



Sonoma County Regional Parks – Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 12, 2022

Public invited to shape future Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve

Input sought on trails, camping, education and stewardship

[Sonoma County Regional Parks](#) seeks community input to help shape the future of [Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve](#) in northwest Santa Rosa. The department is creating a master plan to guide the park's future development, public access, vegetation management, educational uses and habitat enhancement. The public is encouraged to share their desires, thoughts, and feedback by taking an online survey now through Nov. 11, 2022, at [MarkWestCreekParkAndPreserve.org](https://www.sonomacountyregionalparks.org/MarkWestCreekParkAndPreserve.org).

The 1,192-acre future regional park is located near Mark West Springs and Porter Creek roads in the southern part of the Mayacamas Mountains above Santa Rosa. Its oak woodland and redwood forests are former grazing and ranch lands, and its boundaries encompass Mill and Porter creeks, which both feed into Mark West Creek, a significant tributary of the Russian River and critical habitat for endangered species such as steelhead trout and spawning coho salmon.

The properties that comprise Mark West Creek Regional Park and Preserve were acquired by the [Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District](#) (Ag + Open Space) over the span of a decade, with Sonoma Ag + Open Space contributing \$23 million for the land purchases. Ownership transferred to Regional Parks in 2018. Planning for the park's future opening has been ongoing since then, and public [Park Preview Days and guided hikes](#), co-hosted by Regional Parks and Ag + Open Space, have been giving the community glimpses of the potential for this property.

The master plan will be driven by public input to create an accessible park with an emphasis on low-impact recreational activities, ecological protection and enhancement, interpretive programs, and educational experiences.

The park's terrain includes low-lying riparian habitat along the creeks, rugged upland forests and open views of the Santa Rosa Plain and Napa Valley. The property is home to an array of wildlife, from large mammals such as mountain lions and bobcats to special-status species such as the California red-legged and yellow-legged frogs, California giant salamander, red-bellied newt, and the northern spotted owl. It also adds to a wildlife corridor that stretches across the Mayacamas Mountains east into Sonoma Valley and west to the California coast.

The property includes an historic homestead site and several former residences that burned in the 2017 Tubbs Fire and has the potential for the development of public amenities such as a campground or education center.

Initial public feedback from the survey will be incorporated into three master plan alternatives, a process which typically takes 12 to 18 months and involves extensive environmental review. The three draft alternatives will undergo a public review period, with additional feedback incorporated into the final draft master plan, which is expected to go before the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for approval in late 2023.

In addition to the online survey, Regional Parks will conduct in-person public outreach and collect feedback during and after upcoming [Park Preview Days](#).

Learn more about the future regional park and take the survey at markwestcreekparkandpreserve.org. There, you can read about the project in detail, view an interactive map and submit questions and feedback. A hard copy of the presentation and documents can also be requested by contacting Park Planner Mark Cleveland at Mark.Cleveland@sonoma-county.org or (707) 565-3349.

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Sonoma County Regional Parks preserves irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, and offers opportunities for recreation and education that enhance the quality of life and well-being of Sonoma County's residents and visitors. Learn more at SonomaCountyParks.org.