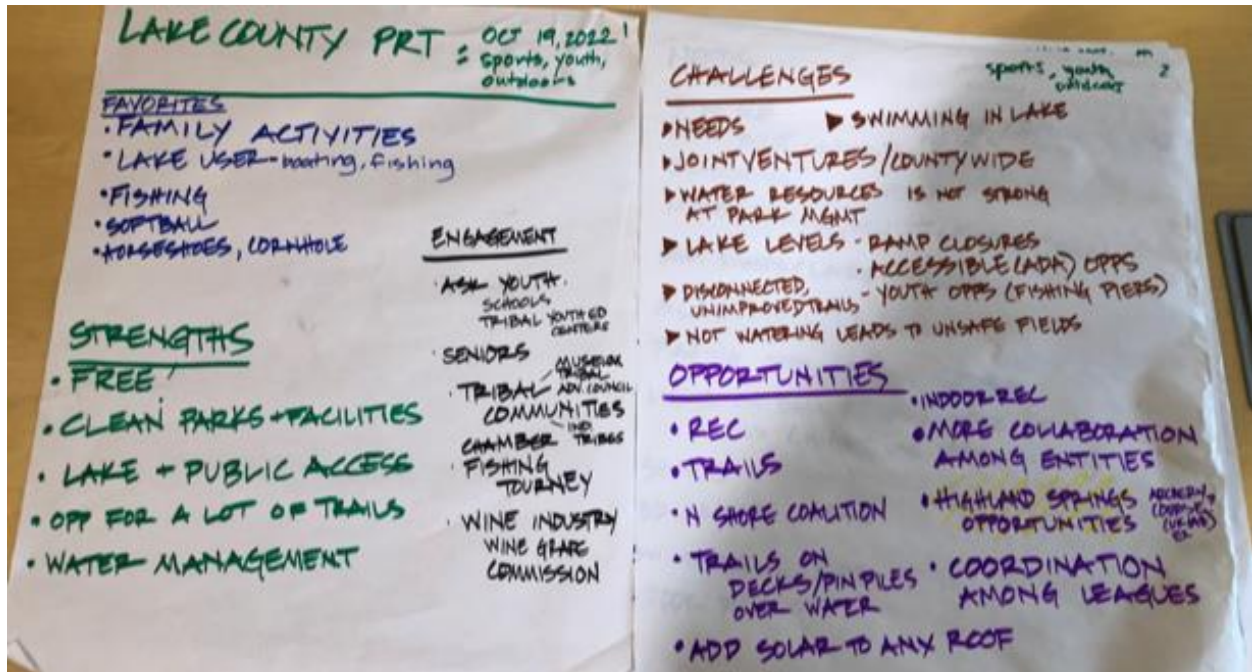




Small Group Interviews Summary

This first window of engagement for the Lake County Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan from 10/17-10/21 focused on understanding the needs and opportunities of the Lake County community through small group sessions. The project team met with four small groups that represented Arts, Culture, and Community; Youth, Sports, and Outdoors; Business, Tourism, and Economic Development; and Land Management and Trails.



Notes from Sports, Youth, and Outdoors small group interview

Primary Themes

Below are the most salient themes that surfaced through this first engagement phase. These themes are aggregated concepts based on the more detailed notes, which are included beginning on page 2.

Strengths

- The **beauty** and **biodiversity** of the lake is a major strength of the County
- There is a large **amount of parks** in the County and a variety of different types of **recreational opportunities** (mountain biking, boating and fishing, sailing, etc.)
- People in Lake County are **invested** in the County and are eager to volunteer time and energy to improving the area
- Lake County parks and amenities are **free**

Challenges



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- **Low water level** in lake is a huge challenge, preventing swimming on the beach and making boating access limited to those who have their own private lakeshore access
- There are **not enough hotels or motels** for people to stay at for racing/ sports events

Needs

- Lake County needs to **expand and improve marketing materials**, and needs to create “activity packages” for tourists that would include activities, restaurants, and lodging
- The County needs to **expand and diversify recreational opportunities**, with more biking, swimming, and disc golf
- Areas around the lake need to be more **accessible** to public, including direct boating access on the lake as well as **ADA compliance** throughout parks
- Need for better **active and public transportation** connections across amenities on lake and between amenities and pedestrian areas

Opportunities

- There are a variety of opportunities to **expand and offer different types of recreation activities** in the County, including more mountain biking courses, disc golf, archery, and a rodeo
- The County should **expand equitable access** to Clear Lake and swimming and fishing opportunities on the lake
- The County should promote **better and safer biking and walking**, including safe routes to recreation areas
- There are lots of opportunities to expand **tourism** and **eco-tourism**, including creating opportunities that take advantage of the County’s rural and scenic nature, hosting larger recreational events, and promoting historical tourism
- There are opportunities to host **more events in parks**, including partnering with local vendors
- The County can **expand the trails system** through **volunteers and partnerships**
- The County can promote and expand tribal involvement and leadership in County parks system
- The County could consider creating **governance structures**, (such as a County Sports Council and Trails Commission) that would unify recreation opportunities across the County, making it easier to form recreation leagues and to prioritize trails maintenance and expansion

Full Notes

Below are the full set of notes from all of the small group meetings and steering committee meetings, which have all been compiled and organized by theme.

Strengths

- The Lake is a strength! (Clear Lake is a huge asset for many reasons- recreation, tourism, beauty, etc., expanded upon below)
 - Clear Lake is California’s largest natural lake
- The County is beautiful, has many natural areas that are assets, both around and farther from lake



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- Cobb Mountain
- Cow Mountain
- Beautiful vista points
- Lots of biodiversity
 - Birding is popular
 - People come to the County for botanic surveys
- Lots of diversity in landscape and different types and levels of recreational activities
- Lots of opportunities for recreation
 - Mountain biking
 - Boating and fishing
 - Sailing
- There are a lot of parks in the County
- Amenities in the County parks are free
 - This includes free boat launches, beaches, and parks
- The County's rural nature is an asset, as it allows people in the Bay, Sacramento, etc. to relax away from City life
 - Has had cleanest air in the state for the past decade
- People in Lake County are invested in the County
 - There are a lot of engaged volunteer groups and groups that can be rallied for volunteer projects (FFA, 4H, agricultural classes in schools, Horse Council, bike groups, etc.)
 - Many people, including tribal communities, have knowledge about land stewardship
- Public Services maintenance staff do their job well, are responsive, and interested in the work
- Art in the County
 - There are lots of places to put on art installations

Challenges

- The County needs to overcome "bad branding" due to recent fires
- Vandalism is an issue in some parks
 - There has been an issue with people doing donuts in the parking lots
- Parks are often used by unhoused and mentally ill people, which can create a tricky environment for children to use
- Low water level in lake is a large challenge, along with associated algae bloom
 - There is not a place to swim along shoreline
 - Majority of boat ramps are closed
 - Only people with boat access get to go on the lake, bypass algae and birds on shoreline and swim in deeper center
- Sustainable funding source for parks is always a question
- There are not safe places for bikers to ride on roads
- There are not enough hotels or motels for people to stay at for racing/ sports events
- Water Resources Board struggles with cleanliness and overall management of Highland Springs Area
 - The area does not receive many resources



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- Mt. Konocti is sacred to tribal communities and there have been issues with having dogs on the mountain
- While electric-assist mountain bikes are allowed on biking trails, larger battery powered, fully electric bikes are being used and damage the trails

Needs

- Lake County needs more and better marketing materials
 - Offline brochures to include at County buildings and facilities
 - More trail maps
 - County needs to create an understanding of what a beach on Clear Lake would be- the County is not Fort Bragg or Tahoe, so what is a “Clear Lake Beach?”
- Need for more “activity packages” for tourists, which would include activities, restaurants, and places to stay the night in County
- Need more/ other forms of recreation opportunities
 - Mountain bike course
 - More disc golf
 - More areas for public swimming
 - Recreation center in Clear Lake
 - Star Center in Fort Bragg is a popular recreation center example
- County facilities (trails, parks, restrooms) need investment in ADA compliance
- Areas around the lake need to be more accessible in general
 - Public beaches along lakeshore are plentiful, but need to be maintained
- Need for more transportation connections between amenities on lake and pedestrian areas
 - More sidewalks
 - Better transportation system
 - Vans/ shuttles for events
 - Easier access to parks closer to home
 - Will allow for greater accessibility to parks
 - Active transportation
- Need to attract youth to outdoor recreation and away from vandalism/ other related activities
- Park rangers needed for enforcement/ prevention of vandalism
- Property rights to parcels are necessary to complete trails in Konocti Master Plan
 - Additional trail heads necessary
- County crews or CalFire should clear vegetation from areas near some trails
- Having a robust parks system attracts talent (businesses, doctors, etc.) to lake county

Opportunities

- There are a variety of opportunities to expand recreation activities in the County
 - There can be added informative signage at the Lake Walk at Highland spring, as it is a very popular trail
 - Pilot for trails along ephemeral streams



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- More opportunities for mountain biking, which is growing in popularity
 - Create a home biking course/ arena for high schoolers and the mountain bike team
 - Create mountain bike trails in highland springs (there are potential grants for that)
- More disc golf, which is growing in popularity
- Archery
- Need more tennis courts, pickleball courts, swimming pools
- Could create a rodeo site, as lots of high schoolers are interested in this
- Opportunities for creating elevated boardwalks over salt marshes
- Expand access to Clear Lake and parks
 - Promote equitable accessibility to shoreline
 - There needs to be more wheelchair accessible structures for lake
 - County needs to consider how close and accessible each park is from people's homes
 - Lots of lakeshore is private, there are more opportunities for public shoreline
 - There should be bike routes to ride between their lodging and shoreline access/ recreation
 - There should be bus stops added to more parks
 - Better loop for transit
 - Opportunity for more public fishing on piers
 - There needs to be public fishing spots that are safe for kids
 - Kids and other people fish off of boat docks, many of which don't have railings and are not safe
 - There needs to be a place for kids away from boats
- Promote better and safer biking and walking, including safe routes to recreation areas
 - More sidewalks
- Utilize better marketing strategies
 - Opportunity to market in Sacramento
 - No marketing entity in county has the lake as central purpose (used to exist but no longer)
- Emphasize and expand tourism and eco-tourism opportunities
 - Could do better job as county and community to highlight other attractions besides wineries
 - Opportunity for food to fork experiences
 - Opportunity to target/ leverage social media and photo opportunities
 - Opportunities for attractions (Mt. Konocti) to be known to larger communities
 - Opportunity for collaboration with federal public lands management
 - Developing a master plan for Mt. Konocti would also provide opportunity to consider how monument resources connect with communities
 - Pinnacle Rock is a great destination but no one has heard of this
 - Increase eco-tourism
 - Opportunities for sightseeing



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- Glamping
- Dark skies allow for star gazing
- Potentially opportunities to build tree houses for people to stay in, have zip-lining, among other activities
- The more people can get onto lake (through tours, access to boats), the better tourism will be
- Cobb Mountain is rebounding and there is an opportunity for development
- There is snow on some peaks, and there is an opportunity for some winter recreation
- Should consider how to share hidden gems in County without having them overrun by tourists
- Put on larger events that can draw folks from the surrounding region in
 - Many parks have no area for parking, and there is a need to consider event staging and parking for events
 - Large events could charge fees
 - County is interested in charging for “day to day opportunities” for casual attendants to parks
- Opportunities for historical tourism
 - A historic preservation ordinance in for older areas of County would allow for more grant opportunities
 - Lake County Theater did walking tours that were very popular
 - Opportunity to increase attendance in museums (especially schoolhouse museum)
 - There are 7 federally recognized tribes in County that have partnered with advisory council in the past
- Glamping is a developing industry
 - Other campgrounds are already offering sites, which are not being filled currently
 - Clear Lake State Park offers camping
 - Camping is not necessarily a priority for county parks
- There are opportunities to host more events in parks
 - Includes hosting vendors, food, second hand/ vintage fair in Parks
 - Can co-locate opportunities for recreation center with private businesses (food vendors, etc.) and locate parks near private businesses
 - Special event coordinator would help to pay and maintain the park
 - 6 Sigma Ranch hosts regional bike races and is in the process of developing 137 camping spots
 - Main resort on the lake has closed, so there is a need to have concerts elsewhere
- Opportunities to expand trails system through volunteers and partnerships
 - Opportunity for creating more trails
 - Currently trails are disparate, disjointed, or unimproved, or access is not adequate
 - Trails host good views
 - Land exists for County to control



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- Opportunity to tie into fuel reduction programs planned for next 5-10 years
- There needs to be equestrian trails that are separate from mountain biking trails
- Should consider existing easements (e.g. for utilities, on levies) to see if it can be extended to include trails
- Connect trails from Highland Springs to Highway 29 to Kelseyville
- Use volunteers to help create trails
 - Opportunity to heal as a group and rebuild through trails maintenance
 - High school kids need community service to graduate
 - Middletown high school mountain bike team would be interested in helping to clear trails
- Opportunity to partnership with federal agencies (BLM) and State agencies
 - Opportunity for trail connection to make them part of State trails
 - 720 acres near Mt. Konocti was old fire road that was gifted to County from BLM; BLM's objective is to build trails for mountain biking community
- Explore county-wide governance structures to help unify recreation opportunities
 - There could be a "Sports Council," "Youth Council," or similar structure that would allow for multiple sports clubs to collaborate
 - This would require safety, education, and marketing
 - Little League is structured, but other leagues aren't
 - There could be a Trails Council/ Trails Commission that would identify and prioritize improvements to park
 - Could have a community group made up of different folks that have interest in trails (mountain bike, equestrian, accessibility, others)
 - Trails Council/ Commission could then report directly to board
 - Foster collaboration among County activities and recreation opportunities
 - Different cities have different desires for sports leagues, providing an opportunity to promote collaboration among entities
 - Need to consider organizational oversight of such a council/ commission
 - What are staffing needs, if County manages?
- Promote more informational signage and educational opportunities
 - More brochures, interpretive, and educational signage at trailheads about different biodiversity that is found in each location
 - Could help bring schools out to parks, other groups
 - Link natural flora and fauna to parks website
 - Increase art installations in County
 - Much of eco-art walk burned up and there is now a gap to fill
 - There could be requirement for artist to be on parks plan
 - Opportunity to grow art cottages
 - Explore grants for art in parks
- Promote and expand tribal involvement and leadership
 - Robinson Rancheria band of Pomo Indians will gain 8-12 acres of new property to develop



Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

- There is a plan to reestablish Robinson Lake into Clear Lake, which was going to give tribes access to the Lake, but this may not be the case with drought conditions
- Access to Mt. Konocti is important, as the place is sacred to many tribal groups, and there many stories and geological legends surrounding it
- Opportunity to tailor land and trails to tribal organizations (e.g. through naming, stewardship)
- Foster outside agency relationships including with tribal nations, who are getting more involved in making sure land around their area is maintained and protected
 - TERA (Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance) use some natural resources for cultural activities and may be interested in partnerships
- Opportunities to improve existing County Recreation facilities
 - Opportunity to clean out trash from water when lake is low