

Trail Change-in-Use Proposal Evaluation



Park (Including classification): Folsom Lake SRA
 Park Sub-classification: _____
 Trail Name: Middle Ridge Trail
 Location in Unit: Lake Natoma
 Current Use Designation(s): Equestrian, pedestrian
 Proposed Use Type Change: add bikes
 Use Change Initiated By: FATRAC, Mtn Bike Focus Group
 Evaluation Date: May 21, 2015

Evaluation Team Members
 Jim Micheaels, Sr Park & Rec Specialist (Trails Coord.)
 Greg Wells, Park & Rec Spec. (Trails specialist)
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Initial Field Evaluation 10/19/15, Final 3/23/22

This worksheet is designed to help park managers make an objective, defensible, and consistent determination regarding a proposed change-in-use (CIU) for a trail in the state park system. The first section is designed to make an initial determination regarding the compatibility of the proposed CIU with the park's classification and management. Refer to the rules and regulations for the park's classification as well as approved planning documents when making this preliminary decision. If the CIU is found to be incompatible, note the rule, regulation, or planning document under which the determination to deny was made.

Preliminary Considerations

		Yes	No	NA	Comments
0.1	Is the proposed CIU compatible with the park unit classification or sub-classification per the CA Public Resources Code and/or Code of Regulations?	X			
0.2	Is the proposed CIU on a trail that passes through more than one unit or sub-unit?		X		
0.3	Is there an approved general plan?	X			
0.4	Is there an approved road and trail management plan?		X		This CIU evaluation and recommendation will be part of the ongoing FLSRA Road and Trail Management Plan.
0.5	Is there an approved area management plan?		X		
0.6	If there is an approved and relevant planning document, is the proposed CIU consistent with planning recommendations?	X			
0.7	Has a previous CIU request been made and evaluated for this trail?		X		
0.8	Is the proposed CIU located on a non-system (volunteer trail)? <i>This form can only be used to consider a CIU for system roads and trails.</i>		X		
0.9	Is the proposed CIU on a facility designated as a trail or road? <i>This form cannot be used to consider a CIU for non-designated facilities such as a beach or desert wash.</i>	X			
0.10	Based on the preliminary considerations, should the CIU be further evaluated? <i>If yes, continue to the next page. If no, please explain.</i>	X			

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If found to be compatible, the following pages aid park managers in considering the broader impacts of the proposed CIU, including necessary management or design options. Clearly identify the primary concerns and considerations for each item that significantly contributes to approval or denial of the CIU proposal.

Summary of Findings and Considerations

Complete this section last

Transfer the results from the following pages to this summary page.
If using the electronic version, the results will transfer automatically.

		Yes	No	NA	Comments
Part 2	Will the CIU be compatible with existing visitor uses, facilities, and services?		X		The trail is very narrow across steep side slopes in places and very limited ability to provide for safe passing. It appears that portions of this trail were user-created and not a constructed trail. The trail is currently equestrian/pedestrian, but occasionally get used (illegally) by bikes. There are other trails in the area that are more suitable for a CIU.
Part 3	Will implementation of the CIU enhance circulation?		X		Implementing the CIU would add an additional trail opportunity for bikes, however the Shady Trail and Snowberry CIUs, which are recommended for approval, provide single-track bike access and connection across the Mississippi Bar area and the north/west side of Lake Natoma. Bikes also have access along the paved trail along the north/west side of Lake Natoma.
Part 4	Would implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended) maintain trail safety?		X		It is possible the trail could be realigned and reconstructed to provide for trail safety, however due to the steep side slopes it could be a challenge to provide suitable passing areas and adequate sight distance.
Part 5	Will the trail be sustainable following implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended)?	X			Even without approving this CIU, the trail needs realignment, reconstruction, repair and maintenance. The western end of the trail is steep and unsustainable and a portion of this end needs to be eliminated/restored and a new terminus developed. Other portions of the trail also need reroute and reconstruction. Doing this work and keeping the trail equestrian/pedestrian will provide a suitable alternate trail option to the Shady Trail for which a CIU is recommended for approval.

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Part 6	Would implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended) create significant negative impacts to the natural or cultural resources?		X		This trail is located in blue oak woodlands which is vegetation community for which there is concern due to loss of this habitat type and the impacts of climate change. The CIU would not likely cause significant impacts, but would occur in a habitat of concern.
Part 7	Will implementation of the CIU with management and design options create a significant on-going maintenance or operational workload?		X		As an individual CIU, this CIU would not cause a significant ongoing maintenance or management burden.

Recommendation Based on Evaluation Considerations

Substantiate in Comment Box

Recommend that the park's general plan or road and trail management plan be developed or amended to evaluate the CIU	X			This CIU is being considered in as part of the Folsom Lake SRA Road and Trail Management Plan.
Recommend that the CIU be approved		X		Reccomend this CIU not be approved.
Recommend that the CIU-be approved with design options such a major or minor re-route or minor re-construction.		X		
Recommend that the CIU be approved with management options such as alternating days of use, one way travel, and/or seasonal closures		X		
Recommend that the CIU be put on hold		X		

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Final Comments/Determinations

The Middle Ridge Trail is really two trail alignments, a trail along the flat behind the homes along the top of the bluffs and a trail that runs along the mid to lower slopes of the bluffs above the Shady Trail. There are steep and unsustainable sections that connect these two trail segments and steep non-system trail segments between the Shady Trail and the lower leg of the Middle Ridge Trail. The trail is very narrow in places across steep side slopes. In places there is a minimal trail bed and portions of this trail may be an adopted user-created trail, rather than a constructed trail.

This trail appears less used than the parallel Shady Trail which is down in the flat below the bluffs. There is some evidence of bike use, but much less than the Shady Trail. This trail is currently not an equivalent alternate trail experience to the Shady Trail for either bikes or equestrians.

The far western section of the Middle Ridge Trail is on a fall line alignment as it drops down into a draw before connecting to the Pioneer Express Trail and parallel paved bike path. This approximately 1500-foot segment of trail is steep, eroding and unsustainable and should be considered for removal and restoration. A new alignment for the southern terminus of the trail should be developed to tie into the Pioneer Express Trail and American River Bike Path near where the Nimbus Dam Service Road connects the paved trail.

As noted, portions of the lower leg of the Middle Ridge trail bed are very narrow and cross steep side slopes without good opportunities to step off the trail to let other users pass. As part of considering the CIU for this trail in the context of the other trails in the area and the entire FLSRA trail system, the recommendation is to not approve this CIU. The Shady Trail and Snowberry Trail provide better opportunities for multi-use trails which will give bikes single-track access across the Mississippi Bar area and the north/west side of Lake Natoma.

The recommendation is to eliminate one of the parallel trail alignments of the Middle Ridge Trail and to reroute, reconstruct and repair one of the other trail alignment of the Middle Ridge Trail to provide a more suitable and useful parallel equestrian and pedestrian trail alternate to the Shady Trail. New connections to either end of the Middle Ridge Trail should be considered. Eliminate some, if not all, of the steep unsustainable segments connecting the lower and upper Middle Ridge Trail and the lower Middle Ridge Trail and the Shady Trail. **The recommendation is to not approve this CIU.**

Multiple CIU requests may require development or amendment of a unit wide road and trail transportation management plan.

Qualified staff, including a DPR-trained Trail Coordinator will complete this survey and checklist to:

- (1) Determine the sustainability, safety, and feasibility of a proposed CIU for a single trail.*
- (2) Determine the appropriateness of the CIU in relation to cumulative impacts to the existing uses (users, routing, hiking opportunities, etc)*
- (3) Validate the existing conditions described on the attached trail log. The trail log should address typical log elements and positive and negative attributes related to the evaluation criteria.*

Trail Change-in-Use Proposal Evaluation



Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
Part 1 Existing Conditions					<i>Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed CUI and any other details related to proposal evaluation.</i>
1.1	Is the trail a controlled access road?		X		
1.2	ADA Accessible Route of Travel		X		
1.3	Connection to a trail head or other accessible facility?	X			Just connects to other trails.
1.4	What is the trail's current classification?	I			<i>Enter the trail class (I, II, III, or IV)</i>
Trail or road surface type:		<i>Check All Applicable</i>			Comments
1.5	Asphalt				
1.6	Concrete				
1.7	Gravel				
1.8	Native Material	X			
Trail and road facility use type					
1.9	Public	X			
1.10	Administration				
1.11	Fire Break				
1.12	Motorized Recreation				
1.13	Non-Motorized Recreation				
1.14	Road used as trail route				
Current trail uses allowed		Yes	No	NA	
1.15	Pedestrian	X			
1.16	Mountain Bike		X		
1.17	Equestrian	X			
1.18	Other - specify in comment box				
Part 2 Compatibility with Existing Visitor Uses, Facilities, and Services					
Existing Conditions					
2.1	Is the trail high-use or in a high use area?	X			
2.2	Is there evidence of unauthorized use?	X			There is some evidence of unauthorized use by bikes, but less than other nearby trails.
2.3	Does the proposed use currently exist in the park?	X			

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
2.4	Are there other routes in the unit or on nearby public land that adequately accommodate the type of use proposed?		X		There are other trails within the park unit that allow mtn bike use, but there is no single track trail along the North/West side of Lake Natoma that provides connectivity for mtn bikes. As part of the RTMP, the nearby Shady and Snowberry Trails are being recommended for CIU approval which will provide single-track access and connection for bikes in the area.
2.5	Is there documented survey or statistical information that identifies a need/desire for the CIU?	X			In the 2014 FLSRA Trail User Survey, there were many comments requesting more multi-use trails. At FLSRA/FPSHP, the trail mileage by use type is: 5.5 mi of pedestrian only; 11 mi. of ped./bike; 46 mi. of ped./equestrian; 38 mi. of unpaved multi-use and 19 mi. of paved multi-use.
2.6	Would the CIU create conflicts with existing facilities connected or adjacent to the trail (trail heads, stables, campgrounds etc)?		X		The Middle Ridge Trail is in the vicinity of the Snowberry Trailhead which is adjacent to the Shadow Glen Stables, a DPR concession at Mississippi Bar. State Parks is working with the concessionaire as part of developing the RTMP and CIU decisions in the area. These are the only facilities in the area, the area is also accessed by users from the local community and the nearby paved bike path.
2.7	Would significant user conflict be anticipated with implementation of the CIU?		X		There may be some conflicts along the trail, but it is uncertain if these would be significant.
Part 2	Based on above considerations, will the CIU be compatible with existing visitor uses and services?		X		The Middle Ridge Trail is a very narrow trail, parts of which may originally have been a user-created trail, across very steep side slopes. Due to the topography, not vegetation, there are a number of locations along the trail where sight distances are limited. This makes safe passing of different trail users a challenge. This trail is less compatible for a CIU than other nearby trails.
#3 Effects to Circulation Patterns					
Does the CIU:					
3.1	Provide a loop, semi-loop, or other connection for the CIU user group?	X			Other CIUs recommended for approval, including the Snowberry and Shady Trails, will provide single-track connectivity for bikes along the north/west side of Lake Natoma and across the Mississippi Bar area.

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
3.2	Legalize or legitimize unauthorized trail use currently occurring in the unit?	X			Some unauthorized bike use does currently occur on the trail, but this is not a determining factor in this CIU decision.
3.3	Provide a connection to adjacent land agency that allows similar use?		X		
3.4	Improve circulation or relieve congestion on other high-use trails?	X			It is possible that if approved, this CIU would have some small effect in relieving congestion at other high use trails, such as Granite Bay. The approval of the Shady and Snowberry Trail CIUs will provide single-track access to bikes and help meet the demand for bike use in the area.
3.5	Create the potential need for use changes on adjacent or connecting trails or facilities?	X			The CIU evaluation for this trail is being evaluated along with CIU evaluations for other trail segments in the area including: the Snowberry Trail, Shady Trail and portions of the Pioneer Express Trail.
3.6	Require a seasonal closure to mitigate resource impacts?		X		
3.7	If yes, will seasonal closures disrupt circulation patterns?			X	
Part 3	Based on above criteria, will implementation of the CIU enhance circulation for the new use type?		X		Other trails recommended for CIU in this area, such as Shady and Snowberry, will provide single-track connectivity and opportunities for bikes, this CIU would create additional loop trail opportunities for bikes, but would not significantly enhance circulation.
#4 Effects to Trail Safety					
Existing Conditions					
4.0	Are there documented safety concerns resulting from interactions between different user groups?		X		The park unit has looked at documented trail accidents at the park unit over the past 10 years (from 2022), the vast majority of accidents are solo accidents.
4.1	With standard cyclical trail brushing (as determined by vegetation type), is there adequate sight distance to address safety concerns resulting from the CIU?		X		In a couple of locations the line of sight distance is limited by topography. Most of the trail is through open blue oak woodlands/grassland.
4.2	With standard cyclical slough and berm removal, is there adequate tread width for safe passage of trail users with the CIU?		X		The trail bed is very narrow in many stretches along this trail and the trail crosses steep side slopes for much of its length so there are locations where it is difficult to get off the trail to allow others to pass.
4.3	With equestrian users is there adequate space for non-equestrian users to retreat to the downhill side of trail for safe passage?		X		

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
4.4	If tread widths are narrow, are the fill slopes gentle, firm, and stable for users to retreat to the downhill side of trail for safe passage?		X		The tread is firm but very narrow and the trail is along steep side slopes making it challenging to get off the trail in many places. It appears that much of this trail was user created and not a constructed trail which is why the tread is very narrow in places.
4.5	Does the trail have sinuosity that slows trail users?	X			
4.6	Would the CIU increase the need for enforcement of park rules and regulations?	X			Implementing this CIU might increase the need for enforcement due to the challenging nature of the trail for safe passing.
Design Options to Improve Safety					
<i>Check those design options that could be implemented to improve trail safety with the CIU</i>					
4.7	Increase sinuosity through re-routing or re-construction		X		
4.8	Increase sight distances through re-routing or removal of visual obstructions		X		
4.9	Widening of the trail tread to provide adequate passing space	X			The trail could be widened in places regardless of this CIU.
4.10	Install speed control devices such as pinch points or tread texturing	X			Perhaps in a couple of locations.
Management Options to Improve Safety					
<i>Check those management options that could be implemented to improve trail safety with the CIU</i>					
4.11	Alternating days of use		X		
4.12	One-way directional usage		X		
4.13	Installation of new signage	X			
4.14	Other (Describe)				
Part 4	Based on the above considerations, would implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended) maintain trail safety?		X		The trail needs widening, reconstruction and reroute in places regardless of this CIU, but even with these modifications the steep cross slopes along the trail are a challenge for passing. Other trails in the area are better candidates for multi-use including the Shady and Snowberry Trails.

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
#5 Effects on Trail Sustainability					
Existing Conditions					
5.1	Is the trail draining to natural topographic drainage features, such as creeks and swales or natural sheet flow, and not being captured and concentrated to the man-made drainage structures?	X			At the western portion of the trail a major re-route is proposed and closure/removal of approximately 1300 ft of the existing trail is proposed. This portion of trail is on a steep unsustainable grade and then follows a seasonal drainage and cross what appears to be a seasonal wetland. The eastern portion of the trail primarily drains to natural topographic features.
5.2	Is the trail tread firm and stable?	X			
5.3	Are there abrupt changes in trail running grade?	X			
5.4	Is the fill slope stable?	X			
5.5	Is the back slope/cut bank stable?	X			
5.6	Does the trail tread remain firm and stable in wet conditions?	X			Eastern portion of trail yes.
Supporting data from trail log					
5.7	Number of water breaks (water bars, dips, etc.) required for proper drainage		47		47 culverts and dips documented in condition assessment.
5.8	Linear footage of berms		188		188 ft of berms documented in condition assessment.
5.9	Linear footage of ditches		none		3 ditches identified in condition assessment, documented as points (ditch outs?) not linear features.
5.10	Linear footage rills and ruts		1135		1,135 ft of rills and gullies documented in condition assessment.
5.11	Linear footage log entrenched trail		5557		5,547 ft of entrenched trail documented in condition assessment. Total length of this segment is 12,611 ft.
Describe the locations of soil types and matrixes encountered on trail					
5.12	Rocky				
5.13	Rocky/Partial Soil Profile		X		
5.14	Full Soil Profile				
5.15	Partial Soil Profile/Sandy				
5.16	Sandy				
5.17	Based on these considerations is the trail currently sustainable?	X			Eastern/northern portion generally yes, western/southern end of trail no.
5.18	Will the trail be sustainable following implementation of the CIU without management or design options (as recommended)?		X		
Design Options to Improve Sustainability					
	<i>If not sustainable, can any of the following measures be implemented to make the trail sustainable for the CIU?</i>				

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
5.20	Armoring of wet drainage crossings to reduce erosion and impacts to waterways?	X			
5.21	Additional drainage structures (e.g. grade reversals, water bars, rolling grade dips, etc.) to manage increased mechanical wear?		X		
5.22	Additional bridges and puncheons/boardwalks to facilitate dry crossings necessary to reduce erosion and impacts to waterways?		X		
5.23	Reconstruction or replacement of bridges and puncheons to comply with equestrian construction standards?			X	
5.24	Fill slope or cut bank retaining walls?		X		
5.25	Additional or upgraded turnpikes or causeways?		X		
Minor reconstruction of trail tread would:					
5.26	Correct lack of outslope	X			
5.27	Stabilize abrupt grade changes	X			
5.28	Stabilize cut bank		X		
5.29	Stabilize fill slope		X		
5.30	Correct rilling and rutting	X			
5.31	Provide for firm and stable surfaces		X		
Minor realignment/re-route of trail within the immediate proximity of the existing trail would:					
5.32	Stabilize cut bank		X		
5.33	Stabilize fill slope		X		
5.34	Eliminate abrupt grade changes	X			
5.35	Correct unsustainable grades	X			
5.36	Correct lack of sinuosity		X		
5.37	Should a major reroute be considered to establish sustainability?	X			This evaluation recommends closure/removal of the approximately 1500 ft of the western end of the trail and construction a reroute to connect both the upper and lower Middle Ridge Trail to the Pioneer Express Trail near the southern end of the Shady Trail.

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
Management Options to Improve Sustainability					
<i>If not sustainable, can any of the following measures be implemented to make the trail sustainable for the CIU?</i>					
5.38	Can wet weather closures establish or maintain sustainability?	X			Wet weather closures could help with trail sustainability. Such closures would likely be implemented park wide and could be considered in the RTMP.
5.39	Can other mangement options be implemented to improve trail sustainability? If so, please describe.			X	
Part 5	Based on the above considerations, will the trail be sustainable following implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended)?	X			Sustainability may be able to be maintained with trail modifications, but the trail is in blue oak woodland habitat and there may be concerns with the the level of modifications needed in order to provide a safe and sustainable trail.
#6 Effects or Impacts to the Natural or Cultural Resources					
Would the CIU and/or needed modifications significantly impact:					
6.1	Erosion of existing trail tread and sedimentation of adjacent streams?		X		
6.2	Significant geologic features?		X		
6.3	Sensitive wildlife habitat?		X		
6.4	Sensitive plant habitat?		X		
6.5	A wetland, riparian or stream zone?		X		
6.6	A sensitive cultural feature?	X			Portions of trail may be within an historical landscape. Site specific environmental analysis, including any required additional studies, would need to be conducted to evaluate potential impacts of design option/physical modifications prior to implementing CIU.
6.7	A sensitive palaeontological feature?		X		
6.8	Is the trail a historic feature?		X		
6.9	Would required trail modifications trigger outside agency permits?	X			Maybe for restoration of section of the trail in seasonal drainage to be closed/removed.
Part 6	Based on the above considerations, would implementation of the CIU with management and design options (as recommended) create significant negative impacts to the natural or cultural resources?		X		Impacts to resources may not be significant, however there are concerns with the potential impacts to the blue oak woodland habitat and the level of trail modifications necessary.

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Evaluation Considerations		Yes	No	NA	Comments
#7 Effects or Impacts to Maintenance and Operations					
Would the CIU and/or needed modifications:					
7.1	Change the classification of the trail?		X		
7.2	Require additional maintenance?	X			Maybe, reasonable to expect is there is additional use the maintenance need will increase some.
7.3	Require additional management practices to maintain user compliance?	X			The District could implement occasional patrols with staff or volunteers and provide trail safety and etiquette signing and programs.
7.4	Require additional staff time to address compliance requirements of the management or design options?	X			Proposed closure and restoration of trail, including segment in drainage could require additional staff time to meet permitting compliance requirements.
7.5	Could the proposed modifications be completed by non-department work forces?		X		Some of the modifications could be completed by non-department work forces, but the more involved modifications, such as reroutes and major reconstruction are best completed by Department staff.
7.6	Could the proposed modifications be maintained by non-department work forces with minimal cost to the State?	X			Some trail maintenance work could be completed by non-department work forces, other maintenance work is best suited to Department staff. Using non-department work forces still requires coordination and oversight of Department staff.
7.7	Can necessary management strategies be enforced?	X			Sector/District staff could patrol the trail occasionally and could educate visitors on safe trail use and trail etiquette.
7.8	If not, is there a volunteer group or partner agency that can assist with enforcement?		X		There is a volunteer mounted patrol and the Sector is finalizing an agreement with a bike patrol organization. Both of these groups could help patrol the trail. Volunteer groups assist with patrol of trails and reporting problems, but don't get involved in enforcement.
Based on the above considerations, will implementation of the CIU Part 7 with management and design options (as recommended) create a significant on-going maintenance or operational workload?			X		