Portola Redwoods State Park, A California State Park
Sustainability Plan and Road Map for Park Partner Engagement

Executive Summary
Portola Redwoods State Park (PRSP), located in the heart of the Santa Cruz Mountains, is
less than a one-hour drive from California’s Silicon Valley. The Park preserves the
pristine upper watershed of Pescadero Creek, untouched redwood groves and second-
growth Redwood areas, massive Douglas firs, and miles of riparian habitat. Its’ location
opens biological corridors of regional significance, and creates an intersection for a
regional complex of recreational trails. The significant natural, cultural and recreational
value contained in PRSP’s boundaries is immeasurable by any monetary terms, and for
68 years the dedicated California State Parks (CSP) staff have professionally and expertly
stewarded this public treasure on behalf of all Californians.

For the more than 40,000 visitors each year, PRSP is a refuge from the daily stress of
work and school and is a place where families and friends gather together to be inspired
by and learn about nature. Their experience is greatly enhanced by the dedicated CSP
staff work hard to ensure that the visitors of PRSP are safe, have access to clean and well
maintained facilities, can access the various recreational offerings, and can participate in
engaging interpretive programs.

From the Park’s inception in 1945, nonprofit and community members have partnered
with CSP and played an integral role in preserving and interpreting PRSP for the public
good. Save the Redwoods League (the League), Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST),
and the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation (PCRF) have been dedicated to supporting
CSP and State Park personnel through the acquisition of significant lands, providing
funds for key projects and programs, building support through advocacy and promoting
the Park, and supporting volunteerism. In response to the current challenges to CSP and
PRSP, this Partnership (The League, POST and PCRF) has come together with the Santa
Cruz District State Park staff to work on several initiatives to ensure that PRSP continues
to be accessible and open to future generations. This Sustainability Plan is one of these
initiatives.

Through partner engagement and leveraging, the planning process analyzed nine projects
for their feasibility of implementation, presented a roadmap for project implementation,
and demonstrated that implementation of these projects would drive revenue for long-
term sustainability of the Park. Further, the PRSP Sustainability Plan provides expert
analysis and data-driven studies that complement the wisdom and best practices of CSP
and support the District park personnel in achieving their mission at PRSP to, “preserve,
protect, restore, interpret and manage the unit's natural and scenic resources, features
and values, making them available to the public for their educational, inspirational and
recreational benefits.”
**Park Profile**
Established in 1945
Acres: 2,767.82
Trails: 18 Miles
Individual Camping sites: 67
Group Camping Sites: 4
Individual Picnic Sites: 26
Group Picnic Site: 1
Paid Day Use Individuals: 8,738
Free Day Use Individuals: 853
Camping Individuals: 32,033
Total Annual Visitors: 41,624
Total User Fees: $236,164
Concessions: $240
Total Annual Income: $236,404

**Park Attractions & Activities**
Old Growth Redwood Groves
Tip Toe Falls and Peters, Slate & Pescadero Creeks
Old Tree & Sequoia Nature Self-guided Trails
Family and Group Camping or Picnicking
Backpacking at the Slate Creek Trail Camp
Hiking
Visitor Center and Park Store
Interpretive Exhibits and Programs
Volunteerism
Nature Study
Photography
Geocaching
Mountain Biking

**Developing an understating of how Visitors value PRSP.** Through a comprehensive Situation Assessment, Market and Fiscal Analysis this plan provides a solid understanding of the PRSP’s: History, visitors and visitor demographics, market trends, past and present operations models, and fiscal sustainability options.

**Visitor Profile** (sample based on visitor surveys conducted as a part of this plan process):
1) Average group size: Day Use = 2.9 and Camping = 5.2
2) Adults make up 62% and Children 38% of the visitors
3) 98% live in California; 91% live in the greater Bay Area
4) 91% live within 60 miles of PRSP
5) Time in nature, the natural features and being with friends and family are the most important activities for visitors to PRSP.
6) Interpretive programs, backpacking and biking were rated as the least important activities to visitors to PRSP. It is important to note, according to the 2012 DPR Interpretive statistics when divided by 2012 DPR attendance report, only 4% of the visitors to PRSP participate in an interpretive program.
7) 40% of visitors found out about PRSP on the Internet, 29% had been to PRSP before; and 28% were referred by word of mouth.
8) 94% of the visitors plan to return to PRSP.

**Park Sustainability, projects that sustain all the values within PRSP.** Every aspect of the Park’s facilities were reviewed and 38 specific assessments were made. From this facility assessment nine projects were selected by the Partners and CSP to be vetted for further development through the Sustainability Plan process. The feasibility and sustainability of these projects were identified, and determined to be fully aligned with the CSP mission in terms of their value to the visitors and recreation, the parks’ natural and cultural resources and revenue enhancement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portola Redwoods State Park Sustainability Plan</th>
<th>Project Value &amp; Alignment with the Mission of California State Parks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visitor Experience Enhancement Value</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campfire Center Upgrades</td>
<td>Increases available offerings for interpretive programing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic Ramada Rebuilding</td>
<td>Provides a picnic area for general public when not reserved. Provides meeting and project area for Jr. Rangers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Camp Sites &amp; Hike/Bike Area Upgrades</td>
<td>Provides more privacy for group campers and upgraded facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replace Bathhouses: Upper Campground, And Group Camps</td>
<td>Improves visitors’ comfort at the park - key feedback from visitor surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Center Repair &amp; New Exhibits</td>
<td>Increases available offerings for interpretive programing and visitor amenities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased Directional And Interpretive Signage</td>
<td>Increases the feeling of welcome and orientation that park visitors experience when coming to PRSP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Install New Cabins - Convert Point Group Campground</td>
<td>Allows for new and nontraditional user groups to use the PRSP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restore And Remodel Vacant Residences</td>
<td>Allows for new and nontraditional user groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal-Proof Food Storage Lockers</td>
<td>Provides cleaner and safer food storage for campers - key feedback visitor surveys</td>
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Planning the future of Portola Redwoods State Park. The Sustainability Plan outlines critical paths forward for each of the nine selected projects to ensure their completion. This was accomplished by researching CSP project protocols and planning needs, addressing accessibility needs and several site-visits with the Partners and CSP personnel as well as extensive follow-up research. As a part of this work we assessed current and optimal CSP services levels at PRSP and built the fiscal models to achieve strategic revenue enhancement goals.

Assuming a modest annual revenue growth of five percent over ten years, the plan projects an ultimate additional revenue figure from revenue enhancement activities of $951,526 over ten years. This also assumes that all revenue-enhancing strategies were enacted and their associated capital development projects completed. Further details and a description of this analysis are presented in the Sustainability Plan in Table 2.h.1.

Reengaging the public with Portola Redwoods SP. As new facilities and interpretive & recreational opportunities come on line it will be important to inspire and reintroduce the public to PRSP. To accomplish this, a PRSP Brand Analysis and Value proposition were developed to inform Marketing and Communications strategies that focuses on the key demographic regions that are served by the park.

Next Steps. The work described in the Sustainability Plan is ongoing and the Partners and CSP have already started to focus on several of the nine projects described in the plan. The intention of this work is to increase all the values of PRSP, to the Visitors, Natural & Cultural resources and Fiscal Sustainability with the overall goal that PRSP continues to be open to the public and well stewarded for generations to come.
Portola Redwoods State Park Sustainability Plan Team

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