

3 Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the extent and location of open space, cultural resources, and recreational spaces within the Dana Reserve (DRSP) area. It also includes goals and policies for ensuring the long-term success and management of these resources and assets. The open space, trail network, and recreational amenities are envisioned as a cornerstone for the DRSP. These open space areas will provide moments to embrace tranquility and peacefulness, while recreation spaces will encourage exercise, exploration, play, and community engagement – part of the larger healthy community vision for the DRSP. Refer to Table 3.1 below for a summary of land use acreages of these areas within the DRSP and Exhibit 3-1 for their locations.

Table 3.1: Recreation and Open Space Land Use Summary

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Acreage (ac)</i>	<i>% of Site (%)</i>
Open Space		
○ Open Space	49.8	17.3
○ Trails		
○ Basins		
Recreation	9 - 11	3.1 - 3.8
Pocket Parks	8.5 - 12	3.0 – 4.2
<i>Totals</i>	<i>67.3 – 72.8</i>	<i>23.4 – 25.3</i>

Exhibit 3-1: Open Space and Recreation Map



3.2 Conservation and Open Space

The proposed DRSP Open Space includes a total of 49.8 acres (17.3%) of the total site. This designation includes areas that remain undeveloped long-term, as well as areas that provide opportunities for passive uses. Examples of areas intended to remain undisturbed long-term include the central oak woodland area, while passive open space areas will include pedestrian and equestrian trails as well as seating areas. County trail standards for pedestrian and equestrian trails are specified in Chapter 4: Circulation.

A Biological Report was conducted for the DRSP in 2020. The report identified five special status plant species located within the DRSP area. Additional special plant and habitat surveys were also conducted in 2018 and 2019. The data collected from these biological studies served as a general guide to the siting of land uses within the DRSP area in order to avoid or minimize impacts to these species.



Open space area concepts.

3.2.1 Biological

Coast Live Oaks

The DRSP contains coast live oak trees dispersed in different locations across the site. With the exception of three non-native trees, no other tree species are located on the property. While many of the coast live oaks are scattered in various configurations, most intact oak woodland (oak forest) is located centrally on the property with a denser tree coverage, canopy structure, and understory shrub cover than other areas of the site. Most of the oaks in savannah, chaparral, and managed oak woodland on the Dana Reserve resprouted from oaks harvested in the late 1800's to increase grazing area. The Dana family had 18,000 head of sheep in the area in the 1890's. The understory of multi-stemmed trees continues to be managed for grazing. The managed woodland has been grazed by horses and cattle in recent decades. Low tree branches and dead wood are removed to increase grass cover and reduce fire fuel.

The majority of the centrally located oak woodland, not historically managed, is to be maintained as part of the DRSP. To maintain the integrity of this centrally located oak woodland, development

and the circulation network has been located to minimize impacts. Where development is to occur adjacent to areas where coast live oaks are to be maintained, County oak tree protection construction best practices will be implemented.

An Oak Woodland Management Plan, Tree Protection Plan, Off-Site Habitat Acquisition and Preservation Plan, and On- and Off-Site Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared. A combination of on-site mitigation plus off-site conservation will be used to offset the loss of coast live oaks. On-site mitigation will be implemented for the 30 individual oaks removed from grassland habitats at a 4:1 ratio to mitigate for temporal loss. Planting locations will be selected adjacent to existing coast live oak areas to be maintained, within open spaces, recreation and park areas, or street trees within select areas. To the extent practical, on-site mitigation of coast live oak trees will be propagated from on-site acorns. Plantings shall not fulfill more than one-half of the mitigation requirements. Off-site mitigation for loss of oak woodland habitat will be provided by oak woodland habitat acquisition and conservation at a 2:1 ratio (two acres conserved for every acre of oak woodland habitat impacted).

Special Status Plant Species

As part of the 2020 Biological Report conducted for the DRSP effort, eight special status plant species were identified within the DRSP area. These include Sand mesa manzanita (*Arctostaphylos rudis*), Sand buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus var. fascicularis*), Michael's rein orchid (*Piperia michaelii*), Mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata*), California spineflower (*Mucronea californica*), Nipomo mesa ceanothus (*Ceanothus impressus var. nipomoensis*), and Sand almond (*Prunus fasciculata var. punctata*). Based on the extent of the DRSP development area, the 2020 Biological Report found potential for adverse effects, however it noted that effects to all special status plant species can be mitigated.

The DRSP will avoid impacts to special status plant species to the extent practical. For those special status species that cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation ratios will be required.

Listed Plant Species

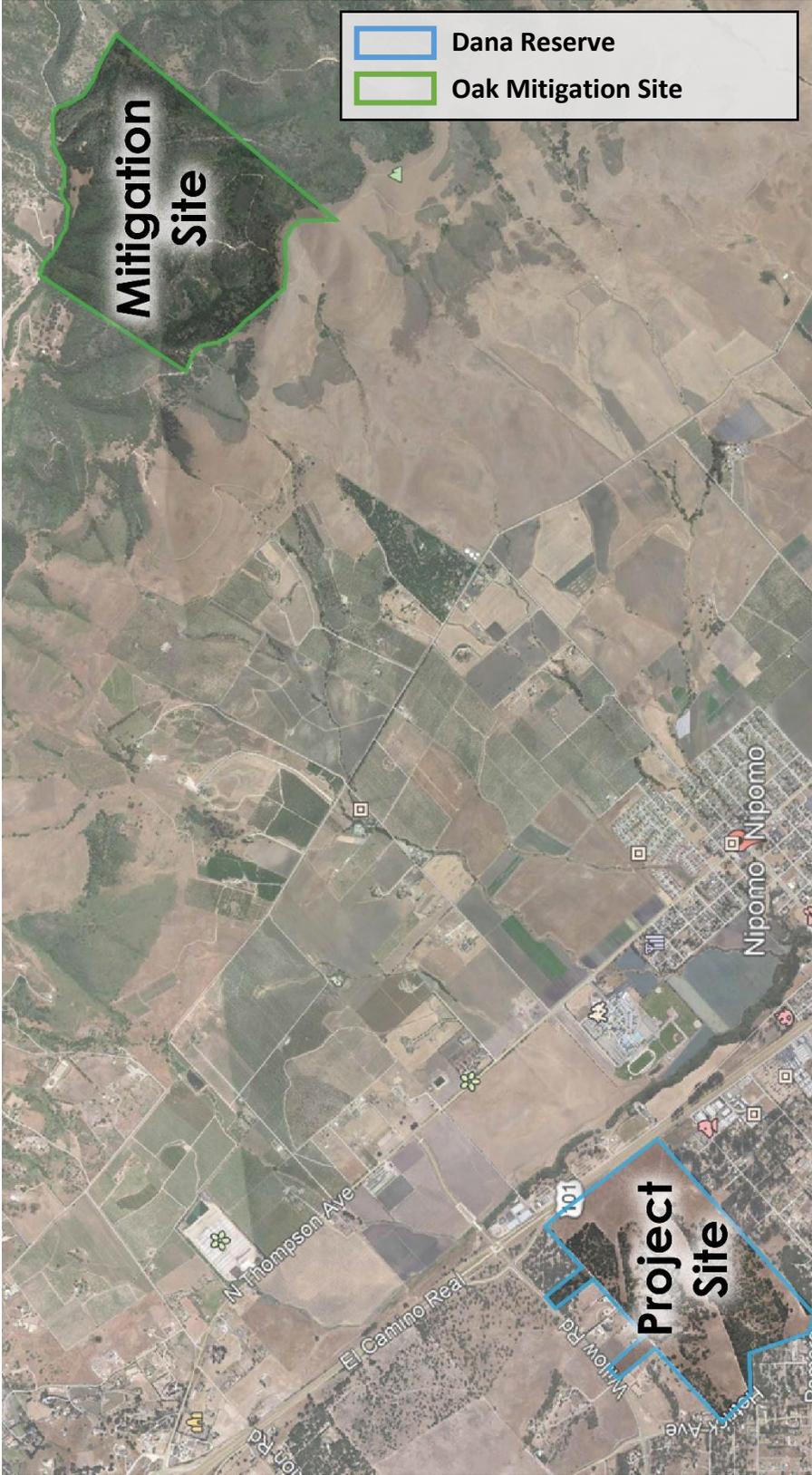
During surveys and field observations on the property for the 2020 Biological Report, small patches of a state listed plant species, Pismo clarkia (*Clarkia speciosa ssp. immaculata*) were identified in portions of the centrally located oak woodland area. Development, including roadways, have been situated on-site to avoid impacts to these areas, however a small impact to state-listed species may occur. Relevant state permits will be obtained and mitigation implemented for impacts to this rare plant.

Biological Mitigation Area(s)

The DRSP proposes to preserve an off-site oak and chaparral habitat mitigation site within the Nipomo area. Located along the Temettate Ridge, the Dana Ridge Ranch site, will be placed into a conservation easement with a local non-profit to provide for the long-term management and maintenance of the site. Refer to Exhibit 3-2 for the location of the Dana Ridge Ranch site.

On-site habitat on DRSP occupied by sensitive species will be placed in protected easements. Appropriate off-site habitat will be preserved and/or restored to mitigate for impacts to rare species.

Exhibit 3-2: Biological Mitigation Site



3.2.2 Cultural

Cultural resources include historical, archaeological, and/or paleontological resources. An archaeological cultural resource site has been identified within the DRSP area. Site design and layout of the property has been designed to avoid impacting this location by integrating it within open space and avoiding excavation of the resource site.

Known archaeological resources shall be protected to the greatest extent practical. If additional archaeological resources are discovered during grading and construction activities the County's Inland Land Use Ordinance shall be applied, which may include, but is not limited to fencing or other protective measures around identified cultural resources.

3.2.3 Conservation and Open Space Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following DRSP goals and objectives brought forward from Chapter 1 of this document and associated policies are provided to guide the recreation and open space uses envisioned within the DRSP area.

Goal 8

Maintain the large, centrally located oak woodland area as a site feature. Minimize impacts to special status plants and animals on-site.

Open Space Policy 8.a

Prepare a Oak Woodland Management Plan, Tree Protection Plan, Off-Site Habitat Acquisition and Preservation Plan, and On- and Off-Site Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to mitigate loss of coast live oaks on-site.

Open Space Policy 8.b

For unmitigable impacts to special status plant species, the mitigation ratios identified in the Environmental Impact Report shall be followed. Where feasible, plant salvage and seed collection shall be conducted prior to habitat disturbance.

Open Space Policy 8.c

The open space areas shall be a separate lot or lots under the ownership of the Homeowners Association. Open Space Policy 8.b

Open Space Policy 8.d

Ongoing maintenance of the oak woodland shall be conducted consistent with the approved Coast Live Oak Woodland Habitat Preservation Plan.

Open Space Policy 8.e

Interpretive signage may be installed at designated locations along the trail network and other open space areas to promote public awareness and education about oak woodlands and other special plant species within the DRSP area.