

3 Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the extent and location of open space, cultural resources, and recreational spaces within the Dana Reserve (DRSP) area. It also includes goals and policies for ensuring the long-term success and management of these resources and assets. The open space, trail network, and recreational amenities are envisioned as a cornerstone for the DRSP. These open space areas will provide moments to embrace tranquility and peacefulness, while recreation spaces will encourage exercise, exploration, play, and community engagement – part of the larger healthy community vision for the DRSP. Refer to Table 3.1 below for a summary of land use acreages of these areas within the DRSP and Exhibit 3-1 for their locations.

Table 3.1: Recreation and Open Space Land Use Summary

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Acreage (ac)</i>	<i>% of Site (%)</i>
Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open Space ○ Trails ○ Basins 	55.6 60.86	19.3 21.1
Recreation	6.34 ¹	2.2
Pocket Parks	7.6 6.7 - 10	2. 3 6 - 3.5
<i>Totals</i>	69.5 73.9 – 77.2 1.9	25.6 4.1 – 26.8 25
¹ A maximum 0.5 acre site will be reserved for a child day care center and is located at the Neighborhood Park, which is in the Recreation land use category.		

Exhibit 3-1: Open Space and Recreation Map



3.2 Conservation and Open Space

The proposed DRSP Open Space includes a total of [55,660.86](#) acres ([19,321.1](#)%) of the total site. This land use category includes areas that remain undeveloped long-term, as well as areas that provide opportunities for passive uses. Examples of areas intended to remain undisturbed long-term include the central oak forest area, while passive open space areas will include pedestrian and equestrian trails as well as seating areas. County trail standards for pedestrian and equestrian trails are specified in Chapter 4: Circulation.

A Biological Report was conducted for the DRSP in 2020, with updates completed in 2021 through 2023 related to oak trees and Burton Mesa Chaparral. The report identified eight special status plant species located within the DRSP area. The data collected from these biological studies served as a general guide to the siting of land uses within the DRSP area in order to avoid or minimize impacts to these species.



Open space area concepts.

3.2.1 Biological

Coast Live Oaks

The DRSP contains coast live oak trees dispersed in different locations across the site. With the exception of three non-native trees, no other tree species are located on the property. While many of the coast live oaks are scattered in various configurations, most intact oak woodland (oak forest) is located centrally on the property with a denser tree coverage, canopy structure, and understory shrub cover than other areas of the site. Most of the oaks in savannah, chaparral, and managed oak woodland on the Dana Reserve resprouted from oaks harvested in the late 1800s to increase grazing area. The Dana family had 18,000 head of sheep in the area in the 1890s. The understory of multi-stemmed trees has been managed since the 1930s which are the earliest available photographs. The managed woodland has been grazed by horses and cattle in recent decades. Low tree branches and dead wood are removed to increase grass cover and reduce fire fuel.

The majority of the centrally located oak forest, not historically managed, is to be maintained as part of the DRSP. To maintain the integrity of this centrally located oak forest, development and the circulation network have been located to minimize impacts. Where development is to occur adjacent to areas where coast live oaks are to be maintained, County oak tree protection construction best practices will be implemented.

An Oak Woodland Management Plan, Tree Protection Plan, Off-Site Habitat Acquisition and Preservation Plan, and On- and Off-Site Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared. A combination of on-site mitigation plus off-site conservation will be used to offset the loss of coast live oaks. Planting locations will be selected adjacent to existing coast live oak areas to be maintained, within open spaces, recreation and park areas, or street trees within select areas. To the extent practical, on-site mitigation of coast live oak trees will be propagated from on-site acorns. Plantings shall not fulfill more than one-half of the mitigation requirements. Off-site mitigation for loss of oak woodland habitat will be provided by oak woodland habitat acquisition and conservation at a 2:1 ratio (two acres conserved for every acre of oak woodland habitat impacted). Refer to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for more details on oak tree mitigation measures.

Special Status Plant Species

As part of the 2020 Biological Report and subsequent 2021 through 2023 updates related to oaks and Burton Mesa Chaparral conducted for the DRSP effort, eight special status plant species were identified within the DRSP area. These include sand mesa manzanita (*Arctostaphylos rudis*), sand buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus* var. *fascicularis*), Michael's rein orchid (*Piperia michaelii*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata*), California spineflower (*Mucronea californica*), Nipomo mesa ceanothus (*Ceanothus impressus* var. *nipomoensis*), and sand almond (*Prunus fasciculata* var. *punctata*).

The DRSP will avoid impacts to special status plant species to the extent practical. For those special status species that cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation ratios will be required, as detailed in the EIR.

Listed Plant Species

During surveys and field observations on the property for the 2020 Biological Report, small patches of a state listed plant species, Pismo clarkia (*Clarkia speciosa* ssp. *immaculata*) were identified in portions of the centrally located oak forest area. Development, including roadways, have been situated on-site to avoid impacts to these areas, however a small impact to state-listed species may occur. A state Incidental Take Permit (ITP) will be obtained and mitigation implemented for impacts to this rare plant.

Biological Mitigation Area(s)

The DRSP proposes to preserve an off-site oak mitigation site within the Nipomo area. Located along the Temettate Ridge, the Dana Ridge site, will be placed into a conservation easement with a local non-profit to provide for the long-term management and maintenance of the site. Refer to Exhibit 3-2 for the location of the Dana Ridge Ranch site.

Appropriate on-site habitat will be preserved and/or restored to mitigate for impacts to rare species, as detailed in the EIR.

Exhibit 3-2: Biological Mitigation Site



3.2.2 Cultural

Cultural resources include historical, archaeological, and/or paleontological resources. An archaeological cultural resource site has been identified within the DRSP area. Site design and layout of the property has been designed to avoid impacting this location by integrating it within open space and avoiding excavation of the resource site.

Known archaeological resources shall be protected to the greatest extent practical. If additional archaeological resources are discovered during grading and construction activities the mitigation measures listed in the DRSP EIR and the County's Inland Land Use Ordinance shall be applied, which may include, but is not limited to fencing or other protective measures around identified cultural resources.

3.2.3 Conservation and Open Space Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following DRSP goals and objectives brought forward from Chapter 1 of this document and associated policies are provided to guide the recreation and open space uses envisioned within the DRSP area.

Goal 9

Maintain the large, centrally located oak forest area as a site feature and minimize impacts to special-status plants and animals on-site.

Open Space Policy 9.a

Prepare an Oak Woodland Management Plan, On-Site Tree Protection Plan for Trees Retained, Off-Site Habitat Acquisition and Preservation Plan, and On- and Off-Site Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to mitigate loss of coast live oaks on-site, as detailed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Open Space Policy 9.b

For unmitigable impacts to special status plant species, the mitigation ratios identified in the Environmental Impact Report shall be followed. Where feasible, plant salvage and seed collection shall be conducted prior to habitat disturbance.

Open Space Policy 9.c

The open space areas shall be a separate lot or lots under the ownership of the Homeowners Association.

Open Space Policy 9.d

Ongoing maintenance of the oak forest shall be conducted consistent with the approved Oak Woodland Management Plan.

Open Space Policy 9.e

Interpretive signage may be installed at designated locations along the trail network and other open space areas to promote public awareness and education about oak woodlands and other special plant species within the DRSP area.



Example of interpretive signage identifying local habitats.

3.3 Recreation

A variety of recreational amenities are proposed within the DRSP area, including a neighborhood park, pocket parks, pedestrian trails, and equestrian trails. The County of San Luis Obispo requires the provision of a minimum of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for the County's unincorporated communities. See Table 3.2 below for detailed County Parkland requirement calculations.

Table 3.2: Required Parkland

	Single-Family (RSF)	Multi-Family (RMF)
Total Homes	831819	539423
County Multiplier	0.00741	0.00564
Acres Required	6.1607	3.042.39
Total Parkland Required (acres)	9.28.4	
Note: Non-residential uses and ADUs are not required to provide public parkland per Chapter 21.09 of the County LUO.		

To address County parkland requirements, the DRSP includes a 5.3-acre, centrally located neighborhood park adjacent to the oak forest area and a 1-acre equestrian trailhead. An additional 7.66.7 - 10 acres of publicly accessible pocket parks are to be provided within the residential neighborhoods, for a total of 13.0.9 - 16.3 acres of parkland within the DRSP.

3.3.1 Recreation Amenities

Neighborhood Park

The County's Parks and Recreation Element states that parks and trails contribute to a high quality of life and make our communities more livable. The proposed 5.3-acre neighborhood park will be an amenity not only to the residents of the DRSP area, but also visitors and the community. This neighborhood park is envisioned to be more passive in character in order to maintain a greater

number of on-site oak trees and to better connect with the adjacent open space. Exhibits 3-3 and 3-4 demonstrate the conceptual character of the neighborhood park in the DRSP area.

Exhibit 3-3: Neighborhood Park Site Plan Concept



Exhibit 3-4: Neighborhood Park Birds-Eye



The following amenities are examples of what should be considered when developing the neighborhood park. This is not an exhaustive list and other complementary and/or similar amenities may also be included.

- Bicycle racks
- Drinking fountains
- Entry signage and landscaping
- Picnic areas
- Irrigation/Landscaping
- Parking
- Restroom
- Trail connections
- Trash and recycle bins
- Wayfinding signage

Pocket Park Areas

As a complement to recreation in the public park and trail system, pocket parks support and promote passive play, exercise, social gatherings, and family get-togethers for people of all ages and abilities. Pocket parks are accessible to residents and the public via the trails system.

These pocket park areas are specific to each neighborhood within the DRSP area and are integrated into the larger open space network. Positioning pocket parks along a system of connection trails enables users to enter the trail system and safely walk to each park within the DRSP.

Pocket parks will incorporate a variety of native plants that are appropriate to local climate and soil conditions. Native plants minimize irrigation and maintenance needs while providing areas for native pollinators, insects, and birds.

The DRSP pocket parks will be designed with multigenerational activities and needs as well as emphasize the physical and social inclusion of all ages and abilities. Playground equipment and other hardscape features may be designed to complement the character and landscape of the DRSP property. Exhibit 3-5 illustrates the pocket park character and scale.

Exhibit 3-5: Pocket Park Concept



Refer to Neighborhood Park amenities examples for features that may be included in Pocket Parks.

Equestrian Trailhead and Trails

The DRSP area will provide equestrian trailhead access at the property's perimeter, as well as through open space areas to create a trail network on the property. Approximately 3.3 miles of equestrian trails will be accessible to residents and the community. The equestrian trailhead will be integrated at the southeastern corner of the property, providing a staging area for a limited number of trailers to load/off-load horses for trail access. The equestrian trail network will be available to residents of the DRSP area as well as to visitors and the community, with connections at Willow Road, Pomeroy Road, Hetrick Avenue, and Cory Way. The equestrian trails will be owned by a Homeowners Association, with a local non-profit(s) assisting in the ongoing operations and maintenance of the trail system. For specific equestrian trail standards and trail head features, refer to Chapter 4. Exhibit 3-6 illustrates an equestrian trail concept.

Exhibit 3-6: Equestrian Trail Concept



Pedestrian Trail System

Trails are an integral component of the DRSP's open space and recreational infrastructure. Connecting residential areas with shopping, dining, recreation, and jobs is accomplished through a series of connecting pedestrian trails.

Consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the DRSP, the pedestrian trails are an alternative mode of transportation encouraging residents to access nearby services without using their automobile. Approximately 3.8 miles of off-street pedestrian trails will be accessible to residents and the community. Pedestrian trails provided in the DRSP area will be maintained by a Homeowners Association to ensure ongoing maintenance of the trail system. For specific pedestrian trail standards, refer to Chapter 4. The proposed pedestrian trail system configuration may change based on the ultimate configuration of each individual residential neighborhood. However, a point(s) of access from the overall pedestrian trail system into/from each residential neighborhood shall be maintained, as shown by neighborhood on Exhibit 2-2a.



Example of pedestrian trail.

3.3.2 Recreation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals and objectives brought forward from Chapter 1 of this document and associated policies are provided to guide the recreation and open space uses envisioned within the DRSP.

Goal 3

Provide a neighborhood park and pocket parks and open space areas within each residential neighborhood, linking the neighborhoods together through a network of trails and open spaces.

Recreation Policy 3.a

Provide a pocket park or common open space area within each residential neighborhood.

Recreation Policy 3.b

Incorporate a variety of native plants into pocket parks to support native pollinators, insects, and birds.

Recreation Policy 3.c

Connect parks and recreation spaces within the DRSP through a network of pedestrian trails and sidewalks, thereby encouraging non-motorized transit.

Goal 8

Integrate a network of walking, bicycling, and equestrian facilities to connect on-site residential neighborhoods and the broader community.

Recreation Policy 8.a

Ensure walking and bicycling facilities are included to provide connections from residential neighborhoods to on-site open space, parks, and commercial areas.

Recreation Policy 8.b

Provide sidewalk, pedestrian trails, and bicycle access points to public park and open space amenities within the DRSP area for the community.

Recreation Policy 8.c

Create an equestrian trailhead and trail system.

Recreation Policy 8.d

Integrate informational and directional signage within open space, trails, and pocket park, reflecting a cohesive theming and branding of DRSP.

Recreation Policy 8.e

Pedestrian and equestrian trail systems will be owned and maintained by a local non-profit or Homeowners Association. Neighborhood Park and pocket parks will be owned and maintained by a Homeowners Association.

3.4 Recreation

3.4.1 Homeowners Association

There will be a Homeowners Association(s) within the DRSP area. Refer to Chapter 8 for more information regarding Homeowners Association(s) within the DRSP.

3.4.2 Fire Protection/Vegetation Management

County Fire and CDF designate the existing DRSP area within the Moderate Fire Severity Zone as of 2022. As the DRSP is built-out over time, the level of fire severity is expected to be reduced and transition to one focused on structural defense. However, best practices in fire protection and vegetation management will be implemented within the overall DRSP site plan to ensure the safety of future residents per the 2021 Dana Reserve Fire Protection Plan and EIR. Fire protection and vegetation management within the DRSP will be consistent with CalFire/San Luis Obispo County requirements. Ongoing management will provide preemptive and preventative measures in preparing and planning for fire protection. Neighborhoods adjacent to the central oak forest area and anticipated to be subject to the fire protection and vegetation management requirements of CalFire/San Luis Obispo County include Neighborhoods 3, 7, 8, and 9.

Proposed irrigated landscaping on public and private properties adjacent to the central oak woodland area will help buffer residences. The establishment and maintenance of additional emergency vehicle access points, street names, directional signage, building identification, and fuel modification measures also establish and add to fire protection within the DRSP area. These measures and programs incorporated at the time of site design and implemented at time of construction and prior to occupation will positively influence the responsiveness and preparedness during emergencies. Updates to strategies, best practices, and/or County requirements will be conveyed to residents through the Homeowners Association.

Site-specific requirements for identified neighborhoods include but are not limited to the following:

- A minimum defensible space shall be maintained around all buildings on the site per Cal Fire/San Luis Obispo County Requirements.
- Defensible space areas containing brush shall be thinned and/or masticated in accordance with recognized methods to minimize ground level fuel loads and lessen the potential impact of fire.

- In accordance with current Cal Fire/San Luis Obispo County Requirements, within 30-feet of permanent structures, trim trees, including oaks, to a minimum clear height of 6 to 8 feet above the ground to avoid continuous ladder fuels.
- Grasses that are dead, dormant, or directed to be trimmed by County Fire Official, shall be maintained at a maximum of 4 inches to minimize light flash fuels with the intent of mitigating continuous fire spread.
- Landscaping shall be fire resistant and meet County standards for fire resistant planting.



Defensible space areas around structure requirements (Source: CDF).

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