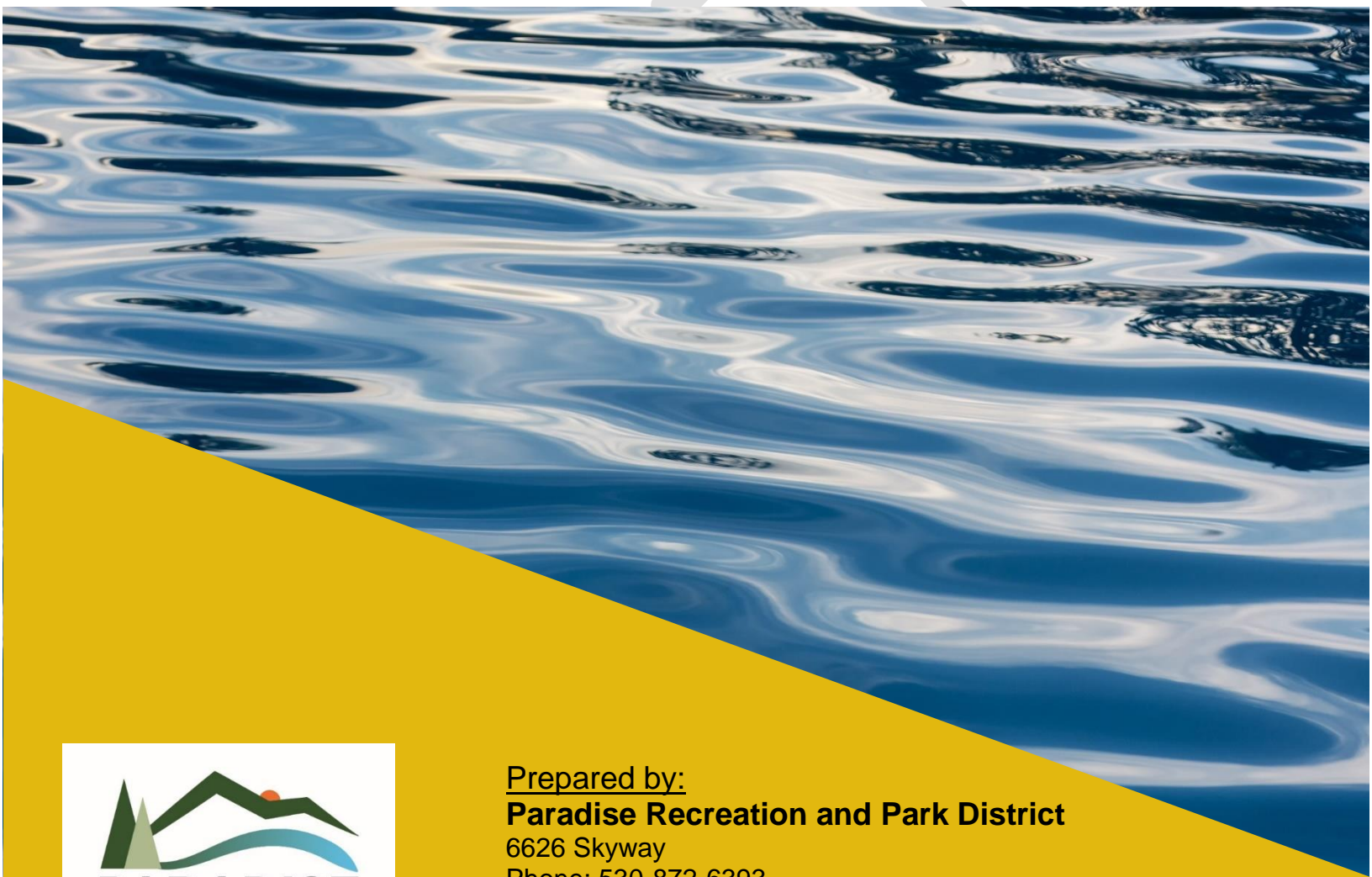


- DRAFT -

Lake Concow – Recreation Feasibility Report (DRAFT)

December 10, 2024



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Appendix III – Concow Lake Feasibility Booklet (Melton Design Group (MDG) – 12/19/2024

Appendix IV - Concow Lake Cost Opinion for Selected Features (MDG) – 2/21/2025

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The following individuals contributed significantly to this effort:

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Introduction



At the October 12, 2022 meeting, the Paradise Recreation and Park District (PRPD) Board of Directors (BOD) authorized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Thermalito Water and Sewer District (TWSD) to explore mutual interests for expanding recreation activities at Lake Concow. The TWSD also approved the MOU. Both parties extended the MOU to December 31, 2024 in December 2023.

The purpose of the MOU is to explore options on the recreation potential of TWSD and PRPD lands near Lake Concow and provide recommendations.

Though relatively modest resources have been used for this effort, our organizations have been able to collect significant information. This Feasibility Report explores potential appropriate activities and supporting amenities, the steps to develop them, public input, and some conceptual design ideas to potentially fuel future collaboration or funding

applications. The Report considers partnerships, ownership, and management of the facility to ensure the long-term operation of facilities.

This Report will be submitted to the TWSD and PRPD boards and provide recommendations and outline next steps. Staff anticipate that additional comments and suggestions will likely result in a revised document following release and review of the draft document. A revision will be issued to reflect those changes.

Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) and Feasibility Report

The Report explores possible management, and programming options and outlines any recommended next steps. The Report will be submitted to each Party's boards of directors for consideration and possible action. The MOU outlined the following elements:

- a. **Purpose:** Provide planning and outreach effort to explore the recreation potential of TWSD and PRPD lands near Concow Lake.
- b. **Location.** Focus on TWSD's Lake Concow and Crain Memorial Park and adjacent parcels currently or which may come under public ownership in the future.
- c. **Roles and Responsibilities.** The Report will detail the potential roles PRPD and TWSD may consider taking to facilitate future collaboration, implementation, programming, and management.

- d. **Constraints or Challenges:** a much more robust effort was submitted funding to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy; however, the proposal was not accepted.
- e. **Outreach/Community Engagement.** The Report will include the results of outreach efforts.
- f. **Anticipated Outcomes.** The Project meets multiple management objectives, including public engagement/outreach, inventorying recreational resources and opportunities, and identifying next steps (such as further studies, conceptual designs, detailed designs for infrastructure, and environmental compliance). The Project will identify opportunities for initial projects or phases and a blueprint for future implementation.
- g. **Financial Considerations.** While designed as a modest effort with minimal funding, the MOU left the door open for a more involved project if funding became available. The more extensive report would have included a larger recreational planning project for the Concow Basin, seeking additional outreach efforts, sustainable land and enlightened fuels management, and a review of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for implementation. PRPD did apply for an additional funding source for this larger effort, however, it was declined.
- h. **Development of a Follow-up Agreement.** If TWSD and PRPD agree to pursue a joint effort based on the Report, a more complete agreement shall be prepared, and considered by TWSD and PRPD.

Each of these elements is considered in the sections below.

Environmental Setting

While it is beyond the scope of this document to provide a comprehensive analysis of the resources and environmental description of the area, some basic information may help provide some context for the recreational opportunities at Lake Concow.

Lake Concow is situated in Butte County, approximately 25 miles north of Oroville, California. The area is part of the Feather River watershed, with local waterways draining into both the West Branch and North Fork of the Feather River, eventually converging in Lake Oroville.

The surrounding landscape is characterized by mixed coniferous forests, including species such as ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and various oak species. The Camp Fire created significant variability in intensity within the basin with areas of high fire intensity corresponding to steep slopes and exposure to high winds. Areas of lower intensity may be found in “backfire” areas and near the lake.

The Concow area is situated within the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and nearly the entire area of the lake and surrounding areas is within the Concow Pluton

The region's topography features rolling hills and valleys, with elevations ranging from approximately 2,400 to 3,500 feet above sea level. The climate is characterized by hot,

dry summers and cool, wet winters, typical of the Mediterranean climate found in much of California. Annual precipitation varies, with most rainfall occurring between November and April.

The area supports a diverse array of wildlife habitats, including riparian zones along streams, dense forested areas, and open meadows. These habitats are home to various species of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Historically and culturally, the area is important as the land around Lake Concow has been home to the Konkow Maidu since time immemorial. There is also considerable evidence in the area from mining and early settlers. Konkow Maidu people live in the area still with strong traditions to the land and efforts to maintain that cultural heritage.

The focus of this report is on TWSD's Lake Concow (and properties owned by the agency) and Crain Memorial Park and adjacent parcels. Though in the future, it may be worthwhile to take a larger view and explore additional potential partnerships within the Concow Basin for recreation and land management.

TWSD Property

Dam

- Spillway elevation: 1997.5'.
- Height: 97 feet tall from the base. The
- Volume of reservoir: 7,200 acre-feet
- TWSD property (approximate)
 - Dry Land Area: 275 acres.
 - Reservoir area: 269 acres.
- A good source of regional information for background may be found in the interagency report following the Camp Fire (CAMP FIRE Watershed Emergency Response Team Report. CA-BTU-016737. November 29, 2018).

Recreational Amenities

- 2 Parking areas
- Shore fishing access
- Fishing Pier
- Signage

PRPD Crain Memorial Park

- This park reopened in October 2017 but has been a part of the District since the 1950s.
- Area
 - PRPD: 6.22 acres
 - Leased: 3.5 acres
 - Total: Approximately 10 acres
- Recreational Amenities
 - Restroom
 - Picnic table and group area,

- Restrooms,
- Native plant trail and interpretive signs,
- Drinking water,
- play structure and
- Meadow area

Outreach

The District employed several methods to collect information including in person meetings and an on-line survey. PRPD hosted a community outreach meeting at Crain Park on June 19th, 2024. PRPD had a station set up joined by staff from TWSD to listen to the public's input on recreation at Concow Lake. The meeting was free flowing and had around 30 attendees. The District has hosted other meetings in the Concow area including one at the Concow School. While this meeting focused on a tour of the facilities and exploring programming options, the District received input as well. In addition, the District hosted an online survey of information and collected informal conversations with a variety of stakeholders.

The District developed a simple approach to conduct community engagement and collaboration. The effort provided information on potential amenities, programs, uses, partners, gauge community interest and support that citizens may provide about Concow Lake, Concow School, and Crain Park.

In November of 2022 PRPD published a Concow Planning Survey on the District's Webpage. As of December 2024, 81 individuals responded, indicating strong interest (and many thoughtful comments). The survey posed questions on recreation in the area including a section on Recreation at Lake Concow. Below are a summary of the responses (along with additional comments made via other means). The survey regarding Concow Lake Includes:

1. **Considerations for Recreational Use** (57.5% of respondents):
 - Most responses focused on priorities for maintaining clean waters and shores, adding swimming opportunities, and leveraging recreation for economic benefits.
 - Kayaking and the use of small trolling motors were the most favored activities (14 mentions), followed by swimming and fishing, each receiving significant interest (9 mentions each).
2. **Recreation-Related Issues** (45.0% of respondents):
 - Concerns included a lack of facilities, requests for restrooms, trash receptacles, and improved trails.
3. **Land Management and Maintenance of Facilities** (42.5% of respondents):
 - Suggestions emphasized brush clearing, invasive plant removal, and improved land maintenance to reduce fire risks.
 - Maintaining the area around the lake and addressing litter concerns were emphasized (4 mentions each), with suggestions for no-littering signs and promoting eco-tourism.
4. **Additional Recreational Uses** (25.0% of respondents):

- Interest was shown in adding activities such as electric motorboats, hunting, and comprehensive recreational options.
- Some participants supported a pay-to-enter system but noted locals should have free or discounted access (3 mentions).
- Ideas included offering a way to purchase maps (2 mentions) and organizing summer camps.
- One unique suggestion was the creation of a yacht club.

These percentages reflect the distribution of focus areas among survey participants, with a majority emphasizing recreational priorities and environmental care.

To get a sense of facility market research, the District ran a Community Profile Facility Report for Crain Park (Attachment 1). The reports provide a variety of data to get a sense of residents served by the facility. Staff opted for a report of a 30-minute drive based on 2020 Census Data (a 15-minute drive based on 2010 Census Data is also available). In comparison to the 2020 Census,

[[[Note we are awaiting the most recent report]]]

Table 1. Comparison of Estimates of 2021 and 202XXX Forecast.

Factor	Census 2021 forecast	
Number of residents living within a 30-minute drive	4,829	
Median age of residents living within a 30-minute drive	36.8	
Percentage of adult population living within a 30-minute drive of the facility that exercise at least seven hours per week	18.0%	

To provide a more regional perspective (<https://www.statsamerica.org/radius/big.aspx>) the population within a 50-Mile Radius of Concow CDP, California indicates a population in 2023 of 505,904. This region includes 6 counties: Butte, CA; Colusa, CA; Glenn, CA; Sutter, CA; Tehama, CA; Yuba, CA. We should note that this is a crude radius (only can set in increments of 25 miles).

Additional follow-up surveys that include TWSD customers may be helpful to assess interest and anticipate adequate sizing of facilities and any measures to minimize impacts.

In addition, there is probably a need to develop partnerships within the basin with other organizations (USFS and Sierra Pacific Industries).

Since this project has been underway, PRPD staff have been impressed with the considerable community interest and enthusiasm for recreational improvements and uses from the community. The effort has spawned ideas from community members about future ideas on cooperation. While some of these ideas may not come to pass, Staff recommend that outreach and community engagement continue to be a part of future efforts, and future efforts should consider ways to share information and progress (could be meetings in the area, email blasts, use of social media, etc.).

Most geographical place names have the area listed as Lake Concow, but the community seems equally divided between that name and Concow Lake (Concow Reservoir is rarely used). One potentially fun task is to adopt the moniker that the community prefers and use that in our documents. In addition, the lake has many features that would benefit from naming (coves, island, peninsula,). The public could help develop a sense of place with helping to name these features (either be nature-based names or appropriate Konkow names).

Because of changing community needs, new partnerships, and quickly evolving related efforts, our exploration would benefit from an engagement and collaboration effort with the community, and to nearby organizations. This will provide important feedback on potential amenities, programs, uses, partners, and gauge community interest and support when the time comes for next steps. This may connect us to additional funding or donations to make those improvements a reality and to help nurture partnerships.



Recreational Options

The outreach and community input fed into the conceptual designs for the lake along with input from TWSD and PRPD staff. The ideas, concepts, and even locations should be viewed as preliminary to provide some examples and direction of the overall approach.

While detailed plans are beyond the scope of this document, we intend the ideas presented as a starting point to provide a sense as to appropriate activities and realistic scale for improvements

Acceptance of this report does not translate to specific endorsement of the designs. Undoubtedly, additional public and District input, site investigations, environmental compliance, governance structure, and funding opportunities will alter any specific plans.

Amenities or ideas may be added later, but the main purpose of this effort is to provide some baseline ideas for the community and District's to explore and importantly provide a context for moving forward.

This effort is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are appropriate activities for Lake Concow?
- What are improvements or amenities that would facilitate appropriate activities and provide best serve the community now and into the future?
- What are measures that maintain or enhance environmental, cultural, aesthetic, recreational, qualities that make the area special?

To allow for a clearly articulated vision, we will use conceptual plans to share with the public and to, hopefully, inspire partners to join the effort with funding, programing, or partnership.

The map of the lake with existing and proposed amenities is provided (Appendix II).

Recreational Scenarios

Provided that the concepts noted above are agreeable to the partners and supplemental funding is available, there are important discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the organizations, as well as the potential for additional partners to join this effort. There are several options to proceed (we define "project" as inclusive of design, fundraising, construction management, and implementation):

1. No Action Alternative

- **Description:** The No Action Alternative represents the current status quo with minimal existing facilities. While this scenario does not preclude future recreational development, it means that any features would be added only as needed, without a comprehensive master plan or strategic vision.
- **Advantages:**
 - Minimal expenses and coordination required.
 - Maintains the natural aesthetics of the area.
 - Provides additional features only when deemed necessary.
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Existing facilities are inadequate to match current recreation interests, limiting the site's full potential.
 - Risk of unsanctioned or undesirable uses (e.g., illegal camping, unauthorized trails, and vandalism).
 - Lack of trash receptacles and restroom facilities could negatively impact water quality and visitor experience, particularly as use increases.
 - Continued vegetation management challenges, including fire risk and overgrowth.
 - Limited engagement from PRPD and other potential partners in managing and enhancing the site.
- **Costs**
 - Minimal, with projects developed only as needed.
- **Revenue:**
 - None.
 - Limited potential for external funding, as projects are not tied to a comprehensive plan.
- **Public and Community Needs:**
 - Existing parking areas provide only limited access for fishing, with no other amenities.
 - This scenario does not align with community recreational needs and does not realize the site's full potential for recreation and conservation benefits.

2. Development of Conceptual Design and Master Plan.

- **Description:** This scenario involves developing a conceptual design and eventually a master plan based on public input, site assessment, and recreational needs. The plan would identify appropriate recreational activities, balance environmental protection measures, and provide a roadmap for phased or accelerated development depending on funding availability.

Additionally, a formal agreement between TWSD and PRPD would clarify roles, responsibilities, and long-term site management strategies. The plan should also consider opportunities for involvement from other community organizations, local governments, and funding agencies to broaden support and resource availability.

- **Advantages:**

- Generates community interest, leading to volunteer engagement, stewardship, and advocacy for the site.
- Provides a clear vision and framework for phased development, ensuring that recreational opportunities align with ecological and financial sustainability.
- Creates an opportunity to introduce new District programs at the site.
- Enhances partnership potential, leveraging outside resources, expertise, and funding.
- Provides a focal point for local organizations to collaborate on recreation, conservation, and education efforts.
- Potential to increase local property values and drive positive economic impacts through increased tourism and visitation.

- **Disadvantages:**

- Requires an initial financial investment in planning, engineering, and community engagement.
- Implementation depends on available funding, which may delay certain phases of development.

- Coordination among multiple stakeholders could prolong decision-making and approval processes.

- **Costs**

- Moderate to high, depending on the level of planning, engineering, and environmental studies required.
- Potential for grant funding and partnerships to offset costs.

- **Revenue:**

- Increased opportunities for external funding (grants, donations, public-private partnerships).
- Potential for fee-based programs, events, or recreational rentals in the long term.

- **Public and Community Needs:**

- Once developed, the site will offer diverse recreational opportunities for families, nature enthusiasts, and outdoor recreationists.
- Creates a community gathering space, fostering social engagement and a sense of place.
- Provides structured opportunities for physical activity, environmental education, and nature appreciation.
- Next steps would involve further development of a Master Plan with detailed costs and plans. This effort may require outside funding sources.

Conceptual Design

The proposed conceptual design for Lake Concow prioritizes low-impact, community-supported recreation, with a focus on trail connectivity, environmental preservation, and cultural interpretation. Activities such as motorized sports were not included due to limited community interest. Other options identified below may require collaboration with other organizations to take advantage of efforts and shared interests, it is beyond the scope of this document to describe those but we want to mention that as a key goal for future planning.

Key Amenities and Features

- **Event and Gathering Spaces** – While Crain Memorial Park and the school serves important roles, additional designated areas for community gatherings, educational programs, and special events should be considered.
- **Restrooms and Utilities** – Permanent and portable facilities at key locations for visitor convenience.
- **Trail System and Connectivity: Loop Trail (Phased Development)** – A multi-phase trail around the lake, incorporating:
 - A wilderness trail section on the western side.
 - A potential bridge to complete the loop.
 - Defined trailheads featuring kiosks, parking, trash receptacles, picnic tables, and restrooms.
 - Interpretive signage and mile markers, with potential incorporation of Konkow language for place names and directions.
- **Water Access and Recreation**
 - Kayak and Canoe Launch – A designated non-motorized boat launch, with potential for secure kayak storage and rental opportunities (or development of a mobile approach with episodic availability of equipment on a trailer).
 - Fishing Access – Expanded and improved shoreline access for anglers.
- **Camping and Overnight Facilities/Campground Enhancements (could be on existing partner lands)** –
 - Parking and designated tent/RV sites

- Restrooms and picnic tables
- Potential inclusion of showers to enhance usability and appeal.
- **Additional Recreational Opportunities**
 - Beach Access (Under Consideration) – Evaluating the feasibility of a designated swimming area and additional recreational opportunities at TWSD property near the lake.
- **Cultural and Educational Opportunities** – Integration of interpretive and educational signage to highlight local history, ecology, and indigenous heritage. This may also provide an opportunity to work with other organizations.

Next Steps and Collaboration

- This concept remains flexible and requires partnerships and agreements between PRPD, TWSD, and other stakeholders. Key areas for further discussion include:
 - Interpretive and Educational Opportunities – Potential collaborations on adjoining lands to enrich visitor experiences.
 - Security and Storage Solutions – Planning for kayak rentals and secure storage options.
 - Trail Routing and Resource Protection – Ensuring sustainable access while preserving the watershed and cultural sites.

This framework serves as a foundation for refining the development plan in collaboration with stakeholders, ensuring an inclusive, well-maintained, and environmentally responsible recreation area at Lake Concow.

Cost Estimates

Note: While staff feel that an estimate provides a starting point for level of effort, these estimates are **based on extremely limited data** and investigations and should be viewed with considerable skepticism.

The estimated cost for recreational development at Lake Concow depends on several factors, including the scope of amenities, infrastructure needs, environmental considerations, and phasing. Completing many of the tasks “in house” could potentially result in greatly reduced costs. **Further refinement** (especially on the execution of projects, responsibilities, and coordination) will **provide a better understanding of costs**.

Preliminary Estimates for Initial Features

Based on the initial features, Melton Design Group (MDG) provided a cost estimate for basic features (Appendix III). The **cost estimate** for the limited set of projects is **\$405,019**. While a number of questions need to be answered before this figure is refined, this estimate provides a good starting point for projects.

Full Project Estimate

Staff also wanted to include an estimate based on “all bells and whistles” identified. Some of the estimates could be reduced with work conducted “in house” with agency staff, volunteers, or donated materials and services. In addition, as the project proceeds some

of the items noted below may not be selected or considered desirable based on identified needs. However, staff wanted to include a durable estimate based on contracted services at prevailing wages to provide a high-end estimate that may help determine grant requests. Below is a **general cost estimate** based on similar recreation and park projects:

No Action Alternative

- Minimal cost (~\$0–\$25,000 annually)
- Possible expenses:
- Basic maintenance (e.g., road grading, vegetation management)
- Addressing unauthorized uses (e.g., cleanup, enforcement)

Full Project Development

Conceptual Design and Master Plan Development

- Estimated Cost: \$50,000–\$150,000
- Consultant fees for public engagement, environmental assessments, and planning
- Design costs for layout of trails, facilities, and infrastructure
- Legal and administrative costs for agreements with TWSD and other partners

Full Development (Estimated in Phases)

- Assuming moderate-scale recreational development, including trails, restrooms, parking, and picnic areas:

Phase 1: Infrastructure and Basic Amenities (\$190,000 - \$450,000)

- Parking area improvements: (\$50,000–\$150,000)
- Parking area improvements: (\$50,000–\$150,000)
- Restroom facilities:
 - Vault/compost toilets: (\$75,000–\$150,000 per unit) OR
 - Portable restrooms: (\$5,000–\$10,000 per unit (if opting for temporary facilities))
- Trash receptacles and maintenance: (\$5,000–\$25,000)
- Trail system (basic dirt/gravel): (\$5,000–\$10,000 per mile) (assuming 5–10 miles, \$25,000–\$100,000 total) (note most estimates assume \$50,000–\$150,000 per mile)
- Signage, fencing, gates, and security (\$50,000–\$100,000)

Phase 2: Enhanced Recreational Features (\$500,000–\$1.5M)

- Picnic shelters and seating areas: (\$50,000–\$100,000)
- Fishing pier or improved shoreline access (\$20,000–\$100,000)
- Enhanced multi-use trails (ADA-compliant, paved) (\$150,000–\$250,000 per mile)
- Environmental restoration and landscaping (\$100,000–\$300,000)

Phase 3: Expanded Recreational Development (\$300,000–\$1.25M)

- Campground (\$250,000–\$1M)
- Boat launch and dock improvements (\$50,000–\$250,000)
- Optional – did not include (Floating pontoon bridge (\$500 - \$6,000 per linear foot, plus anchoring, permitting – (\$25,000–\$200,000), installation and site prep (\$25,000 to \$300,000))

Total Estimated Cost for Full Development:

- Basic improvements (Phase 1 only): \$190,000–\$450,000 (up to \$750,000)
- Moderate-scale recreation (Phases 1 and 2): \$685,000–\$2M
- Full-scale recreational development (All Phases): \$985,000–\$3.2M+

Timeline

Like the funding estimates, the timeline should be viewed with considerable uncertainty and greatly depends on available resources. In general, the initial planning steps will take 1-2 years, installation of amenities 2-5 years, recreational features 5-10 years, and full development 10 years. However, the progression may be greatly accelerated based on available depending on available funding and capacity for TWSD and PRPD staff to complete work or contracting. In addition, we would recommend that some programming can proceed immediately.

Other Considerations

- TWSD is planning on completing an upcoming sediment removal project, which coordination could develop the possibility to enhance recreational uses or opportunities. For example, sediment materials may help level adjoining areas, provide trail fill material, or develop launch access, etc. This may be a worthwhile coordination opportunity.
- To help develop a sense of place and provide a nod to the rich cultural heritage of the area, developing place names for lake features (coves, points, the island, and peninsula) may provide an opportunity for community naming opportunities (some might even be Konkow words, if appropriate).
- Any infrastructure will need to be developed with the remote nature of facilities in mind. Items such as a kayak rental container will need to be designated at an appropriate area but also with security and vandalism in mind (i.e. near the caretakers residence or other secure location).

Recreation Management Scenarios

Another dimension added to the development of recreational amenities is the management and potential partnerships that could help facilitate the development of those amenities. While there are a variety of possible mechanisms (or hybrids), staff thought that it would be helpful to layout a few management scenarios and the mechanisms to make them happen. These options include:

1. **No Action/Agreements as needed** – This would be essentially a status quo approach with TWSD retaining sole ownership and management of lands around the lake. As projects or opportunities arise, TWSD and PRPD could work out individual agreements (i.e. a lease for example on the specific area related to a proposed kayaking launch and paddle craft rentals). The agreements would come up in a piecemeal fashion (ad hoc) or on an as needed.
2. **Formalized Partnership Agreement** - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) would outline the roles, responsibilities, and financial obligations of each organization.

- a. **Cooperative Agreement/MOU** - (Less Binding, More Flexible): Defines a cooperative framework but doesn't create a new entity. A variety of options are possible depending on TWSD and PRPD discussions and BOD direction. This can either be a land agreement or a joint management approach. With TWSD owning the land, a long-term lease or easement could be granted to PRPD to manage recreational uses or alternatively, some of the tasks could be divided between the two organizations.
- b. **JPA** - (More Formal, Legally Binding): Establishes a new joint authority with shared decision-making power.

As the scope of this report is on the feasibility of recreation at Lake Concow, if TWSD and PRPD both wish to move forward, then considerable effort should be put into the structure of an agreement with the agencies.

Out of the options above, the best option is likely to be a cooperative agreement (2a) as it will be simpler to implement than a JPA (2b) and will allow for a long-term partnership and framework to develop the project in phases or as opportunities arise (rather than the ad hoc/Agreements as needed approach (1)).

The full step-wise approach is as followings:

1. **Exploration/Feasibility MOU** – this document and current cooperation between TWSD and PRPD.
2. **Planning and Design MOU** – focus on recommended recreational amenities and activities and develop a detailed master or project plan, costs, Capital Project Fundraising, revenue sources, partners, and phases; develop detailed recommendations for long-term governance on an implementation MOU. Importantly this could provide some of the environmental compliance needed for the next steps.
3. **Implementation MOU** – provides the detailed framework to construct facilities and implement measures and the Long-term Management of those facilities and programs.

This approach provides opportunities to build consensus, focus on a shared vision, identify potential funding sources and partners and build an implementation approach with some answers to questions raised in this report.

PRPD has had recent success with a similar approach to other projects. Because a variety of recreation and revenue or cost-sharing options are possible, time to consider the advantages and disadvantages may make for a more durable long take some time to develop. Alternatively, the latter 2 agreements could be combined, but it would take considerable upfront staff time to develop a durable agreement.

However, if TWSD and PRPD wish to accelerate this process, then the last two steps could be combined into an MOU that lays out a framework for cooperation with amendments as new features or responsibilities are added. This approach would require considerable upfront efforts to layout the framework and anticipate some of the issues raised in this report. This would allow for some activities to proceed immediately (i.e. paddling classes or tours) as amenities are added over time.

Though it is subject to direction from the respective boards, this is what the steps might look like for the next steps:

1. Start with a **Planning MOU** to establish a framework for developing additional information and recommendations. This MOU could identify appropriate activities and amenities; decision-making and governance/roles and responsibilities; liabilities and insurance, costs, revenue and capital funding, liability and risk management, insurance coverage, and community engagement. The main product will be a report with specific planning recommendations and approaches and an implementation MOU.
2. Then execute an **Implementation MOU** to guide the next phases and layout a blueprint for recreation development and management.
3. Depending on the Implementation MOU, TWSD and PRPD could develop a **Lease or Land-Use Agreement(s)** for long-term operational clarity.

This approach balances flexibility, funding opportunities, and long-term sustainability while minimizing financial risks for both parties.

Concow School Opportunities

Although this is part of a different initiative, PRPD wanted to note some of the information that came from exploration of use of the Concow School. The Concow School presents several potential opportunities for recreational use, complementing Lake Concow development while fostering community engagement, education, and outdoor activities. Here are some key possibilities that residents and staff have identified:

1. **Outdoor and Environmental Education Center**
 - a. Field Trips and Nature Programs – Use the school as a hub for guided nature walks, wildlife observation, and ecological education.
 - b. Workshops and Classes – Offer programs on forest management, watershed conservation, traditional ecological knowledge, and sustainability.
 - c. Interpretive Displays and Exhibits – Create a small visitor center with exhibits about local ecology, indigenous history, and the impact of wildfires.
2. **Community Recreation and Gathering Space**
 - a. Event and Meeting Space – Utilize classrooms or multipurpose areas for public meetings, community events, and cultural programs.
 - b. Fitness and Wellness Programs – Offer yoga, tai chi, or senior fitness classes, particularly if there is an indoor or covered area available.
 - c. Arts and Cultural Activities – Provide space for music, dance, or indigenous storytelling programs, in partnership with local cultural groups.
3. **Staging Area for Outdoor Activities**
 - a. Meeting point for Local Hikes or Adventures – The school could serve as a launch point for trail networks, particularly for guided hikes to Lake Concow, Crain Park, or adjacent public lands.
 - b. Parking and Logistics Support – Visitors could use the school as a safe parking area, especially for larger events or weekend programs at the lake.

- c. Bike Hub – Establish a bike rental or repair station to support non-motorized recreation.
- 4. Youth and Family Outdoor and Sports Camps**
 - a. Sports camps or leagues – as youth interest continues in the area, PRPD may pursue developing basketball or practice or skill building on the Concow school field.
 - b. Summer and Weekend Camps – Host day camps for kids, focusing on outdoor skills, nature exploration, and science-based activities.
 - c. Overnight Camping Support – If allowed, group camping could take place on or near the school grounds, providing a staging area for backpacking trips.
 - d. Scout and Youth Programs – Partner with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or other youth organizations to facilitate structured outdoor experiences.
- 5. Emergency and Resilience Hub for Outdoor Recreation**
 - a. Fire and Safety Training – Provide wilderness first aid, fire safety, and evacuation preparedness workshops for visitors and the community.
 - b. Disaster Staging Area – In the event of an emergency, the site could serve as a rally point for responders or displaced community members. The sufficiency of fuels treatment and defensible space and situational awareness would have to be considered for wildfire events.

One significant concern is the financial risk of starting programs or maintaining facilities with minimal revenue to off-set costs. To start with financial responsibility in mind, PRPD is engaging with the Golden Feather Unified School District (GFUSD) to provide youth programs and will see if we can add other programs that may have demand. Importantly, the Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) grant has provided a number of opportunities for residents directly from PRPD and other partners (unfortunately, some of the events have not been well marketed and some residents did not realize that these are PRPD initiated events).

Next Steps and Feasibility

To move forward, key considerations include:

- **Ownership, Permissions, and Partnerships** – Discuss options with GFUSD on the management of school property and whether recreational use aligns with their mission and future uses. Part of the effort could be exploration if PRPD fits within recent GFUSD efforts to secure funding for activities at the school. This may provide a low-risk opportunity to work with them to add additional recreational and community programs.
- **Facility Condition** – Assess if existing structures can support new programs (e.g., restroom availability, ADA accessibility).
- **Funding and Partnerships** – Identify grants, sponsors, or community organizations willing to help develop and maintain programs.
- **Integration with Lake Concow Plans** – Ensure activities at the school complement ongoing recreational developments at the lake.



Crain Park Improvements

Since Crain Park already has essential amenities like restrooms, a playground, running water, BBQs, picnic tables, benches, and an interpretive nature trail, future improvements could focus on expanding recreational opportunities, enhancing community engagement, and upgrading infrastructure. Generally, residents were very pleased with the facility and improvements completed in 2017. Staff and residents did generate some ideas for future consideration. Here's a refined list:

1. Expanded Recreation and Sports Features

- a. Disc Golf Course – Install (3-5) permanent disc golf baskets to create a casual and competitive recreation option.
- b. Multi-Use Open Space Enhancements – Though a few people mentioned improving the existing grassy areas for soccer, frisbee, cornhole, or other casual sports; others noted that they liked the more natural meadow area as it currently is with perhaps some attention to filling in some of the uneven terrain.
- c. Walking Path Upgrades – PRPD got favorable feedback for the nature trail and interpretive signs. More work will be completed soon to remove remaining hazards from the Camp Fire and complete the trail. One suggestion was to add distance markers or create a fitness loop with simple exercise stations.
- d. Hiking Trail - A expansion of the trail to the south side of the creek was also noted along with connecting the park to the proposed Lake Concow trail, which may allow those users to access the (well regarded) restrooms and running water at Crain Park.

2. More Community Events and Programming

- a. Regular Outdoor Events – Organize movie nights, music concerts, cultural festivals, and seasonal celebrations.
- b. Expanded Educational Workshops – Offer hands-on wildlife tracking, outdoor survival skills, and cultural storytelling events.
- c. Youth Activities and Day Camps – Develop structured programs like "Junior Naturalist" activities or summer recreation camps.

3. Infrastructure and Comfort Enhancements

- a. Consider additional shade – Additional trees or picnic areas to support larger gatherings. For events, PRPD can potentially provide additional tables and chairs (and even sound system and movie screen that can be used on site upon request).

4. **Improved Parking and Accessibility** – PRPD received favorable comments about the ADA-accessible pathways and parking installed with the 2017 upgrades. Staff will want to revisit the adequacy of these features in the future.

5. **Waste Management** – Generally, PRPD received positive feedback on the cleanliness of the site, though unfortunately the site receives occasional graffiti, vandalism, and trash dumping.

6. Interpretive and Cultural Enrichment

- a. Expanded Interpretive Trail – The new signs have been very favorably received, and we enjoyed working with local Konkow people on the information. Staff suggested that additional interactive or interpretive signs or digital QR codes (though connectivity is an issue) linking to audio guides, Konkow language lessons, or augmented reality experiences may be desirable.

7. **Art and Murals** – While the opportunities are limited, looking for local indigenous or community artists to create public art installations may add a very important dimension to the site.
8. **Vegetation Management** – PRPD will continue efforts to work with the Yankee Hill Fire Safe Council and CALFIRE to reduce fire risks on site. The Park has been an active volunteer site for at least 2 years and PRPD will continue those efforts. PRPD will develop a management plan over the next few years to Community Garden or Pollinator Habitat – Develop a native plant demonstration garden with signage on traditional ecological knowledge.

Finance and Revenue

This document does not provide a full financial plan but outlines a framework for funding, revenue generation, and operations.

Capital Improvement Funding Approaches

1. Incremental Investments and Small-Scale Projects

- Gradual improvements over time, such as phased trail work, portable restrooms, and gravel access for non-motorized watercraft.
- Focuses on easier to implement project that are modest scale.
- Funded through TWSD, PRPD, small grants, donations, and in-kind services.

2. Grant-Funded Development

- Leverages agency contributes outside funding from state, federal, and private grants.
- For example this could support larger phases (e.g., major infrastructure, bridges, facilities) or to combine smaller projects together to jump start efforts.
- While loans or financing are possible, grants and partnerships are more viable.

3. Hybrid Approach

- Combines phased investments with ongoing grant-seeking efforts.
- For example, TWSD and PRPD could start building some of the modest improvements and improving existing infrastructure, offering new programs and activities, and building the partnership, while also seeking funding for the master plan and implementation of more significant phases.
- Enables immediate progress, builds community interest, and minimizes financial risks.

Potential Funding Sources

- **State and federal grants** (e.g., California State Parks, LWCF, Prop 68, Prop 4 funding)
- **Public-private partnerships** (local businesses, non-profits, and outdoor industry sponsors)

- **Shared Partner Resources** (TWSD and PRPD collaboration on specific projects)
- **Recreation fees** (day-use, camping, event rentals)
- **Community fundraising and volunteer-driven initiatives** (fundraisers, service days, etc.).

Operational Cost Considerations

Future consideration of phases should estimate operational costs based on infrastructure scale and usage levels. A short trail with minimal amenities differs significantly from a fully developed site requiring staff presence. A composting toilet requires a different level of service and tools that a portable restroom.

Paradise Lake Comparison (FY 2023-24 and 2023-24 Averages)

- Revenue/Income: \$47,961.48
- Expenses: \$118,705.50
- Net Deficit: -\$70,744.02
- Prior to the Camp Fire, the Paradise Irrigation District estimated annual revenue between \$60,000 and \$80,000.
- Paradise Lake has considerably more infrastructure in place (including restrooms, boat ramps, kayak storage, groups sites, and other amenities).
- Volunteer efforts have played a vital role in maintenance and stewardship.
- We anticipate more aggressive promotion of the lake and programs, and enforcement of parking will increase revenue over the next few years.

Current Lake Concow Expenses

- To help inform future operational planning would be to evaluating TWSD's management costs (e.g., vegetation control).

Other

- **Access Fees** – Implement parking or launch fees, similar to Paradise Lake.
- **Fundraisers and Events**
 - **Races and Fun Runs** – Trails and kayak access could support paddle races, fun runs, or endurance events.
 - **Community Festivals** – Music, cultural, or outdoor festivals could serve as fundraising events. the community and develop a fundraising source (and could be combined with volunteer efforts to clean up trash, trails work, or other tasks).
- **Program Income** – Revenue from day camps, guided tours, kayak rentals, or astronomy nights.
- **Event Rentals** – Weddings, retreats, or private gatherings.
- **Partner-Driven Initiatives** – Leverage partnerships with organizations for collaborative use of property which will help provide new opportunities and funding sources for improvements and operations.

What's Next

The **Exploration of Recreation Feasibility MOU** has provided a strong foundation for Lake Concow's potential as a recreational resource. The effort has also fostered a positive working relationship between TWSD and PRPD, demonstrated community interest and outlines a path forward.

Key Findings

- **Public Support:** Community engagement (n=___) showed strong support for recreation, with priorities including [list key features identified].
- **Compelling Vision:** The project aligns with community needs and welcomes additional partners for programming, funding, and operations.
- **Site Advantages:** Public ownership by TWSD, existing infrastructure, and zoning compatibility provide a strong foundation.
- **Funding Challenges:** Existing resources are insufficient, requiring a vigorous, multi-source funding strategy to succeed.

Recommended Path Forward

Given the successful collaboration, staff recommend **expanding the agreement** between TWSD and PRPD. To advance the project, staff recommends the following proposed process:

- **Staff Collaboration** – TWSD and PRPD staff work through key elements (roles, funding strategies, infrastructure needs, phased implementation).
- **Ad Hoc Review** – Staff presents recommendations to the ad hoc group (2 board members from each entity) for feedback.
- **Board Presentation** – After refinement, the full boards receive a well-developed, actionable proposal for approval.

This approach allows Staff to work through logistics, feasibility, and technical details and develop well-developed approaches and explore and refine ideas before coming back to the ad-hoc committee and then the respective BODs for further action.

The agreement should be established to:

- Define **roles and responsibilities** for construction and development.
- Develop **fundraising and capital campaign** strategies.
- Identify **grant, loan, and sponsorship opportunities**.
- Engage **partners and community champions**.
- Explore and possibly secure **professional services** for design, cost estimation, environmental compliance, and permitting.
- Oversee **construction management, compliance, and budgeting**.
- Establish a **long-term management strategy** for sustained operations.

Phased Approach for Flexibility and Success

To ensure adaptability, staff recommends a phased approach, allowing TWSD and PRPD to commit incrementally:

- **Planning and Partner Building** – Develop master plan, cost estimates, and partnerships.
- **Fundraising and Grants** – Secure funding through grants, donations, and pooled resources.
- **Construction and Implementation** – Develop trails, amenities, and access points.
- **Long-Term Operations** – Establish governance, maintenance, and programming.

Immediate Next Steps (Hybrid Approach)

TWSD and PRPD should begin with small-scale, high-impact projects while seeking funding for major infrastructure. This ensures:

- Early wins and community engagement
- Minimal financial risk
- Time to refine governance and funding models

Funding and Revenue Sources

- Government Grants and Loans – Federal, state, and local funding (e.g., Prop 68, LWCF).
- Private Donations and Sponsorships – Corporate and community contributions.
- Non-Profit/Foundation Grants – Support from conservation and recreation groups.
- Public-Private Partnerships – Shared resources and investment from local businesses.

Other Considerations

- Name Preference: The community is divided between "Lake Concow" and "Concow Lake." A community-driven naming approach could enhance local buy-in.
- Environmental Stewardship: Development must balance recreation, conservation, wildfire mitigation, and cultural preservation.

Conclusion

Given the area's natural beauty, diverse ecosystems, cultural landscape, and existing conservation efforts, the lands around Concow Lake offer significant potential for recreational development. Careful planning and management are essential to balance recreational use with environmental preservation, wildfire risk mitigation, and historical considerations.

If both boards agree, staff recommend launching Phase 1 (Planning and Partner Building), setting the stage for a transformative community asset while maximizing flexibility and minimizing risk.

Photos



Figure 1. Lake Concow provides beautiful views and supports a variety of wildlife. Current recreation is limited to a couple of parking areas and a short trail to shoreline fishing. Residents have few opportunities to access the public lands at the lake. Kayaks and swimming are currently prohibited and there are no sanctioned trails and there are only 2 small parking areas. The project would explore planning for future access, trails, and paddling opportunities and linkages to other publicly owned resources and future opportunities. In addition, proper stewardship of the shoreline forest could aid in conservation and fire protection goals.



Figure 2. The terrain around the lake could lend itself to relatively simple improvements to allow for excellent access and views of the lake. Prior to the Camp Fire the mountains in the background were well-forested Sierra Pacific and US Forest Service lands.



Figure 3. In the Fall of 2021, Staff from PRPD and TWSD received special permission for an exploratory paddle of the lake, the reviews of the paddling, lake levels wildlife, potential launch points, and interesting shoreline were universally outstanding. We hope to engage and capture the imagination of the community as to what recreational development could mean to people's lives.



Figure 4. Although small (less than 10 acres) and across Concow Road from the lake (350 feet from the nearest TWSD property), Crain Park is an important anchor for the community. The role of this Park could expand with the integration of additional area recreational amenities.

Welcome to Crain Memorial Park

A Place to Enjoy Nature and Community

Located in a small valley near Lake Concow, Crain Memorial Park is a very special place. We welcome you to stretch out under the shade of the giant Ponderosa Pine trees near the creek. Or, sit under the Black Oaks, valued for their bountiful acorns, just north of the road. Walk along the hiking trail and learn about the plants that thrive at this elevation. We encourage families to bring their children to enjoy our playground and groups to gather and utilize our picnic area to share a meal together.

Crain Memorial Park is also the ancestral home of the Konkow Maidu whose presence you can still see here today in the form of grinding stones. The Konkow Maidu knew much about the resources provided by this valley, including how to make medicines, shelter, baskets and food from the plants you see around you. As you explore the park, look for the interpretive panels to learn more.

Most of all, take care of this park and enjoy all it has to offer.

Travel Back in Time
The native people who lived in this valley, the Konkow Maidu, used large rock outcroppings known as "bedrock mortars" and smaller stones as pebbles or manos to pound dried acorns into flour, the main source of their food. The holes left behind tell a story of this way of life. Grinding acorns was a communal affair, with exact methods passed down through families, from generation to generation, over hundreds or even thousands of years. Each stone pestle or mano was as individual as the person who used it and became an important personal possession.
Do you see rocks that might have been used for this purpose?

Use your Senses
Use all of your senses to fully immerse yourself in this special place! Look up to view the giant Ponderosa Pines. Crush a Mugwort leaf between your fingers to release its scent. Listen to the soft sounds of the water flowing over rocks in the creek or the wind in the leaves of the trees. Feel the prickly edges of the pinecones in the grass.
What do you notice when you close your eyes?

Protect this Place
Enjoy this green space and respect all it has to offer. Everything you see from the gentle creek to the tallest trees should be cared for generations to come. The native peoples who inhabited this land since time immemorial understood the importance of a deep relationship with the land. Let us all respect our natural resources and the life it supports.

Rentals
Paradise Recreation and Park District offers a wide variety of rentals. Buildings, swimming pools, picnic areas and ballparks may be reserved. Rental options at Crain Memorial Park include weddings, memorials, and festivals.
For more information, please call (530) 872-6393.

Crain Memorial Park

PARADISE RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

Figure 5. PRPD has recently completed interpretive signs at Crain Park that welcomes residents and provides information on natural history, the Konkow people, and other topics. A similar approach for Lake Concow would benefit citizens seeking interpretive opportunities.

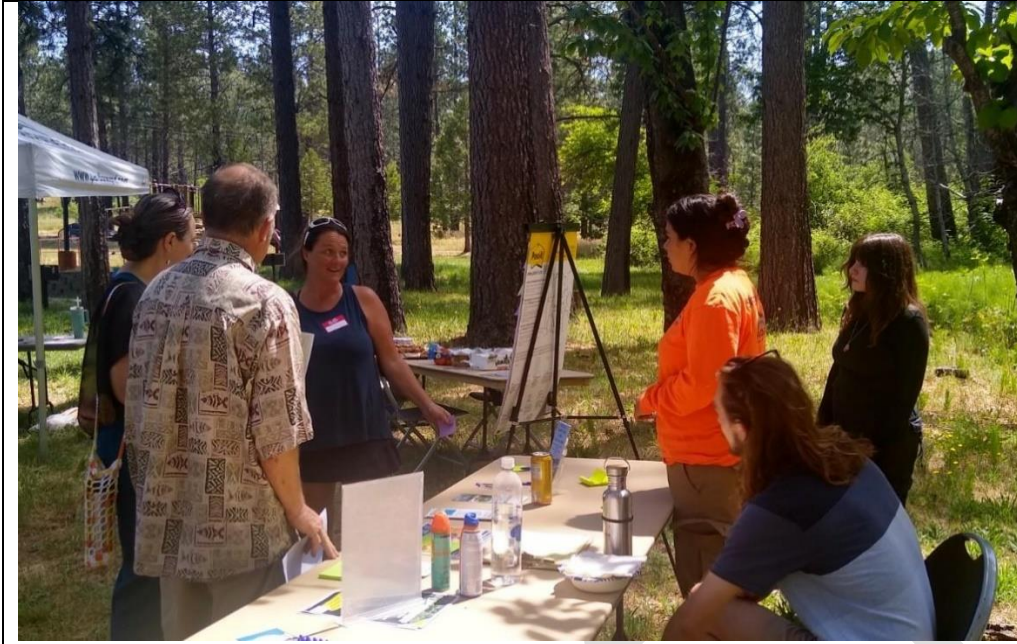


Figure 6. PRPD staff hosted a community engagement meeting at Crain Park in Fall 2024. Resident participants provided input on their preferences for the Concow Elementary School, Concow Lake, and Crain Park.

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Figure 7. Concow residents provided input on recreational activities they would like to see in their community (Example of one of the prompts at the meeting).

Appendix I – National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). 2022. Facility Market Report: Community Profile Analysis of: Crain Memorial Park, 3842 Jeffrey Pine Lane, Oroville, CA 95965

[[[use new report?????]]]

Appendix II – Concow Lake A) Existing Facilities and 2) Conceptual Plan for Future Facilities

Appendix III – Concow Lake Feasibility Booklet (Melton Design Group (MDG) – 12/19/2024

Appendix IV - Concow Lake Cost Opinion for Selected Features (MDG) – 2/21/2025

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