

Contra Loma Resource Management Plan Preliminary Draft Alternatives

1. Introduction

1.1 Resource Management Plan Overview

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is developing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Contra Loma Reservoir and Recreation Area (Contra Loma) in Antioch, Contra Costa County, California. The Contra Loma RMP will be a long-term plan to guide management of the reservoir, recreation area, and surrounding lands owned by Reclamation. The RMP is being developed based on a comprehensive inventory of environmental resources and facilities; input from the current managing partners (i.e., the East Bay Regional Park District [EBRPD], City of Antioch [the City], and Contra Costa Water District [CCWD]); and input from the public. The primary emphasis of the RMP is to protect water supply, water quality, and natural resources, while enhancing recreational uses.

The overall objective of this RMP is to establish a set of management objectives, goals, and actions to be implemented by Reclamation, either directly or through its management agreement(s) that will:

1. Establish uniform policy and land management guidelines that promote an organized use, development, and management of the Contra Loma Reservoir and the surrounding recreational area lands compatible with applicable federal and state laws.
2. Protect the water supply and water quality functions of Contra Loma Reservoir.
3. Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources in and around the reservoir, consistent with federal law and Reclamation policies.
4. Provide recreational opportunities and facilities consistent with EBRPD's current management strategies, Reclamation policies, and state water policies.
5. Provide guidance for future decision making.

1.2 Purpose of the Preliminary Draft Alternatives

Reclamation has drafted planning criteria that help establish the sideboards and parameters for development of the RMP and help highlight major areas of concern, management objectives for the RMP, and goals that will provide overall guidance for the RMP management direction and actions. Reclamation has also drafted three conceptual RMP alternatives. Reclamation sought technical comments from EBRPD, the City, and CCWD (i.e., the current managing partners) on the draft planning criteria, draft

management objectives, draft goals, and the draft alternatives before presenting them to the public at a workshop to be held on March 3, 2011. The alternatives are conceptual at this stage, and are not intended to include substantial detail. After receiving comments from the current managing partners and the public, Reclamation will develop the draft alternatives in more detail, and circulate the draft RMP for public comment together with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will evaluate the environmental effects of each alternative.

2. Draft Planning Criteria, Objectives, and Goals

2.1 Draft Planning Criteria

As described in Reclamation's RMP Guidebook, planning criteria are short and concise statements that help establish the sideboards and parameters for development of the RMP and help highlight major areas of concern. Planning criteria are intended to assist Reclamation in formulating and selecting combinations of land uses and management actions that will be considered in the RMP. Reclamation has drafted the following planning criteria for the Contra Loma RMP.

- Protect the water supply and water quality functions of the reservoir
- Protect and enhance natural resources
- Protect cultural resources
- Recognize community concerns and values about Contra Loma
- Encourage an appropriate range of recreational uses
- Ensure consistency with federal policies, laws, and regulations
- Protect public health and safety
- Limit alternatives to those with reasonable certainty that:
 - the management actions can be implemented within the 20-year planning period;
 - Reclamation or managing partner(s) can fund the management actions; and
 - Reclamation or managing partner(s) are committed to seeking financial, program, and staffing resources necessary to implement the management actions.

2.2 Draft Management Objectives

The overall objective of this RMP is to establish a set of management objectives, goals, and actions to be implemented by Reclamation, either directly or through its management agreement(s) that will:

- Establish uniform policy and land management guidelines that promote an organized use, development, and management of the Contra Loma Reservoir and the surrounding recreational area lands compatible with applicable federal and state laws.
- Protect the water supply and water quality functions of Contra Loma Reservoir.

- Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources in and around the reservoir, consistent with federal law and Reclamation policies.
- Provide recreational opportunities and facilities consistent with EBRPD's current management strategies, Reclamation policies, and state water policies.
- Provide guidance for future decision making.

Reclamation has drafted the following management objectives to fulfill the purpose and meet the overall objective of the RMP:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive land use strategy considering uses of Contra Loma and adjacent lands.
- Identify long-term resource programs and implementation policies to manage and develop recreational, natural, and cultural resources.
- Identify opportunities and develop partnerships for managing recreational and natural resources.
- Develop strategies and approaches to protect and preserve the natural, recreational, and cultural resources.
- Provide adequate public safety and security measures for protection of visitors and resources.
- Determine the opportunities for new or enhanced recreation facilities that are needed based on demand.

2.3 Draft Goals

Reclamation has drafted the following primary goals of the Contra Loma RMP to provide overall guidance for the RMP management direction and actions. The degree to which the various RMP alternatives meet these goals will be described in RMP/EIS.

- Promote responsible stewardship of federal land and water resources for the public benefit.
- Protect and maintain water quality.
- Protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources at Contra Loma.
- Protect and maintain existing recreational uses and educational opportunities.
- Provide for enhanced or new recreational uses and facilities that are compatible with other RMP goals.
- Maintain the character and ambience of Contra Loma's setting.
- Promote continued compatibility with nearby land uses.

3. Formulation of Alternatives

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the conceptual draft RMP alternatives designed to address the planning issues, opportunities, and constraints at Contra Loma. Reclamation's intent is to develop a broad range of management actions to address alternatives that would represent the varied interests pertaining to Contra Loma. The No Action Alternative and two action alternatives are as follows:

- No Action (Alternative 1)—This alternative manages land and activities with the continuation of current management practice.
- Enhanced Recreation and Facilities (Alternative 2)—This alternative enhances recreation opportunities and existing facilities, but limits expansion of recreation and facilities to minimize changes to park character and adverse effects on natural resources.
- Expanded Recreation and Facilities (Alternative 3)—This alternative emphasizes expanded recreation opportunities and facilities.

Several management actions would be common to all alternatives. Unique management actions for each alternative are detailed in Sections 4.3 through 4.4.

3.2 Roles of Reclamation and Local Managing Partner(s)

Reclamation will negotiate a long-term agreement with one or more local managing partner(s) for Contra Loma. The local managing partner(s) will have overall responsibility for managing public access, recreation, infrastructure and public services, and natural resources in Contra Loma, excluding the dam. Responsibilities for dam and reservoir operations are subject to a separate contract between Reclamation and CCWD; therefore, these operations would not be affected by the RMP. The RMP will provide the overall resource and recreation management direction and framework for Contra Loma. It will be a guidance document for the local managing partner(s) for day-to-day operations and long-range planning.

Reclamation will have overall responsibility for ensuring that all actions in Contra Loma by Reclamation and its managing partner(s) are consistent with the RMP. The managing partner(s) must ensure that its actions in managing Contra Loma and associated land, recreation facilities, and infrastructure, are consistent with the RMP.

The agreement with managing partner(s) will require that the managing partner(s) use the RMP as the primary land use, natural resource, and recreation management guidance document to be followed during the management of Contra Loma. A term of the agreement will specify that any other agreements affecting management of Contra Loma that preceded the RMP will be not be changed or invalidated by the RMP, and that any agreements that occur after the agreement, or any new agreement, will include the RMP or an amended RMP (if modified by Reclamation).

3.3 Implementation Approach

The RMP will be implemented through recommendations for specific management actions and improvement projects.

3.3.1 Management Actions and Projects

The RMP includes recommendations for various resource management actions and facility improvement projects. These are specific actions that may be implemented at Contra Loma to meet the RMP goals. These management actions and projects are defined at a conceptual or programmatic level in the RMP. More detailed descriptions of the actions and project will be developed during the planning horizon of the RMP. The responsibility for funding, designing, and implementing (or constructing) the management actions and improvement projects will be specified in a long-term agreement with the local managing partner(s).

It should be noted that the RMP will not require the local managing partner(s) to implement all the recommended management actions and facility improvements. Implementation of some management actions, however, may be required. The local managing partner(s) will have the option of implementing the optional management actions and improvements based on considerations of the following factors: (1) sufficient public demand, (2) sufficient staffing and funding to manage any new or modified facilities in accordance with the RMP, and (3) potential for increased public benefits and use. New facilities or activities allowed under the RMP may also be discontinued in the future at the discretion of the local managing partner(s) if demand decreases, the activity is not economically viable, new security or safety considerations arise, and/or unforeseen significant environmental impacts occur that cannot be mitigated.

It should be noted that the local managing partner(s) will be required to conduct an appropriate site specific environmental review for most of the new or expanded recreational activities or facilities identified in the RMP such as new sports fields at the Antioch Community Park or new sewer lines to connect the regional park sanitary facilities to the City's wastewater treatment system. The project-specific environmental documentation would need to be prepared to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements because the projects would occur on federal land, and may need to satisfy California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements if the projects are partially funded or managed by the local managing partner(s).

3.3.2 Amendments to the RMP

Reclamation can amend the RMP at any time if the need arises. Conditions that may require an amendment could include, but are not limited to, (1) changed environmental conditions; (2) unforeseen events; (3) changes in policies and land use plans that have been determined to be infeasible, impractical, or have undesirable consequences; and (4) change in applicable laws and regulations. Reclamation would initiate the amendment process, which would include appropriate NEPA environmental review tiered from this document.

The RMP can be updated to reflect any changed environmental or institutional circumstances; and new laws, regulations, or policies; and changes in Contra Loma operations. Reclamation would conduct public meetings and an environmental review when updating the RMP.

4. Preliminary Draft Alternatives

4.1 Common Infrastructure, Operational Improvements, and Management Actions for All Alternatives

Each alternative has different components and management actions that would achieve the objectives of that alternative. However, several components and management actions are common to all alternatives. These are consistent with the current resource and recreation management direction and practices at Contra Loma and are listed in this section. The remaining management actions are listed as they apply to each alternative.

4.1.1 Administrative and Operational Activities

All RMP alternatives include the following administrative and operational activities.

Facilities Management at Contra Loma Regional Park

Litter and Waste

1. Continue to implement a litter and waste reduction program to effectively meet demand. Elements of this program will include staff outreach and public education, routine litter and nuisance pickup and removal, and availability of sufficient litter cans and dog feces bag stations. Elements of this program will be modified or expanded as necessary to meet demand.

Other Facility Management

2. Continue to perform routine maintenance and repairs of existing facilities.
3. Continue programs to manage zebra and quagga mussels, New Zealand mud snails, and carp. Elements of this program will be modified or expanded as necessary.
4. Continue to implement pesticide management plans, and an integrated pest management plan for weeds, pest rodents, and wasps.
5. Continue to implement plans for fire and emergency preparedness and to provide public safety through EBRPD's police and fire departments. Continue to operate the existing EBRPD police substation and Fire Station 8 at Contra Loma and continue to provide lifeguard services at the swim lagoon with emergency response capability at Contra Loma reservoir.
6. Clarify law enforcement and public safety roles for each managing partner agency.
7. Consider adding new donation boxes for walk-in users at key locations.

Facilities Management at Antioch Community Park

Litter, Waste, and Graffiti

8. Continue to implement a litter, waste, and graffiti reduction program to effectively meet demand. Elements of this program will include staff outreach and public education, routine litter pickup and removal, availability of sufficient litter cans and dog feces bag stations, and prompt graffiti removal. Elements of this program will be modified or expanded as necessary to meet demand.

Staffing

9. Continue routine police patrols or implement other measures needed to provide sufficient security.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities at Contra Loma Regional Park

Swim Lagoon

10. Continue to operate the swim lagoon with a capacity for 1,500 people, including the grass area adjacent to the lagoon and within the lagoon area fence.

Fishing

11. Continue to provide a recreational fishing program in the reservoir, and manage fish populations through fish planting (i.e., stocking) programs.
12. Continue to enforce poaching regulations.

Other Recreation

13. Continue to allow boating and windsurfing on the reservoir consistent with current park rules.
14. Continue to operate, manage, and maintain the existing trail system throughout park for hiking, equestrian, and bicycle use.
15. Continue to provide opportunities for wildlife viewing, photography, and painting.
16. Continue to provide recreation programs including low-income youth swim programs, junior lifeguard programs, Girl Scout and Boy Scout events, fishing derbies, outdoor educational experiences for children, cross-country running meets, fundraiser events, and similar programs.

Natural Resource Management and Protection

17. Continue to perform botanical surveys, to inventory and assess special-status plants within Contra Loma.

18. Continue to develop and implement habitat enhancement programs to protect special-status species likely to occur at the park. Such species may include burrowing owl, loggerhead shrike, California tiger salamander, San Joaquin kit fox, tri-colored blackbird, and white-tailed kite.
19. Continue to implement habitat restoration and improvement activities including quail habitat enhancement projects and installation of bat houses and avian nest boxes.
20. Improvements will be consistent with laws and regulations that govern the protection of natural and cultural resources within Contra Loma.
21. Improvements will be consistent with future EBRPD habitat restoration projects and the HCP/NCCP.

4.1.2 Management Actions for Alternative 1: No Action (Status Quo)

Objectives

Under this alternative, the current resource and recreation management direction and practices at Contra Loma would continue unchanged, consistent with EBRPD's current Reservoir Area Management plan (RAMP; dated 1975), the current management agreement between Reclamation and EBRPD, the license agreement between EBRPD and the City, and EBRPD land use plans pertaining to Contra Loma. The local managing partner(s) would implement and manage the administrative and operational activities listed in Section 4.1.1, however, no additional management actions would be implemented. The managing partner(s) would be allowed to implement any of these activities that do not require permits or environmental review under NEPA or CEQA without the need for additional review or authorization by Reclamation or CCWD. This alternative addresses certain public comments that no further substantive improvements will be made at Contra Loma.

4.1.3 Management Actions for Alternative 2: Enhanced Recreation and Facilities

Objectives

The objective of this alternative is to enhance current recreational uses and facilities at Contra Loma to fulfill the evolving needs of the public who recreate at Contra Loma and to implement several basic infrastructure improvements while minimizing changes to Contra Loma's aesthetic character and adverse effects on natural resources. Alternative 2 involves no major expansion of recreational facilities, and would therefore retain more undeveloped land within the regional park than Alternative 3 (Expanded Recreation and Facilities).

Management Actions and Improvements at Contra Loma Regional Park

Restrooms

22. Provide more and better restroom facilities to accommodate existing and future user needs.
23. Replace the existing chemical toilets with modern vault restrooms.

24. Provide a restroom facility near the northwest shore fishing dock.
25. Consider installing sewer lines that connect the regional park to the City's wastewater system.

Buildings and Structures

26. Expand or renovate the existing park offices, the EBRPD police substation, the secondary storage yard, and the buildings near the swim lagoon to better provide for public service and safety.
27. Add structures and facilities for classes, including swim and safety lessons, near the swim lagoon.
28. Build a new park residence near the park office.
29. Expand gravel/overflow parking.
30. Pave some existing gravel parking areas.
31. Add a fueling station and storage tank at or near the maintenance yard for park staff and public safety officers.

Other Infrastructure

32. Add a radio communication tower and other needed facilities to improve communications for EBRPD and public service providers. This tower will be sited and designed in a manner that minimizes aesthetic impacts on the park character.
33. Install water infrastructure to support grazing.
34. Comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements for future improvements at the Regional Park. Continue implementation of an ADA facility retrofit program that includes replacing, retrofitting, and restructuring many of the park facilities to meet the current standards of the ADA requirements.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities at Contra Loma Regional Park

Swim Lagoon

35. Provide a safe swim area or splash pad for small children.
36. Provide more shade around the swim lagoon lawn.
37. Add benches in the swim lagoon area.
38. Prohibit smoking at the lagoon and designate smoking areas down-wind from swimmers.

Fishing

39. Replace aging fishing docks.

40. Modify or reconstruct existing fishing docks to allow safe, continuous fishing use during reservoir drawdowns.
41. Increase fish stocking.
42. Control vegetation within the reservoir to enhance the fishing experience.
43. Repair or reconstruct the fish cleaning facility.

Trail System

44. Improve the existing East Shore-West Shore trails loop with an all-season surface.

Other Recreation

45. Construct more picnic sites where useful and appropriate.

Facilities Management at Contra Loma Regional Park

46. Increase EBRPD's irrigation allotment of 100 acre-feet per year by 50%.
47. Remove trash and dead tules from the reservoir when water levels are low.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities at Antioch Community Park

Sports Fields

48. When new or modified sports fields are planned, the types of sports desired by the public will be considered. Mixed-use sports fields will be considered.
49. Improve maintenance of the existing soccer fields to reduce drainage problems, eliminate gopher holes and uneven surfaces, and improve turf quality.
50. Improve existing soccer fields to allow use in wet weather.
51. Improve drainage on the south side of the southern sports field while reducing impacts on the adjacent riparian habitat.

Other Facility Management

52. Comply with ADA accessibility requirements for future improvements at the Community Park..

4.2 Management Actions for Alternative 3: Expanded Recreation and Facilities

Objectives

The objective of this alternative is to expand recreational uses and facilities to accommodate increasing demand, especially for additional all-weather sports fields, while protecting natural and cultural resources.

This alternative is included to demonstrate a scenario in which recreational uses and facilities at Contra Loma are substantially expanded while still meeting the RMP goals related to protection of natural and cultural resources to the extent feasible. This alternative builds upon and is in addition to the management actions listed under Alternative 2.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities at Contra Loma Regional Park

Swim lagoon

53. Increase the size of the swim lagoon, if needed to accommodate increased demand.

Fishing

54. Add more fishing docks if needed to accommodate increased demand, possibly on the east shore.
55. Improve shoreline access for fishing by managing shoreline vegetation in areas not used for wildlife nesting or breeding.
56. Construct a fishermen's shelter.

Trail System

57. Plant shade trees along trails.
58. Increase the number and length of trails available for mountain biking.
59. Increase loop trail opportunities for mountain biking.
60. Create multi-use trail connectors in several locations.

Other Recreation

61. Install shade structures to support recreational uses and to provide shade in parking areas. Some shade structures may include solar panels that would supplement the Regional Park's energy needs.
62. Provide a playground structure.
63. Consider overnight group camping as part of the current day camp programs or special events that require event-specific EBRPD authorization, oversight, and regulation.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities at Antioch Community Park

Sports Fields

64. Expand the area for multi-use sports fields by adding fields directly south of the two existing soccer fields on the east side of the community park. This would require expansion of the community park boundaries south into the Regional Park and adjustment of the boundary between the two parks.

65. Increase parking if additional sports fields are built.
66. Increase the size of some soccer fields to accommodate older youth and adults (i.e., 70 yards x 110 yards).
67. Replace or install natural turf with artificial turf or a more robust grass.
68. Install lighting for the unlit sports fields to enable evening use throughout the year.

Other Recreation

69. Increase trails along the creek and riparian area and improve interconnection between trail systems.
70. Create a botanical garden in the open space adjacent to the soccer fields.

Reservoir Management and Reservoir Water Quality

Reservoir Level Fluctuation

71. EBRPD and CCWD will work together toward developing a plan for managing reservoir levels in a manner that reduces conflict with the reproductive cycle for fish, birds, waterfowl, and other aquatic life along the shoreline; reduces occurrence of algae blooms and clam mortality along shoreline; and improves recreational fishing and increase catches. The plan will be consistent with the RMP management objective of protecting the water supply and water quality functions of Contra Loma Reservoir.