



**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP**  
Of The Ventana Chapter  
P.O. Box 604, Santa Cruz, CA 95061  
<https://ventana2.sierraclub.org/santacruz/>  
e-mail: [sierraclubsantacruz@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubsantacruz@gmail.com)

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To:  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
City of Santa Cruz

**Subject: Parks Master Plan**

The Sierra Club is pleased that the City of Santa Cruz is in the process of considering how to best care for its parks. Our city is blessed with a variety of unique parks, many of which have their own current Master Plan, as listed in the 2030 City General Plan. Parks and Open Spaces which have existing Master Plans, including Pogonip, Jessie Street Marsh, San Lorenzo Urban River Plan (SLURP) for the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, and DeLaveaga, should have those Master Plans fully implemented and maintained, and cannot legally be amended directly by a streamlined citywide Parks Master Plan.

Current Park Master Plans, such as the Pogonip Master Plan, were created with community input and with the special needs of each location in mind. Each individual Master Plan was formed with input from ecologists which cannot be replicated in an all-inclusive plan. For example, Pogonip is a precious natural area/open space and is often called the crown jewel of the City of Santa Cruz Greenbelt lands. Pogonip requires specific actions for ecological restoration, which are included in the current Master Plan.

The qualities of our natural areas/open spaces are also not identical. For example, the wetlands of Neary Lagoon and Jesse St. Marsh have different habitat and needs than DeLaveaga. To attempt to amend current Park Master Plans with one streamlined plan would undermine the previous

quality work that was done. The existing Master Plans should be implemented fully to create welcoming areas that would benefit both the people that enjoy them and the wildlife and vegetation that depends on the place.

Parks with existing Master Plans have specific procedures that must be followed when amending the Plans. Placing these parks into a streamlined city-wide PMP does not follow this process and would invite legal challenge. A city-wide PMP works well for parks that are fairly basic and meet primarily neighborhood needs for outdoor activities, such as Garfield Park, but is not appropriate for our natural areas/open spaces that have unique ecological needs.

The Sierra Club urges your careful consideration of this recommendation to exclude those parks with existing Master Plans from the umbrella of the proposed Parks Master Plan for the reasons outlined above.

Sincerely,

Greg McPheeters

Chair, Santa Cruz Group, Sierra Club