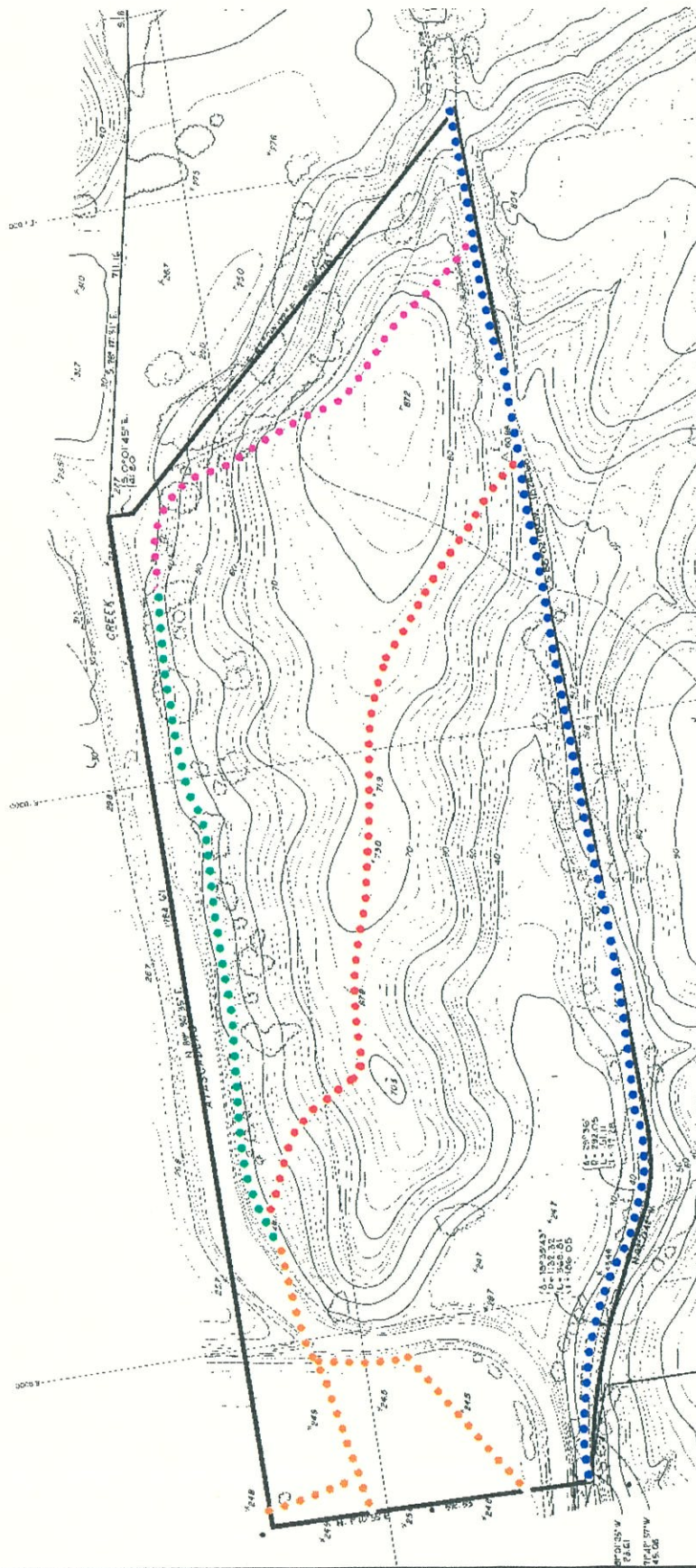


FIGURE 4

PROPOSED DESIGNATED TRAILS ON COUNTY PROPERTY

- Historic Railroad Trail (multiple-use)
- Oak Woodland Trail (limited use)
- Central Hill Trail (limited use)
- Atascadero Creek Trail (multiple-use)
- Proposed Connecting Trail



STORAKER &
SIMONSEN

SOURCE: Penfield & Smith Engineers

The west end of the trail along the northern gas line easement also terminates at Shoreline Drive (Figure 5). This corresponds to the southeast corner of the parcel currently occupied by an equestrian boarding facility (APN 65-230-14). This route is commonly used as an alternate to the southern gas line easement.

Visitors to the County property also approach the site from various access points to the east, south, and north. There is a large network of trails crossing the surrounding privately owned parcels to the south and east. There are a number of trails across Atascadero Creek where people walk or ride to the site. Visitors accessing from the bike path and/or residential development to the north most often use these avenues.

Parking

Visitors that arrive to the site by car typically park along the north shoulder of Shoreline Drive if arriving from the west (Figure 5). There are three unimproved turnouts between Shoreline Drive and Atascadero Creek that can accommodate approximately 15 cars. Once parked, people usually walk to the mesa along either the northern or (more commonly) southern gas line easement.

If approaching from the east end of More Mesa, drivers park along Vieja Drive and access the property along a private road, Mockingbird Lane (Figure 4). Public parking along Mockingbird Lane is prohibited. The south end of Mockingbird lane terminates in a private dirt road. Those who drive their cars beyond the end of Mockingbird Lane onto the mesa do so illegally. Most people arriving from the east end of the mesa do not visit the County property. The vast majority of these visitors walk directly southward to a dirt path leading to the beach.

Designated Trail System

The proposed trail system was designed in consideration of current use patterns and the environmental constraints described in previous sections. Present circumstances are such that access is often gained across private property. This factor should be recognized as a complication to public use of the site. Recommendations for acquisition of additional properties, either through dedication of conservation and open space easements or outright purchase, are provided. The proposed trail system for the County parcel is depicted in Figure 4.

Parking/Ingress and Egress

Parking is presently available only along Shoreline Drive as previously described. Legal access is available from this western point of approach along the southern gas line easement. Long-range plans should consider the need to accommodate more vehicles as visitation increases.

The gate at the intersection of Orchid and Shoreline Drives (Figure 5) is the main point of access to the property and should continue to be so designated. Acquisition of a trail easement for the northern portion of the property (i.e. continuation of the Atascadero Creek Trail as shown in Figures 4 and 5) should be investigated. This is necessary to provide a "loop" configuration as described below. A bridge should be constructed over Atascadero Creek to enable access from the bike path and residential district to the north.

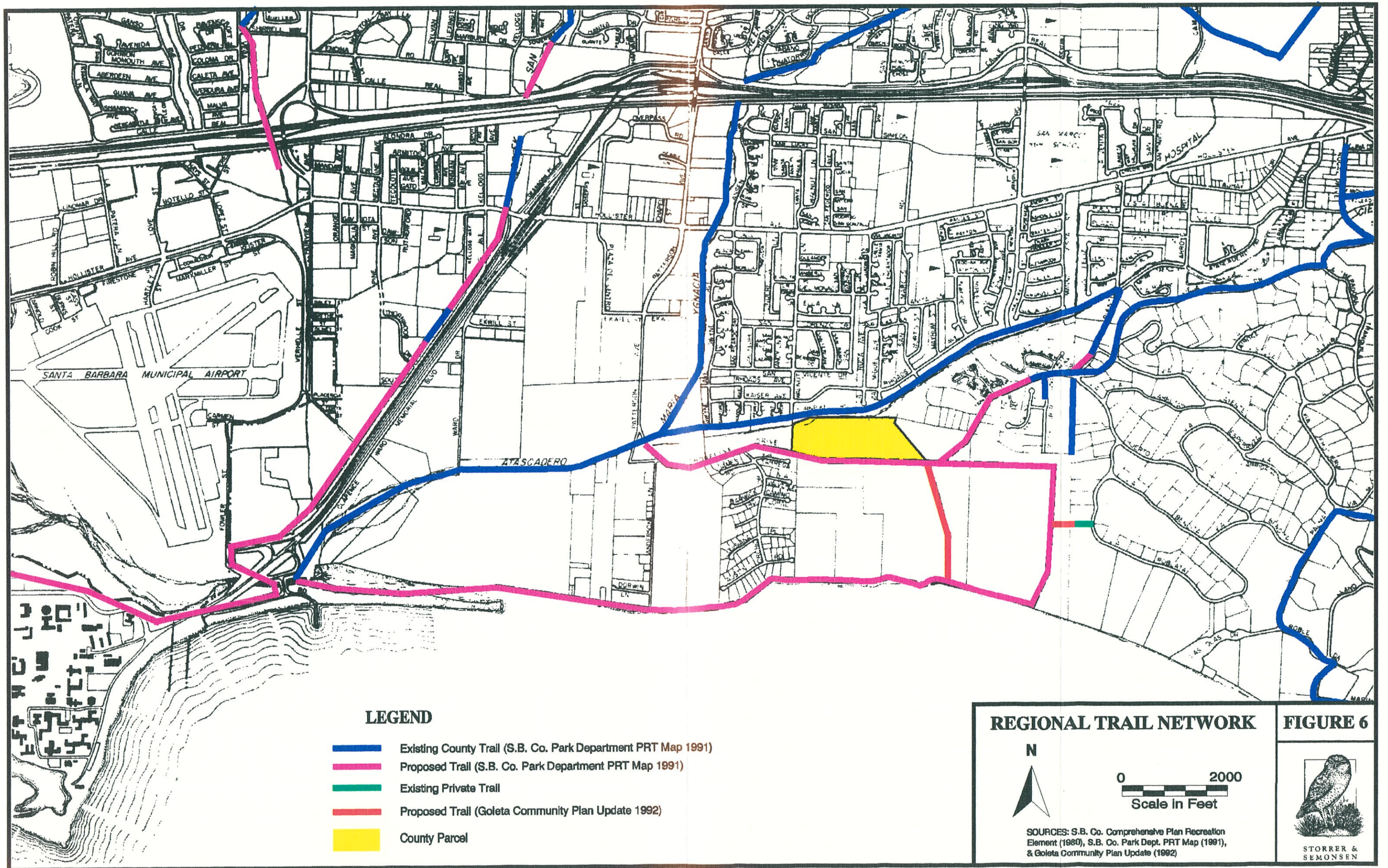
Historic Railroad Trail

This trail follows the historic railroad right-of-way as the name implies. The trail coincides with the Gas Company's southern easement and is routinely maintained. It lies entirely within the grade cut for the railroad bed and is appropriate for pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle traffic (i.e. multiple-use).

The trail follows a finger of the historic (i.e. pre-flood control modification) course of Atascadero Creek. It offers a cool, shaded pathway by virtue of the overhanging live oaks. Riparian and oak woodland habitats are excellent for birdwatching and other forms of nature study.

The existing trail follows the railroad right-of-way to the southeast corner of the County property. The County's proposed trail easement indicated in the Comprehensive Plan Recreation Element (1980a) continues eastward across the mesa where it would provide beach and bluff-top access (Figure 6). Acquisition of this trail easement should be actively pursued.

The Historic Railroad Trail will require very little improvement. Erosion control measures and trail abandonment at the east end of the site should be implemented. Interpretive signs that explain the historic significance of this trail should be installed at the trail head (off Shoreline Drive) and at the southeast corner of the property (Figure 5). Other interpretive themes could include the "old" Atascadero Creek channel and the biological significance of the oak woodland, forested wetland, and wildlife habitats. The Goleta Valley Historical Society may be interested in participating with such an interpretive program.



Central Hill Trail

The Central Hill Trail follows an existing pathway that traverses the elevated central portion of the site. The trail trends northwestward and connects with the Atascadero Creek Trail as described below. The trail should be limited to pedestrian use only because of biological and archaeological sensitivities and the erosion potential of the slopes.

The Central Hill Trail provides the most scenic overviews of the property and surrounding mesa. Ocean vistas are also available from the top of the hill.

The trail itself will require no improvement, however several smaller connecting trails should be blocked off and abandoned. Bicycle racks and signs indicating trail restrictions should be installed at the intersections of both the Historic Railroad Trail and Atascadero Creek Trail (Figure 4). Interpretive themes could include geological evolution of the landscape, significance of the native grasslands, and prehistoric cultural values.

Oak Woodland Trail

The Oak Woodland Trail traverses the northeast slope of the central hill. It connects the Historic Railroad and Atascadero Creek Trails and is an alternate pathway to the Central Hill Trail.

This trail runs through the oak-forested slope and very near the historic black-shouldered kite nest site. It has excellent views of drainages to the north and east and a backdrop of the Santa Ynez Mountains.

No improvements are necessary for this trail, however some erosion repair and remediation will be necessary at its northern and southern ends. Access should be restricted to pedestrians for the same reasons described for the Central Hill Trail. Seasonal trail closure may be necessary in the event that black-shouldered kites return to their historic nest site. A bicycle rack should be provided at the junction of the Oak Woodland and Atascadero Creek Trails. Interpretive themes could include the historic Goleta Slough wetlands, oak woodlands, native grasslands, wildlife values, and natural history of the black-shouldered kite.

Use of the Oak Woodland Trail by other than pedestrian traffic is counter to the objective of resource protection. The trail runs in proximity to the historic kite nest site and sensitive archaeological resources. Steeper portions of this trail exhibit active erosion, a problem that is certain to become worse if access is not regulated.

The Santa Barbara County Park Department expressed a desire to open this trail to multiple use in their comments on the Draft Management Plan (Storrer and Semonsen 1992b). Their reason for supporting multiple-use designation was to discourage access to the adjoining private property to the east by providing a connecting trail between the Historic Railroad and Atascadero Creek Trails (both are indicated for multiple-use).

The specialists hired to prepare the Management Plan have concluded that the Oak Woodland Trail should be designated for limited use (i.e. pedestrian travel) only because of its resource sensitivities (Storrer and Semonsen 1992a, 1992b, Wilcoxon 1992). The proposed multiple-use designation contradicts the findings of the technical studies, conflicts with established planning policies for environmentally sensitive areas, and presents potential problems in affording necessary resource protections.

County Park Department Staff has stated that multiple-use of the Oak Woodland Trail is essential for reasons of liability and policy consistency. The authors of the management plan disagree with the latter conclusion but acknowledge the functional value of a loop trail configuration within the 35-acre County parcel. Resolution of this issue may require a policy decision by the County Park Commission.

If equestrian and bicycle access is to be permitted for this trail, the authors recommend that such use be closely monitored as described in the subsequent monitoring and evaluation section of the management plan. Furthermore, we suggest that alternative circulation routes incorporating potential or proposed connecting trails as indicated in the following section be investigated. At such time that an alternative route can be established, the Oak Woodland Trail should be reclassified for limited use (i.e. pedestrian travel) only.

Atascadero Creek Trail

This trail follows the northern gas line easement, parallel to the realigned segment of Atascadero Creek. The easement is maintained to its terminus with Shoreline Drive to the west (Figure 5). The trail is suitable for multiple use.

In following the active stream channel, this route offers excellent opportunities for nature observation. The adjacent oak-wooded slopes are an added amenity. No improvements are required for this trail. Interpretive themes could include palustrine and riverine wetlands, flood control practices, exotic trees, habitat restoration, and wildlife values.

Potential Connecting Trails

The Atascadero Creek Trail is important in the overall scheme because it provides a second means of egress. This concept is currently limited by lack of a legal easement beyond the County's western property line. Alternative means of connecting this trail with the main access route (the Historic Railroad Trail) would probably require the construction of a bridge over the old channel of Atascadero Creek. This is not the most desirable option because of the sensitivity of the wetland vegetation associated with this corridor. An easement that would allow visitors to exit this trail onto Shoreline Drive would be much preferred.

Possible means of providing alternate access to the western portion of the site were evaluated for feasibility. The northern gas line easement continues west to Shoreline Drive (Figure 5). The easement crosses private property (APNs 65-320-07 and 65-230-14). Another potential route follows the County Flood Control District's easement to Shoreline Drive, just south of its intersection with Patterson Avenue (Figure 5). The Flood Control District has a dedicated fee strip across one of the adjacent parcels (APN 65-320-07). The easement across the other parcel (APN 65-230-14) is for flood control access and maintenance only. The owner of the latter parcel has installed a locked gate where the easement intersects his eastern property line. A trail connecting the Atascadero Creek and Historic Railroad Trails could be constructed along the western edge of the adjacent parcel (APN 65-320-07) if the property or a trail easement were obtained (Figure 5). Acquisition of a public trail easement along one or all of these alignments should be further investigated.

More direct access from the residential district north of the site was also considered in light of comments received on the Draft Management Plan. It would be feasible to construct a bridge across the "new" Atascadero Creek channel that would connect the Atascadero Creek Trail with the existing County trail easement (i.e. bike path). The structure should be similar in design to those already in place for other portions of the creek and bike path. This would provide a link to the multiple-use Atascadero Creek Trail (Figure 4). The bridge crossing could be located near the southern terminus of Walnut Lane as depicted in Figure 5.

Control Access

Realistically, not all potential users will voluntarily cooperate with the management plan. Measures should be taken to discourage unlawful or inappropriate activities. Vehicle barriers would be an effective deterrent in some circumstances. The western point of entry (Shoreline Drive) is blocked by boulders and vehicle passage is allowed only through a locked gate (Figure 4). Motor vehicles most often access More Mesa at the south end of a private roadway (Mockingbird Lane) at the northeast corner of the

mesa. The destination of these vehicles is usually the bluff top above the pathway to the east end of More Mesa Beach. Although cars and trucks are not presently a problem on the County property, the entire area would benefit by discouraging vehicle traffic. The adjacent landowner has expressed interest in cooperating with an effort to exclude unauthorized vehicle access. Installation of a locked gate that would not impede pedestrian, equestrian, or bicycle access is recommended. A design similar to the gate at the Shoreline Drive entrance to the County parcel (i.e. steel poles set in concrete footings, sturdy metal cross-bars, approximately three feet in height) would suffice. An interpretive sign should also be positioned at this point (Figure 5). The sign should explain that vehicle traffic unnecessarily causes damage to vegetation and contributes to erosion.

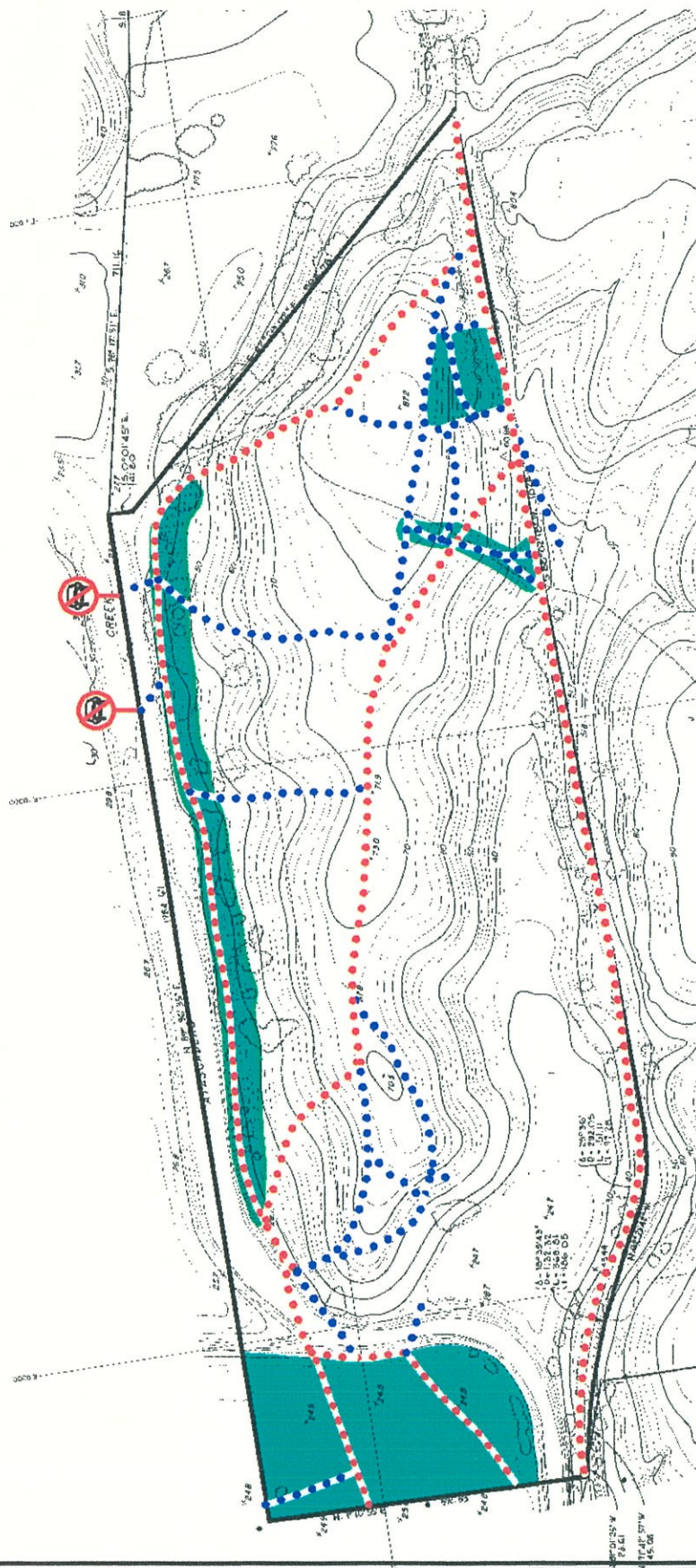
Barriers should also be established at currently used points of access along Atascadero Creek (Figure 7). This might help to discourage motorcycle traffic on the mesa. Because of the sensitivity of the vegetation along the stream channel, only temporary barriers consisting of railroad ties anchored with metal stakes or features of similar construction should be used. These sites should then be revegetated with suitably adapted native plant species. This effort will require continued monitoring, because some riders are sure to seek out alternate routes.

Some level of enforcement will be necessary to eliminate motor vehicle traffic on More Mesa. The Sheriff's Department should be asked to make a concerted effort to patrol the area and apprehend offenders. Visitors to the site might also be encouraged to report unlawful activity to the appropriate authority (i.e. Park Department or Sheriff's Department).

In order to help remediate the problem of unregulated access across Atascadero Creek from north of the property, a bridge should be constructed over the active stream channel as described in the previous section. The bridge would facilitate access from the existing County trail easement (i.e. bike path) to the site. It may also help to eliminate destructive use of the stream channel by visitors.

Coordinate Land Management With Easement Holders and Other Agencies

In addition to the Gas Company, other agencies and management groups could either directly or indirectly affect land management practices on the County property. Maintenance activities by the Gas Company and County Flood Control District have a direct effect on habitat and (possibly) cultural resources. In addition, preventive control measures implemented by the County Fire Department and Mosquito Abatement District (e.g. fuel break construction, pesticide spraying, and ditching of wetlands) have potential to impact onsite habitats. The Park Department should coordinate with the

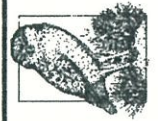


Scale in Feet
0 500

FIGURE 7

TRAIL ABANDONMENT, VEHICLE BARRIER, AND RESTORATION SITES

- Designated Trail
- Trail To Be Abandoned & Restored
- Area Suitable For Revegetation (Not All-Inclusive)
- Vehicle Blockade



SOURCE: Penfield & Smith Engineers

utility company and these other agencies in an effort to achieve a balance of land use perspectives.

The Gas Company should be made aware of the environmental sensitivity of the site and should be encouraged to exercise restraint when maintaining their easements. Routine maintenance and access procedures should be reviewed. In the future, vegetation clearing and tree limbing should be monitored by a biologist or Park Department representative.

The County Flood Control District is interested in developing site-specific methods for stream maintenance. This could be accomplished in cooperation with the Park Department and other interested parties. The District has considered the possibility of creating a secondary channel on Atascadero Creek that would be maintained for its habitat values. Portions of the historic stream channel could benefit from such a project. The District has also expressed a wish to participate in onsite revegetation efforts as mitigation for impacts resulting from flood control maintenance activities.

Wildfire potential is a concern on More Mesa, particularly in view of its urban setting. The County's More Mesa property is equipped with effective fuel breaks by virtue of the gas line easements. However, the surrounding undeveloped property is highly prone to brush fires. A fire management plan should be developed in cooperation with the County Fire Department. The adjacent landowners should be requested to cooperate with the development of the fire prevention guidelines. A similar plan was recently developed for the County's Burton Mesa Natural Preserve near Vandenberg Village. In general, the Fire Department supports the use of perimeter fuel breaks and revegetation of interior roads and trails. Controlled burning, if determined feasible by the County Fire Department, should be considered as a management tool. This measure might also benefit the re-establishment of native vegetation, if properly conceived. All plans for fuel break construction and controlled burning should be reviewed by a qualified biologist.

The Mosquito Abatement District has expressed interest in reviewing any restoration plans that might create conditions for mosquito proliferation. This agency should be consulted at such time that wetlands restoration projects are developed.

The Park Department should work closely with the managers of the Goleta Slough Management Area, as discussed in the final section of the management plan. Coordination of management actions enables sharing of information so that common problems can be addressed. Coordinated management also allows cooperative actions to be applied over a larger area, thereby increasing their effectiveness. Recreational opportunities will be enhanced by linking trails to a regional network and facilitating public access.

Design and Implement Erosion Repair and Revegetation Program

The field assessment suggests that there are excellent opportunities to remediate some of the effects of prior land abuses and thereby improve existing habitat values (Storrer and Semonsen 1992). The need for erosion control is clearly evident. Trail designation and prohibition of motor vehicles will serve to arrest many of the erosion problems and habitat degradation that is presently occurring. Once the source of the problem has been eliminated, site-specific plans for remediation should be developed. These measures may include installation of temporary retaining structures, construction of above and below-ground drainage features, and revegetation.

Existing trails and dirt roads that are not to be included in the designated system should be abandoned and revegetated (Figure 7). Erosion control, soil stabilization, and revegetation will be required.

Revegetation should consist of weed eradication efforts and replanting or reseeding with native plant species. Both of these measures, if effectively implemented, would increase habitat value for plants and wildlife.

Details of revegetation and erosion control will require a more thorough analysis of site-specific conditions. The following general guidelines are presented for consideration.

Erosion Control

Soil erosion is one of the most serious and immediate problems afflicting the County property. The first step in addressing this problem is to eliminate its source. Erosion is most prevalent on the slopes of the central hill and within the railroad cut at the southeast end of the site where numerous pathways have been created by motorcycles and mountain bikes. These paths should be closed to further use.

The cut slope of the railroad bed is prone to severe erosion. A retaining wall would provide permanent stability but is cost prohibitive. Adequate stability might be achieved however, by mechanically reducing the inclination of the slope. Prospects for revegetation of the cut are limited by its steepness and soil sterility. Terracing and/or application of topsoil and jute netting could improve the chances for vegetation recovery and long-term stabilization. The vertical ruts and vehicle trails should also be removed. An interpretive sign and minor trail improvement will help to redirect bicycle, equestrian, and pedestrian traffic to the designated trail system.

Weed Control

The County parcel is typical of the region in having numerous naturalized exotic species (i.e. 99 species, 57% of the flora), some of which can dominate the landscape (Storrer and Semonsen 1992a). The dominant species, known as "invasive exotic species" are often perennials. Extensive growth of exotics can result in: the elimination of native species; altered habitat values for wildlife; and degradation of the aesthetic appearance of an area. We have prepared the following list of naturalized exotic species that are candidates for removal from the County parcel or elsewhere on More Mesa. Those species with an asterisk are considered potential invasive exotics and should be given priority for eradication. Those with a double asterisk are special priority species that should be targeted for immediate control.

The most invasive species at the site is pampas grass. This plant should be eradicated throughout the site and monitored annually for additional occurrences. Three types of control methods; manual, mechanical, and chemical should be employed as necessary. Appropriate techniques for weed control are described in the Santa Barbara County Flood Control Maintenance Manual Program Environmental Impact Report (Philbrick et. al. 1992).

Grasses

- ***Arundo donax* giant reed
- ***Cortaderia jubata* pampas grass
- Cynodon dactylon* Bermuda grass
- Oryzopsis miliacea* millet rice grass
- **Pennisetum clandestinum* kikuyu grass
- **Phalaris aquatica* Harding grass

Forbs

- Brassica nigra* black mustard
- Brassica geniculata* summer mustard
- **Carduus pycnocephalus* Russian thistle
- **Centaurea repens* Russian knapweed
- **Cirsium vulgare* common thistle
- Conium maculatum* poison hemlock
- ***Foeniculum vulgare* sweet fennel
- Gaura odorata* gaura
- **Lactuca serriola* prickly lettuce
- Lavatera cretica* cretan lavatera
- Marrubium vulgare* white horehound

Picris echioides bristly ox tongue
Plantago lanceolata common plantain
Raphanus sativus wild radish
**Rumex crispus* curly dock
**Silybum marianum* milk thistle
Sonchus spp. sow-thistle

Vines and Trailing Shrubs

**Carpobrotus edulis* Hottentot fig
Hedera canariensis Algerian ivy
**Senecio micanioides* German ivy
Tropaeolum majus nasturtium
**Vinca major* periwinkle

Shrubs and Trees

***Eucalyptus* spp. gum tree
***Myoporum laetum* myoporum
**Nicotiana glauca* tree tobacco
Opuntia ficus-indica Indian fig
Pyracantha crenatoserrata pyracantha
**Ricinus communis* castor bean
**Tamarix* spp. salt cedar

Revegetation with native plant species would be appropriate in concert with most weed eradication efforts.

In addition, there is ample opportunity for revegetation elsewhere on the County parcel. The oak woodland habitats would benefit by enhancement through supplemental planting and maintenance. The degraded wetlands, in particular the large tract of ruderal habitat near the west end of the site, has potential to be reclaimed as viable wetland (Figure 7). As mentioned previously, this site may be appropriate for mitigation of flood control maintenance impacts on Atascadero Creek.

Trail Abandonment

The proposed trail system outlined in Figure 4 uses existing trails exclusively. Existing trails that are not integral to this plan should be abandoned and restored (Figure 7). Interpretive signs, to be installed at major trailheads, should explain that several trails are under restoration, thereby encouraging visitors to stay on designated pathways.

Smaller, unobtrusive signs should be placed where designated trails intersect closed trails. Temporary barriers may be necessary across trails that are subject to chronic vehicle traffic, in particular those that cross Atascadero Creek (Figure 7).

Most of the secondary trails should become revegetated within a relative short period. Supplemental seeding may expedite the revegetation process. Seed mixes should contain native or naturalized species specific to the plant community adjacent to the pathway. Most of the trails traverse the annual grassland community.

Several trails converge at the southeast corner of the property. There are large areas in this corner where vegetation has become denuded and soil compaction and scouring have occurred. A more intensive restoration effort may be required at this location.

Wetland Restoration

Most of the wetland habitats on the County parcel are degraded as a result of vegetation removal, filling, ditching, and invasion by exotic plants. Although they generally still retain high habitat value, some will require major restoration efforts. One area in particular is the abandoned agricultural land (now ruderal habitat) on the western margin of the property and north of "old" Atascadero Creek (Figure 7). This low-elevation, flat area and the adjacent parcel (APN 65-230-07) are excellent candidates for wetland recreation or restoration (the area was apparently riparian forest before conversion to agricultural land before 1870). The County Flood Control District has expressed an interest in using these sites for mitigating impacts to wetlands in the flood control channel of Atascadero Creek. If this area is shown to be feasible for mitigation, a wetland restoration plan should then be prepared. Such a plan would not only achieve the District's mitigation goals, but would increase the overall resource value of the County parcel.

Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Program

Various aspects of the management plan will require long-term monitoring and evaluation to ensure their effectiveness. More information on the physical resources of the site would be useful. The studies undertaken for the management plan have provided a sound basis for resource protection and land use. More rigorous scientific research would add immensely to that knowledge and would allow better-informed decisions to be made concerning future management policies.

Periodic assessments of public use patterns should also be done by the Park Department. Information on the kinds of recreational and educational activities pursued would

ensure the most effective application of the management guidelines. Resource impacts that are incidental to visitor use should be identified and promptly mitigated.

At minimum, semi-annual assessments of the site's resources should be conducted. Erosion control needs should be identified and remedial action implemented, if necessary. Revegetation progress should be assessed more frequently, if possible. Site surveys would also be helpful in determining the current status of the black-shouldered kite. Seasonal trail closures may be necessary to prevent disturbance to roosting and nesting birds.

The adequacy of the cultural resource protection measures should be evaluated during site visits. These inspections should preferably be conducted by a professional archaeologist. Supplemental recommendations generated from such a program should be reviewed and implemented by the Park Department in a timely manner.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Management recommendations that are specific to the 34.5-acre County property have been developed with a regional perspective in mind. In the near term, the actions proposed in this plan will affect, and in some cases are dependent upon, interaction with surrounding properties. In addition, the authors of the plan support the integration of the management plan for the County-owned parcel within a larger, regional open space preserve system.

Regional Planning Goals and Policies

The County's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element (SBCo 1980b) specifies these goals for the Goleta Planning Area:

- o Wherever possible, natural stream channels should be maintained in an undisturbed state in order to minimize destructive stream velocities, enhance wildlife passageways, and provide natural greenbelts.
- o Development along ocean bluffs and stream banks and in similar areas should be set back far enough to protect such areas and to allow the natural setting to remain undisturbed.
- o Scenic areas, such as ocean frontage, mountainous areas, lakes and streams, and lands immediately adjacent to these areas, should be preserved by being included in the County's public and private open space land programs.

- o Encouragement should be given to the preservation of archaeological resources and sites reflecting the County's Indian, Mexican, Spanish, and early California cultural and structural heritage, both in public and privately owned open space.
- o The placing of parcels within the urban area into Open Space Preserve should be encouraged.
- o Alteration of topography, vegetation, and biological communities should be regulated in order to minimize the destruction of natural habitats.

The development of the More Mesa Management Plan provides opportunity to initiate actions that are designed precisely with these objectives in mind.

The management plan is designed to operate on three levels. Detailed measures for resource protection and public access were developed specifically for the 34.5-acre parcel. These are short-term objectives, intended for immediate implementation. The plan also recognizes the importance of the greater More Mesa Planning Area in terms of its environmental and recreational values. Protection of additional portions of the mesa and acquisition of dedicated public trail easements are necessary to achieve the goals defined for the next level of management. Finally, the regional objectives stated in the County's LCP (SBCo 1982), Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element (SBCo 1980b), Goleta Community Plan Update EIR (SBCo 1992) and Goleta Slough Policies (Goleta Slough Management Committee 1992) will require coordination of the More Mesa Management Plan with a more aspiring program for open space preservation.

Land use planning policies and recommendations specific to the More Mesa Planning Area are summarized in Appendix B of the Management Plan.

Relationship with Surrounding Properties

Effective management of the subject parcel is an unrealistic goal if its importance in a larger context is not recognized. The majority of the More Mesa area remains in private ownership. Access to these properties is largely uncontrolled. The provisions of the management plan must consider the 35-acre parcel as part of the larger whole, both from ecosystem and land use perspectives. Contacts with adjacent landowners should be made, and their participation with planning and management decisions that affect the entire area should be encouraged. Without some level of support (or at least concurrence) from the adjacent landowners, prospects for effective long-term management and preservation are severely compromised.

The final draft of the Goleta Community Plan Update (SBCo 1992) has recently been completed. The plan has been endorsed by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and Resource Management Department (RMD) Comprehensive Planning Division Staff. The draft plan is currently under review by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission. Completion of this document is timely, in that it contains recommended policies and actions specific to the More Mesa Planning Area. Among the recommendations are parcel-specific development standards for the property, as summarized in Appendix B. If adopted, the recommended policies will facilitate management of the currently owned County property. Each of the proposals is consistent with the objectives of the management plan. Accommodations for vehicle parking, multiple-use trails, and other visitor facilities on adjacent, less environmentally sensitive portions of the More Mesa Planning Area will help in the overall scheme of resource protection.

Trail easements on adjacent properties to the east and west of the County parcel should be procured. In particular, the northern access route from Shoreline Drive (Atascadero Creek Trail) and connecting trails to the eastern portion of the mesa (Figure 5) are of high priority.

Additional Land Acquisitions

The possibility of supplemental land acquisitions should be investigated. Enlarging the area to be held in preserve status would greatly enhance the possibilities for maintaining a viable preserve, and would facilitate the implementation of its management policies. In assessing priorities for future acquisition, the following criteria should be considered: additional properties should have high resource value; they should be contiguous with those already in open space preserve; supplemental lands should afford access and continuity to the County-owned parcel.

The drainage areas to the east of the County property are of considerable biological significance (APNs 65-320-07 and -08). They support wetland vegetation and have hosted nesting and roosting black-shouldered kites. Development in these areas is precluded by their inherent environmental sensitivity and topographic constraints. These lands are contiguous with the County property and would improve both habitat and open space values if added to the preserve area.

Dedication of trail easements and open space preserve lands, as described in the Goleta Community Plan Update (SBCo 1992), should be actively pursued for the More Mesa Planning Area. Such dedications could precede or accompany the Specific Plan for the area, as mandated by the proposed policies summarized in Appendix B.

It is likely that space for vehicle parking will be needed in addition to that described for the Goleta Community Plan Update (SBCo 1992 and Appendix B). There are two intervening parcels between the County's western property line and Shoreline Drive (Figure 5). A parking and interpretive area could be established on the westernmost parcel (APN 65-230-14) if that land were purchased. At minimum, easements for the western extension of the Atascadero Creek Trail and its connection with the Historic Railroad Trail should be obtained as previously described (Figure 5).

In terms of priorities for future acquisition, the following parcels should be investigated first: Overeem (APN 65-230-07); Braun (APN 65-230-14); and Sun Mesa (APN 65-320-07). Acquisition of other parcels or parts thereof, that are currently owned by Sun Mesa Corporation (including APN 65-320-09, -10, and -08) should be considered second priority because of their resource value and continuity with the County property.

Regional Resource Planning Perspective

The authors advocate the integration of the management plan for the County-owned parcel within a larger, regional preserve system. This bio-regional concept would be the best means of realizing the goals set forth in the County's Comprehensive Plan Land Use, Conservation, and Recreation Elements (SBCo 1980b, 1979, 1980a). Within the Goleta Planning Area, five "regional systems" have been identified (SBCo 1992). The regional planning approach outlined as follows would link four of these individual components into an ecologically functional and inter-related preserve system, with the Goleta Slough as its centerpoint.

To assist with the preservation and management of the Goleta Slough Ecosystem, a Goleta Slough Management Committee has been formed. Members of this committee include representatives of various property owners, regulatory agencies, and conservation organizations. Definitions proposed for standardization include the following:

Goleta Slough: The contiguous wetlands contained in the Goleta Valley that are currently or were historically estuarine wetlands and deepwater habitats within the Goleta Slough Estuary, excluding the nontidal portion of streams that flow into the estuary.

Goleta Slough Estuary: The name of the largest estuary in the Goleta Valley. As used herein, it includes only those wetlands and deepwater habitats that currently receive tidal flushing.

Goleta Slough Ecosystem: The combined physical and biotic features of (1) the wetlands (including estuarine, riverine, and palustrine types) and deepwater habitats within the Goleta Slough; (2) adjacent uplands; and (3) contiguous streams in the Goleta valley.

Goleta Slough Management Area: The Goleta Slough Ecosystem as delineated on the Management Area Map and as approved by the Goleta Slough Management Committee.

Goleta Slough State Ecological Reserve: That area defined in the City of Santa Barbara LCP.

Goleta Slough Watershed: The entire geographic area where surface runoff or subsurface flows eventually drain into Goleta Slough. This includes (1) the watersheds of Atascadero, Maria Ygnacio, San Jose, San Pedro, Las Vegas, Carneros, and Tecolotito creeks; (2) portions of the UCSB Main and Storke Campuses; and (3) portions of Isla Vista, the Storke Ranch, and Delco properties and wetlands owned by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

The County parcel is adjacent to Atascadero Creek and, as defined above, is located within the proposed Goleta Slough Ecosystem and Ecosystem Management Area. It is located within the Coastal Region of the Goleta Valley where efforts are underway to preserve and restore open space and habitat areas from More Mesa, westward along Atascadero Creek to Goleta Beach County Park and Goleta Slough State Ecological Reserve, to UCSB Storke Campus and elsewhere within the Goleta Slough Ecosystem, and further westward to Del Sol Open Space and Vernal Pool Reserve in Isla Vista, Coal Oil Point Reserve at UCSB West Campus, portions of the West Devereux Specific Plan Area, and the Santa Barbara Shores Specific Plan Area. The County parcel is a critical link in this effort because of its location, habitats, and passive recreational potential. We propose that any planning for the site be linked to the larger effort in planning open space, habitat protection, and recreation (access and interpretation).

CONCLUSION

The recently purchased County parcel is representative of the resource amenities that have been described for the greater More Mesa area. The parcel's habitat diversity imparts significant biological resource values. This portion of the mesa is strategically situated, in that it encompasses or borders features of local and regional importance (e.g. critical habitat for sensitive wildlife, coast live oak woodlands, native grasslands, and various types of wetlands). These resources are protected by federal, state, and (perhaps most importantly) local regulatory policies.

The cultural heritage of the Goleta Valley is embodied in its historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. Examples of both are present on the County's More Mesa property.

Past and present land uses have somewhat compromised the integrity of the site's resources. If allowed to continue unabated, these factors will further degrade the quality of plant and wildlife habitats and threaten the integrity of the cultural resources onsite.

The need for a management plan that incorporates measures for resource protection while allowing passive recreational use of the property is clearly indicated.

Recommendations have been proposed with these objectives in mind. The primary goal of the management plan is to preserve the site's natural resources for their inherent values, research potential, and recreational enjoyment. The plan is based on a concept of regional planning that encompasses both the surrounding properties and a wider geographic perspective of open space preserve lands for the Goleta Valley.

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APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations contained in the management plan for Santa Barbara County's More Mesa property are summarized as follows. The recommendations are presented in the order in which they appear in the text. The basis for each recommendation is discussed in the management plan document.

1. Sources of current impact to the site's natural resources should be eliminated. Motor vehicle access should be restricted to emergency and limited maintenance use.
2. The site should be open to passive forms of recreation (e.g. hiking, photography, and nature study). Equestrians and bicyclists should be permitted access to designated multiple-use connecting trails that lead to other, less sensitive portions of the mesa.
3. An interpretive program, including signage and distribution of educational literature should be implemented.
4. Educational and scientific use of the site should be encouraged.
5. Visitor access should be confined to a designated trail system as described in the management plan.
6. Potential trails linking existing and potential open space areas should be further investigated.
7. Access should be controlled in order to eliminate detrimental uses (e.g. motorized vehicles). Vehicle barriers should be installed at major points of entry.
8. Management actions should be coordinated with easement holders, agencies, and other land managers (e.g. Southern California Gas Company, County Flood Control District, County Fire Department, Mosquito Abatement District, and Goleta Slough Management Committee).
9. Plans for erosion repair, weed eradication, revegetation, and wetland restoration should be developed. Existing trails that are not proposed for permanent designation should be abandoned and restored.
10. A long-term monitoring and evaluation program should be implemented. The condition of biological and cultural resources should be periodically assessed. Remedial actions should be undertaken if visitor use is found to have a detrimental affect on these resources.

11. Acquisition of trail easements for connecting the County parcel to adjacent and nearby open space lands should be actively pursued.
12. The possibility of supplemental land acquisitions for preservation of natural resources and increasing open space lands for public access should be investigated.
13. Management should be coordinated with the regional planning objectives for the Goleta Slough Ecosystem as outlined in the management plan.
14. Management actions should be consistent with local planning policies set forth in the County's Local Coastal Plan and Comprehensive Plan Conservation and Recreation Elements.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF COUNTY LAND USE PLANNING POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THE MORE MESA PLANNING AREA

Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Plan (SBCo 1982)

The County's LCP contains the following policies specific to the More Mesa Planning Area in Section 3.9, entitled "Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas":

Policies:

- 9-26: There shall be no development including agricultural development, i.e., structures, roads, within the area used for roosting and nesting.
- 9-27: Recreational use of the roosting and nesting area shall be minimal, i.e., walking, bird watching. Protective measures for this area should include fencing and posting so as to restrict, but not exclude, use by people.
- 9-28: Any development around the nesting and roosting area shall be set back sufficiently far as to minimize impacts on the habitat area.
- 9-29: In addition to preserving the ravine plant communities on More Mesa for nesting and roosting sites, the maximum feasible area shall be retained in grassland to provide feeding area for the kites.

Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element (SBCo 1979)

More Mesa is assigned an environmental ranking of 7-1-1 in terms of its recommended land use. These designations pertain to the relative biological value, tolerance to use, and recommended intensity of use for various habitats. The ranking index is more specifically defined as follows:

Value Classification (7): "Scientific study area."

Tolerance to Other Uses (1): "Only regulated scientific study."

Intensity of Use (1): "Only regulated scientific study."

The Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element (SBCo 1979) also contains the following comments and general recommendations:

Biological comments: The More Mesa Grassland according to one authority on the White-tailed (= black-shouldered) Kite, is the most important area in which the bird feeds and roosts on the South Coast. Contributing to the success of this uncommon species on the mesa are the ungrazed grasses which support large populations of the California Meadow Mouse (*Microtus californicus*), the chief food item of the kite.

Recommendations: It is our opinion that the California Department of Fish and Game has prematurely removed the White-tailed Kite from its list of rare and endangered species. The range of the kite is small, and the bird is specialized in both its prey and habitat preferences. The deep grasses on More Mesa support numerous meadow mice; grazing and or other damage to the grass will drastically reduce the number of mice, thus affecting the kite population. If light recreation use is to be permitted, trails should be established to minimize disturbance to the grasses. Obviously, very light recreation should be the only use contemplated for the More Mesa Grasslands.

Goleta Community Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (SBCo 1992)

This document contains the following recommendations concerning parcel-specific development standards for the More Mesa Planning Area:

- o A Specific Plan shall be prepared for the entire site which incorporates all of the conditions listed below and conforms to all other policies of the land use plan.
- o A minimum of 20% of the site shall be dedicated to the County or another appropriate public agency and/or private organization to be set aside for public recreational use.
- o New development onsite shall be designed to accommodate maximum public access to the site and beach with appropriate public improvements, consistent with protection of ESH areas. Such access and improvements, to be provided by the Developer(s) shall include the following:
 - A minimum of one public access road, sited and designed to minimize disruption of the site's natural features and aesthetic qualities.

- Parking for a total of 300 cars, inclusive of existing parking on public roads within 100 yards of trailheads leading to the site, parking available on the new access road(s) and within a gravel/unpaved lot(s) designed to hold a minimum of 100 cars.
 - An informal trail system aligned as closely as possible with the existing, primary historic trails shall provide access from the site's east and west ends, and include stairway(s) to the beach, bluff top path(s), and accommodations for pedestrians, bikers, and equestrians.
 - Public rest rooms, informal picnic/seating areas, bicycle racks, and directional and interpretive signage as deemed appropriate by the County.
- o Prior to issuance of land use permits for any residential development on the site, the applicant shall fund the preparation of a habitat protection and management plan to be prepared under the direction of RMD and the State Department of Fish and Game. This plan shall provide recommendations on methods to reduce or eliminate the impacts of the project on the site's ESH areas and sensitive species.
 - o Development shall be clustered and shall be located outside of all designated or potential Environmentally Sensitive Habitat areas.
 - o All development on the site, including structures, trails and roads, shall be sited and designed to avoid areas used for nesting and roosting by the Black-shouldered Kites.
 - o To the maximum extent feasible, vegetation consisting of drought tolerant native species shall be used for landscaping to screen development from public use areas and to create buffers from ESH areas. Landscaping shall be designed to complement, enhance and restore native habitats onsite.

**APPENDIX C: PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS RESPONDING TO THE
AUGUST 26, 1992 PUBLIC WORKSHOP AND/OR
COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC). Letter to membership (cc: John Storrer) dated October 12, 1992.

Lehman, Paul. E. Comments via telephone conversation with John Storrer on October 26, 1992.

Santa Barbara Bicycle Club. Letter to John Storrer dated September 9, 1992.

Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Letter to the Santa Barbara County Park Commission dated October 22, 1992.

Santa Barbara County Park Department. Letter to Storrer and Semonsen dated November 3, 1992.

Santa Barbara County Trails Council. Letters to John Storrer dated September 10 and October 31, 1992.

Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers. Letter to John Storrer dated September 10, 1992.

Sinclair Oil Corporation. Letter to David Anderson (The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County) dated November 18, 1992.

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. Letter and memorandum to Storrer and Semonsen dated October 30 and November 2, 1992.