

## **4. CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE, AND PARKS ELEMENT**

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### **A. Purpose**

The Conservation, Open Space, and Parks Element of the Inland General Plan combines two State-mandated elements, Conservation and Open Space. It also includes policies and programs addressing water quality, public access, and recreation.

Open space is defined by Government Code Section 65561 as “any area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space use and which is designated on local, regional or a State open space plan for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, or for public health and safety.” Fort Bragg’s open space includes lands which are publicly-owned and operated for active or passive recreational use and land which is in private ownership but is either undeveloped or managed for the protection and enhancement of natural resources. Open space in Fort Bragg provides for recreational uses, scenic and aesthetic resources, and habitat preservation.

The City wishes to preserve as much open space as feasible to provide habitat for native species of plants and wildlife, reduce sprawl, and maintain the aesthetic benefits of undeveloped land. The City also wishes to conserve natural resources and provide its residents with a full range of recreational opportunities. The goals, policies, and programs of this Element address these aims by establishing the framework for the protection and enhancement of natural resources, the environment, and open space and for the provision of recreational opportunities for Fort Bragg residents and visitors.

The EIR for the General Plan contains a full description of the natural resources, parks, trails, and recreational facilities existing within the Planning Area. The EIR also contains a full description of natural resources occurring within the Planning Area. See Map OS-2 for a depiction of rivers, creeks, riparian habitats and land which can contribute to groundwater recharge and stormwater management. Map OS-2 is illustrative, as most areas of the City can accommodate ground water recharge and assist in storm water management. Please see Map OS-1 for a depiction of existing parks and recreational facilities.

### **B. Goals, Policies and Programs**

### **C. Conservation & Natural Resources**

#### **Goal OS-1 Preserve areas with important biotic resources.**

Policy OS-1.1 Special Review Areas: Areas in the City containing watercourses, wetlands, sensitive plant and wildlife habitat, and forested land shall be designated as Special Review Areas.

*Sensitive plant and wildlife habitat include: all species that appear on Federal lists of endangered, threatened, rare, and candidate species and plant and animal species designated*

by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as species of special concern or their current equivalent (G1, G2, S1 and S2 listed plants).

Policy OS-1.2 Preserve Natural Resources: Require that sensitive natural resources in Special Review Areas be preserved and protected to the maximum degree feasible.

Program OS-1.2.1: Review projects requesting discretionary approvals to determine whether the project is located in an area with potentially sensitive natural resources.

Policy OS-1.3 Biological Report Required for Special Review Areas: Permit applications for development within or adjacent to Special Review Areas which have the possibility of containing sensitive habitat shall include a biological report prepared by a qualified biologist which identifies the resources and provides recommended measures to ensure that the requirements of CEQA, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the City of Fort Bragg's *Inland General Plan* are fully met. The required content of the biological report is specified in the *Inland Land Use and Development Code*.

Policy OS-1.4 Maintain Open Space: Require site planning and construction to maintain adequate open space to permit effective wildlife corridors for animal movement between open spaces.

## **Goal OS-2: Encourage Native Plants and Discourage Non-Native Invasive Plants & Trees**

Policy OS-2.1 Native Landscaping: All development shall be conditioned to require that 50% of all plantings are native plants and shall prohibit the planting of any plant species that is (a) listed as problematic and/or invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council, and/or by the State of California, or (b) listed as a 'noxious weed' by the State of California or the U.S. Federal Government.



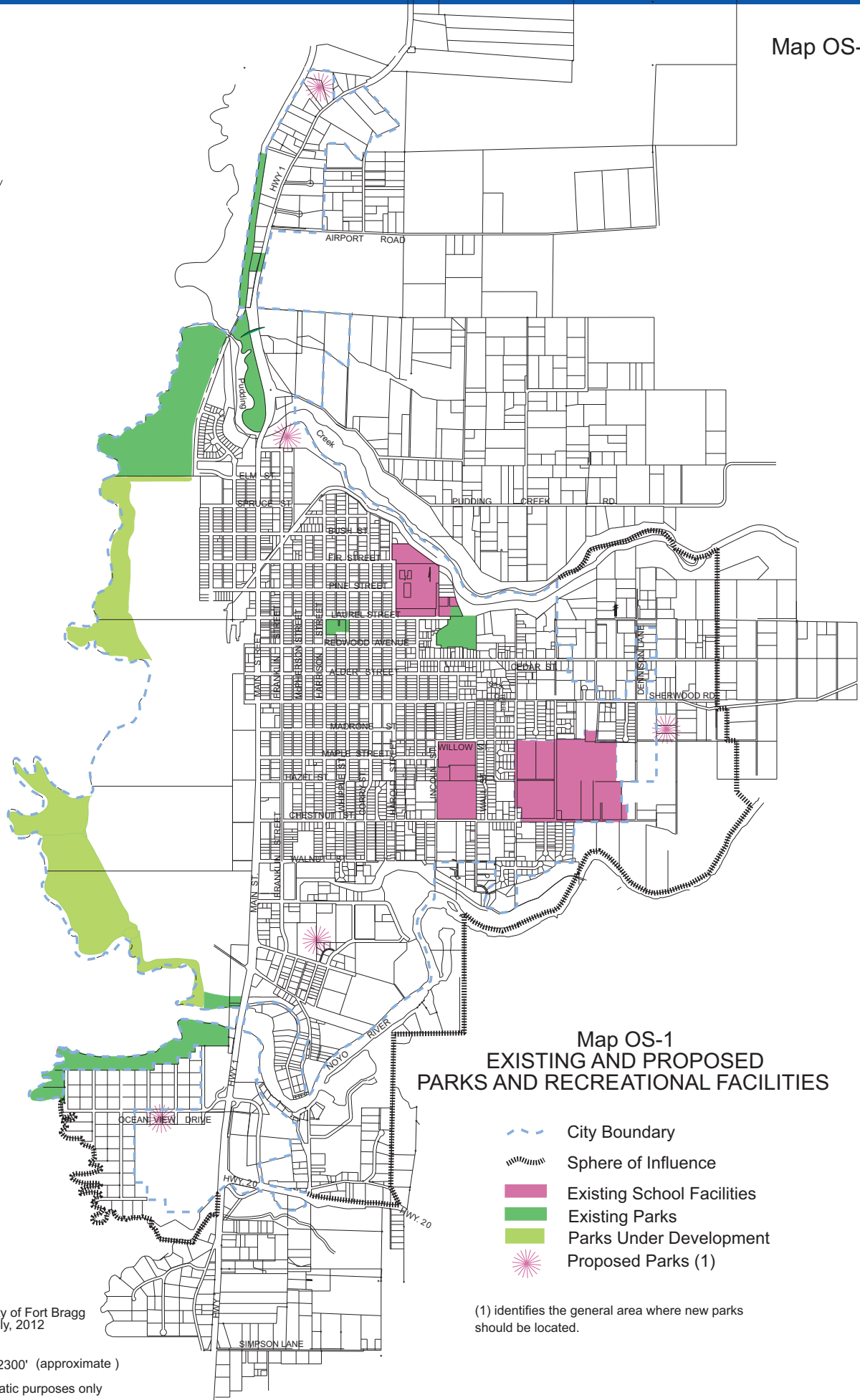
*Native Landscaping*

Policy OS-2.2 Prohibit Invasive Species: Condition development projects requiring discretionary approval to prohibit the planting of any species of broom, pampas grass, gorse, or other species of invasive non-native plants deemed undesirable by the City.







N

Ocean

Pacific



Map OS-1  
 EXISTING AND PROPOSED  
 PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

-  City Boundary
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Existing School Facilities
-  Existing Parks
-  Parks Under Development
-  Proposed Parks (1)

(1) identifies the general area where new parks should be located.

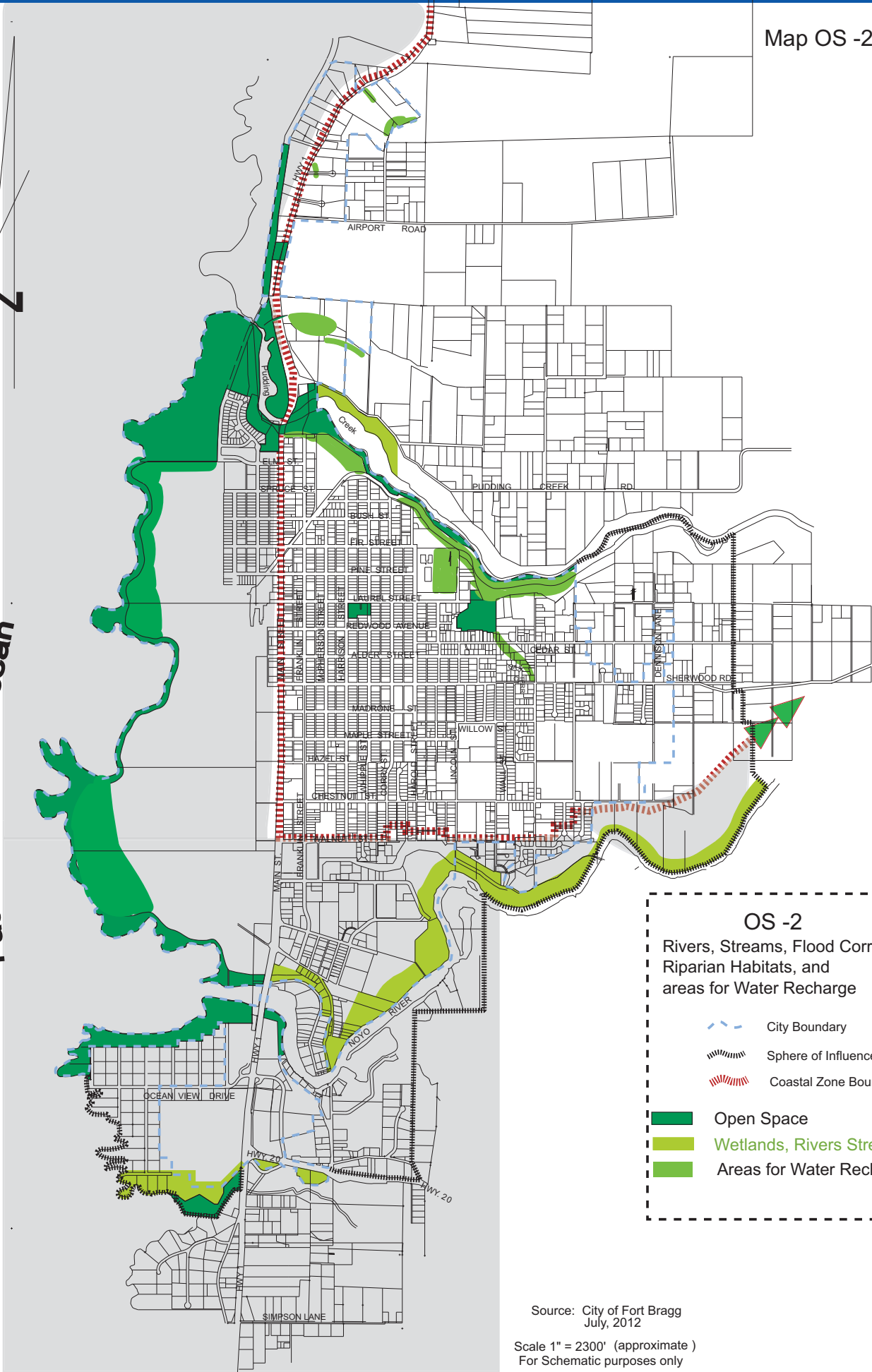
Source: City of Fort Bragg  
 July, 2012

Scale 1" = 2300' (approximate)  
 For Schematic purposes only







N

Ocean

Pacific



**OS -2**  
 Rivers, Streams, Flood Corridors,  
 Riparian Habitats, and  
 areas for Water Recharge

-  City Boundary
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Coastal Zone Boundary
-  Open Space
-  Wetlands, Rivers Streams
-  Areas for Water Recharge

Source: City of Fort Bragg  
July, 2012

Scale 1" = 2300' (approximate)  
For Schematic purposes only

Program OS-2.2.1: Require that Caltrans, PG&E, the County of Mendocino, and private property owners remove pampas grass and broom from their properties and rights-of-way. The City shall strive to remove these plants from City-owned property and rights-of-way.

Program OS-2.2.2: Encourage the removal of non-native invasive trees where feasible, such as Monterey Cypress, Monterey Pine and Eucalyptus, and prohibit planting of non-native invasive tree species in new development.

Policy OS-2.3 Preserve Native Vegetation and Trees: To the maximum extent feasible and balanced with permitted use, require that site planning, construction, and maintenance of development preserve existing healthy trees and native vegetation on the site.

Policy OS-2.4 Forested Areas: Maintain existing forested areas and reforest parks and streetscapes with new trees as needed. Projects proposed in forested areas are required to meet the requirements of the Special Review Areas.

Program OS-2.4.1: Establish a tree planting and replacement program to assure continuing stands of trees throughout the City.

Program OS-2.4.2: Consider adopting a street tree program.

**Goal OS-3      Protect and preserve soil as a natural resource.**

Policy OS-3.1 Soil Erosion: Minimize soil erosion to prevent loss of productive soils, prevent flooding and landslides, and maintain infiltration capacity and soil structure.

**Goal OS-4      Protect and Preserve Cultural Resources.**

Policy OS-4.1 Preserve Archaeological Resources: New development shall be located and/or designed to avoid archaeological and paleontological resources where feasible, and where new development would adversely affect archaeological or paleontological resources, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

## **D.    Water Quality**

**Goal OS-5      Protect, enhance, and restore riparian areas and wetlands.**

Policy OS-5.1 Streams and Creeks: To the maximum extent feasible, preserve, protect, and restore streams and creeks to their natural state.

Program OS-5.1.1: Work with organizations and private property owners to enhance the City's watercourses for habitat preservation and recreation.

Program OS-5.1.2: Develop additional guidelines for the maintenance of watercourses to further assure that native vegetation is not unnecessarily removed and that maintenance

minimizes disruption of wildlife breeding activities and wildlife movement. Incorporate these guidelines, where appropriate, into the City's maintenance procedures.

Program OS-5.1.3: Seek Federal and State funding for the repair of streambank erosion, planting of riparian vegetation to stabilize creek banks, and removal of debris obstructing waterflow.

Policy OS-5.2 Riparian Habitat: Prevent development from destroying riparian habitat to the maximum feasible extent. Preserve, enhance, and restore existing riparian habitat in new development unless the preservation will prevent the establishment of all permitted uses on the property.

Policy OS-5.3 No Net Loss of Wetlands: Ensure no net loss of wetlands, as defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Policy OS-5.4 Protect Aquifers: Protect groundwater aquifers.

*Otis Johnson Park Creek*

## **Goal OS-6 Improve water quality.**

Policy OS-6.1 Pollution in Runoff: Ensure protection of water resources from pollution and sedimentation.

Policy OS-6.2 Minimize Introduction of Pollutants: Development shall be designed and managed to minimize the introduction of pollutants into estuaries, wetlands, rivers and streams to the extent feasible.

Policy OS-6.3 Minimize Increases in Stormwater Runoff: Development shall be designed and managed to minimize post-project increases in stormwater runoff volume and peak runoff rate, to the extent feasible.

Program OS-6.3.1: Develop and implement Low Impact Development requirements in the Inland Land Use and Development Code. Remove regulatory barriers to Low Impact Development from the Inland LUDC where feasible.

Policy OS-6.4 Maintain and Restore Biological Productivity and Water Quality: Development shall maintain and, where feasible, restore the biological productivity and the quality of streams and wetlands to maintain optimum populations of aquatic organisms and for the protection of human health.

Policy OS-6.5 Municipal Activities to Protect and Restore Water Quality: The City shall promote both the protection and restoration of water quality. Water quality degradation can result from a variety of factors, including but not limited to the introduction of pollutants, increases in runoff volume and rate, generation of non-stormwater runoff, and alteration of physical, chemical, or biological features of the landscape.



Program OS-6.5.1: Water Quality Public Education and Outreach. The City shall continue to encourage public outreach and education about the water quality impacts of development.

Program OS-6.5.2: BMPS for Municipal Maintenance Activities. The City shall ensure that municipal maintenance activities and other public projects integrate appropriate BMPs to protect water quality.

### **Goal OS-7 Improve air quality.**

Policy OS-7.1 Participate in Regional Planning to Improve Air Quality: Continue to cooperate with the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) in implementing the *Regional Clean Air Plan*.

Program OS-7.1.1: Add a City representative to the Board of MCAQMD.

Policy OS-7.2 Air Quality Standards: Seek to comply with State and Federal standards for air quality.

Program OS-7.2.1: Review new project proposals for consistency with MCAQMD regulations and guidelines.

Program OS-7.2.2: Work with the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District to ensure that all new industrial projects include Best Available Control Technologies (BACTs) to control emissions of air pollutants to the maximum extent permitted by law.

Program OS-7.2.3: Require that proposed new asphalt plants undergo an air quality analysis that includes analysis of emissions, dispersion modeling, risk analysis, and mitigation required to reduce pollution and risk.

Program OS-7.2.4: Prohibit unpaved driveways of more than 50 feet and unpaved roads in all new development.

## **F. Open Space**

There are three categories of open space in the Fort Bragg Planning Area: 1) publicly-owned land, such as Noyo Headlands Park, Pomo Bluffs Park, and MacKerricher State Park; 2) dedicated land, which is privately-owned and maintained and has a recorded open space or conservation easement; and 3) land which has a prescriptive easement permitting public use.

### **Goal OS-8 Conserve and enhance a variety of open space features including creeks, wildlife habitats, scenic view corridors, and other amenities.**

Policy OS-8.1 Open Space: Plan for and condition new development to implement the City's priorities for open space.

Program OS-8.1.1: Use conservation easements wherever possible to protect environmentally sensitive open space areas.

Program OS-8.1.2: Continue to work with local and regional agencies and interest groups, in conjunction with the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District Master Plan, to develop an open space preservation strategy.

Program OS-8.1.3: Develop additional standards in the Inland Land Use and Development Code for public access to open space areas.

Program OS-8.1.4: Revise the LUDC to make public open space and public access ways and trails to public parklands a permitted use in all land use and zoning designations.

Program OS-8.1.5: Facilitate the acceptance of Offers to Dedicate (OTDs) as a means of obtaining additional public access.

Program OS-8.1.6 City Circuit and Coastal Trails: Develop a continuous trail system throughout the City which connects to the California Coastal Trail system.

Policy OS-8.2 Protect and Restore Open Space: During the development review process, protect and restore open space areas such as wildlife habitats, view corridors, and watercourses as open and natural.

Program OS-8.2.1: Require that projects on parcels five acres or larger requesting a rezoning to a higher density include dedications for open space or parkland.

Program OS-8.2.2: Maintain an inventory of vacant parcels that could potentially be purchased and developed as public open space (parks, community gardens, trails, etc.)

Policy OS-8.3 Trails in Open Space: Wherever feasible, plan and construct trails through the greenbelts and open space that connect to the City's trail system with those of State Parks and MCRPD.



*Pomo Bluffs Park*



## **G. PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Goal OS-9 Provide an attractive system of parks and recreation facilities throughout the City to meet the needs of all age groups and capabilities.**

Policy OS-9.1 Parkland Standard: Use the standard of three acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for the acquisition of additional parkland pursuant to the provisions of the Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477).

Program OS-9.1.1: Establish and update periodically a Park and Open Space Development Impact Fee.

Policy OS-9.2 Neighborhood Parks: Acquire and develop new neighborhood parks, in concert with other local recreation agencies, to meet the needs of the existing population and consistent with growth of the City's population.

Program OS-9.2.1: Acquire and develop additional neighborhood parks as shown on Map OS-1.

Policy OS-9.3 Recreational Facilities: Provide recreational facilities to meet the needs of all Fort Bragg citizens, especially children and teenagers.

Program OS-9.3.1: Consider teen recreation needs when planning new or redesigned parks.

Program OS-9.3.2: Work with other agencies to develop an inventory of recreational facilities and programs available to young people. Seek to implement joint programs and identify additional facilities that are necessary to meet the recreational needs of youth.

Policy OS-9.4 Playground Facilities: Add or upgrade playground facilities at existing neighborhood parks.

Program OS-9.4.1: Provide additional playground facilities and basketball courts at appropriate locations within neighborhoods.

Policy OS-9.5 Ballfields: Develop additional baseball, softball, and other ballfields.

Program OS-9.5.1: Include in the proposed new east Fort Bragg neighborhood park shown on Map OS-1 baseball, softball, and possibly other ballfields, and consider building additional fields wherever feasible.

Program OS-9.5.2: Work with the School District and other agencies to develop additional sports field facilities.

Policy OS-9.6 Prioritize Park Acquisitions: Use the following criteria to prioritize acquisition of parkland and open space:

- a) distribution of neighborhood parks/playground facilities and ballfields on a neighborhood basis;
- b) scenic beauty;
- c) relationship to the existing and proposed trail systems and parks;

- d) natural resource protection; and
- e) appropriateness (physical characteristics) of the site to meet specific recreational needs.

Program OS-9.6.1: Consider the acquisition of strategically located vacant lots for the development of neighborhood parks using the criteria listed in Policy OS-9.6.

Program OS-9.6.2: Adopt a management plan that analyzes geoseismic and other related potential hazards before City acceptance of dedications of land for park or open space. Identified hazards shall be fully repaired and/or financial protection provided to the City for liability before acceptance of land. The management plan shall also specify funding for ongoing maintenance.

Policy OS-9.7 Financing Parks: Consider methods of increasing revenues for the acquisition and development of parkland and open space areas and supporting recreational facilities.

Program OS-9.7.1: Consider the following potential funding sources for the acquisition of park and trails and development of recreation facilities:

- a) Establish a Park Improvement Fee pursuant to Government Code Section 66000;
- b) Place an advisory measure on the ballot for a tax proposal or assessment; and/or
- c) Pursue available grants.

*Unlike the Quimby Act that is limited to subdivisions, the Park Improvement Fee could be applied to a larger variety of residential development applications.*

Program OS-9.7.2: Include in the Capital Improvement Program the schedule and costs of expanding and improving the City's parks and recreation facilities as deemed appropriate by the City Council.

**Goal OS-10 Develop park and recreation facilities with the coordination of other agencies and the public.**

Policy OS-10.1 Coordinate with Other Agencies: Coordinate with other governmental entities to procure and develop additional park and recreational facilities.

Program OS-10.1.1: Consider establishing joint powers agreements with the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Parks District (MCRPD), Fort Bragg Unified School District (FBUSD), and Mendocino County to coordinate planning and development of recreation facilities.

Policy OS-10.2 MacKerricher State Park: Continue to coordinate with State Department of Parks and Recreation regarding development adjacent to MacKerricher State Park.

Program OS-10.2.1: Require that new development east of the Old Haul Road minimizes access to the Old Haul Road, establishes a minimum 30-foot setback from the Old Haul Road, and, if approved by State Parks, closes any unofficial trails leading from the project's frontage across MacKerricher State Park.

Program OS-10.2.2: In reviewing development applications adjacent to MacKerricher State Park, the City shall confer with the State Department of Parks and Recreation to

determine if additional mitigation measures regarding access to the park, or protection of park resources, are warranted. If feasible, these additional measures will be required.

Policy OS-10.3 City/School/Recreation District Cooperation: Continue to encourage City/School/Recreation District cooperation in developing and maintaining park and recreation facilities.

Program OS-10.3.1: Develop joint use agreements with the School District.

Program OS-10.3.2: Continue to cooperate with the FBUSD, MCRPD, and Timberwolf Stadium to develop playfield improvements and maintenance programs.

Policy OS-10.4 Public Participation: Actively solicit public participation in the selection, design, and facilities planning for existing and future park sites.

Program OS-10.4.1: Utilize local volunteer efforts and fund-raising to cover the "match" costs needed to secure rehabilitation or purchase grants for public parks.

### **Goal OS-11 Provide a comprehensive trail system in Fort Bragg.**

Policy OS-11.1 Multiple Use Trail System: Develop a multiple use trail system.

Program OS-11.1.1: Identify potential additions to the trail system which increase access to rivers with cross linkages through to the eastern parts of Fort Bragg. Work with the MCRPD to seek funding and to acquire rights-of-way.

Program OS-11.1.2: Establish an integrated trail system serving inland hiking and trail needs utilizing existing rights-of-way, City streets, and river front property.

Program OS-11.1.3: Review development applications and require a trail easement dedication, where an appropriate nexus is established.

Program OS-11.1.4: Require new development to provide direct pedestrian connections, such as sidewalks, trails, and other rights-of-way to the existing and planned network of parks and trails wherever feasible.

Program OS-11.1.5: Review development applications to ensure that new development does not block proposed trail easements shown on Map OS-1.

Program OS-11.1.6: Consider the access needs of a variety of users, including school-age children, the elderly, and those with handicaps or disabilities when developing trails and recreation facilities.

Program OS-11.1.7: Pursue development of a trail through east Fort Bragg.

Program OS-11.1.8: Consider completing a feasibility study for the development of a pedestrian bridge over Pudding Creek.



Otis R. Johnson Wilderness Park