



El Capitán, Refugio and Gaviota General Plan Update Draft Concepts Virtual Meeting Q&A Summary

March 4, 2026

The Draft Concepts Virtual Meeting, held on March 4th 2026, included a Q&A session. During this session, State Parks staff addressed some of the questions submitted by participants. This document presents responses to all questions received during the meeting, including those that were addressed during the Q&A session.

Additional questions about information shared during the Draft Concepts in-person and virtual meetings held in February and March 2026, or any aspect of the ECRG General Plan Update project, can be sent to: info@ECRGplanupdate.com.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.1	Will we have a link to the recording of the meeting?	Yes, a link for the virtual meeting materials is provided on the project website: https://ecrgplanupdate.com/participate/ Scroll to "Past Opportunities" and open the "Draft Concepts Meeting" section to access the recording.
Q.2	When will El Capitan open for camping?	While this meeting addresses questions related to the General Plan Update process, Katherine Wilson with Parks shared during the Q&A session that the construction work at El Capitán is wrapping up well and staff are hoping for a potential opening date in early April, although the timing will be weather dependent. Parks provided a construction update in January, which is available here: Project Website For questions related to camping reservations, please visit the individual parks' websites directly, or call (805) 968-1033.
Q.3	When will Reserve California begin accepting reservations for El Capitan?	See Q.2

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.4	When will El Capitan campground reopen?	See Q.2
Q.5	Will this presentation have no actual content and plans, just about the process??	<p>The presentation included information about the purpose of State Park General Plans as a requirement for park units to move forward with specific projects, the planning process for the ECRG General Plan Update, as well as project work done to date. The in-person and virtual meetings, along with the accompanying online survey, provide an opportunity for the public to share their vision and hopes for the parks, as well as provide feedback on the draft concepts for each of the three parks, including draft declarations of purpose, draft vision statements, and draft management zone maps and matrices. The presentation and meeting recording are available on the project website at https://ecrgplanupdate.com/participate/</p>
Q.6	When will el capitan state beach be open for camping?	See Q.2
Q.7	Will there be any in person meetings	<p>An in-person meeting was held February 12, 2026 at the Vista de las Cruces School near Gaviota SP. Meeting materials are available for review on the project website: https://ecrgplanupdate.com/participate/ Future participation opportunities will be posted on this page as well.</p>

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.8	Where will the funding come from for any and all updates to the 3 State Parks	Implementation funding for projects stemming from updates to the three State Parks will come from project-specific funding sources. The Department's core operations are supported primarily through the State of California General Fund, which provides funding for planning, administration, and ongoing park management. Capital improvements and other project-level work are typically funded through special appropriations, statewide initiatives, or competitive grant programs that target specific project types such as deferred maintenance, infrastructure improvements, accessibility upgrades, climate resilience, and habitat restoration. Projects identified in the General Plan would be implemented as funding opportunities become available.
Q.9	How many people are on this zoom?	Attendance averaged approximately 60 people over the course of the meeting.
Q.10	There is no way to appreciate who is online and listening to this presentation. Weird. We were told there were people from all over CA online but it doesn't feel that way.	See Q9
Q.11	Are you going to say when the Pier gets fixed, or at least who at the CCC we can contact to move that project forward?	A timeline for repair of the pier cannot be provided at this time. The most recent Coastal Development Permit application could not proceed because conditions associated with the

Q. #	Question	Response
		<p>permit could not be incorporated into the engineering design without compromising the structural integrity of the pier. At this time in the ECRG General Plan Update, it is helpful to hear from the public and other agencies about what people want to see with the pier.. State Parks will continue to coordinate with the California Coastal Commission if a feasible path forward can be identified.</p>
Q.12	<p>Regarding overuse and overcrowding; can there be some perks or improved availability for local residents to have more access to beaches (camping, day use, etc)?</p>	<p>California State Parks manages state park units for the benefit and enjoyment of all Californians. Access to camping and day-use opportunities is provided through statewide reservation systems and policies that are applied consistently across the park system. The Department does not provide preferential access based on local residency, and individual park districts do not have authority to create local exceptions to statewide rules and regulations.</p>
Q.13	<p>Wow, your survey is rough. You can only choose 1 alternative and cannot provide any additional comment??</p>	<p>The polls shared during the Zoom meeting were designed as quick opinion polls to help participants engage with the materials during the meeting and provide all participants with a sense of others' opinions. The feedback survey is available via the link here: https://arcg.is/GuGKb0. This survey asks for more detailed feedback on the materials shared. Additionally, comments are accepted at info@ECRGplanupdate.com for the duration of the project.</p>

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Q.14	How do we give feedback? You say you want feedback but is this the only way?	<p>Please provide feedback on the materials shared via the online survey, which is available from March 4, 2026 through April 15, 2026: https://arcg.is/GuGKb0</p> <p>Additional feedback can be provided at any time during the project duration by emailing info@ECRGplanupdate.com.</p>
Q.15	Will all the presentation materials be available to attendees following the meeting? Where?	Yes, an email was sent to meeting attendees and project email subscribers with a link to the project website where the materials are posted: https://ecrgplanupdate.com/participate/
Q.16	At Gaviota when will the roadways be repaired and improved?	See Q. 44
Q.17	Would like to see the Las Cruces Adobe improved and promoted.	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.

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Q.18	Does "Recreational Capacity" include maintaining the same number of campsites available?	When speaking about recreational capacity as part of the draft concept management matrices, this term encompasses the recreational uses available in the parks today, including the type of recreation, the quantity of opportunities, and the frequency that these opportunities are available. For proposed camping, this means that as there are a certain number of campsites across the three parks today, this same type of recreation (camping) and the quantity of campsites is proposed to be maintained in the future as part of these draft concept plans, allowing that the current range of campsite types (RV, tent, etc.) provided may need to change based on future conditions.
Q.19	Free day use at Gaviota. Especially important for North County residents. BTY - the 'send anonymous' button doesn't work ;0(Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.
Q.20	ARE THERE ANY IN PERSON MEETINGS	See Q.7
Q.21	I know this was called a participatory meeting.... but it was really just a one way lecture.	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward. Please provide further feedback on the materials shared via the online survey, which is available from March 4, 2026 through April 15, 2026: https://arcg.is/GuGKb0

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Q.22	Move Gaviota campground out of the floodplain up to the easterly bluff accessed the Mariposa off/onramp	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.
Q.23	Suggest Parks acquire the Chevron plant for expansion / camping	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.
Q.24	What date is anticipated to reopen El Capitan State Beach for camping?	See Q.2
Q.25	What happened to all the letters and correspondence submitted last year at the beginning of this process? Will they be published for public review?	All comments received have been reviewed and considered in the development of the draft concepts, as shown on slide 18 of the presentation. The presentation is available for review here: https://ecrgplanupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/ECRG Virtual Public Meeting Presentation.pdf

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.26	Is the general plan update contemplating expansion of any of these parks?	The General Plan update does not contemplate acquisition of additional land or expansion of park boundaries. However, both El Capitán State Beach and Gaviota State Park include parcels that were acquired after the previous General Plans were adopted. These existing State Parks properties will be evaluated for potential use in the updated plans, which may appear as an expansion of park facilities even though the land has been owned by the Department for more than 20 years. The intent of the planning effort is generally to maintain the current recreational capacity while improving and modernizing facilities. This may include evaluating opportunities to relocate or reconfigure certain amenities within park boundaries to improve climate resilience and resource protection, as well as considering a more expanded trail system at El Capitán State Beach.
Q.27	Is there any planning for adding electricity and water hook up sites for RV's?	There are no current plans to add RV sites with electricity and water hookups. The parks rely on limited on-site well water and septic systems that do not have capacity to support increased water demand or wastewater generation, and connection to municipal utilities is not feasible due to the remote location of the parks.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.28	Why does this process take so long when the parks need work on them now? thank you	The planning process for State Park General Plans is governed by statutory requirements under the California Public Resources Code Section 5002.2. This law requires that General Plans for units of the State Park System undergo environmental review, public input, and approval by the California State Park and Recreation Commission to ensure that proposed changes are thoroughly evaluated and transparent to the public. Because these steps include technical studies, environmental compliance under the California Environmental Quality Act, public review periods, and formal approvals, development of a new General Plan typically takes several years to complete.
Q.29	When will the construction work at Gaviota State Park be completed? Is any future work being planned there?	There are currently no improvement construction projects underway at Gaviota State Park. From time to time the Department performs storm damage repair or maintenance work as needed; however, there is no construction currently taking place within the park.
Q.30	How do I get on the email list to be notified when the campground will start taking reservations?	See Q.2
Q.31	Why is Gaviota Park closed so often, beyond weather related concerns? Will Gaviota Park be open more frequently in the future?	Gaviota State Park campground is closed seasonally during the winter months due to consistently severe wind conditions in the canyon that make camping conditions poor and result in very low occupancy. This seasonal closure has been the longstanding operational approach for the park. The day-use

Q. #	Question	Response
		<p>area remains open year-round and only closes temporarily if flooding or access conditions make the park inaccessible.</p>
Q.32	<p>How do you get on the "contact list" for El Capitan?</p>	<p>To join the ECRG Plan Update email list, please complete the form available the bottom of every page of the project website, https://ecrgplanupdate.com Entering your email on this form will subscribe you to project updates.</p> <p>For park-specific updates not related to the General Plan Update process, and to subscribe to State Park emails, please visit the El Capitán webpage, available here: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=601</p>
Q.33	<p>What priority is being placed on the maintenance of existing trail infrastructure at the parks? For Gaviota backcountry specifically, these trails support a large amount of people from the SY Valley and Lompoc where recreational trails are few and far between. Is it possible to ensure budget allocation via the master plan for bio/cultural assessment of trails so that maintenance activities can executed?</p>	<p>Current trail maintenance in the Gaviota backcountry is generally limited to vegetation management to keep trails passable. California State Parks works with the Santa Barbara County Trails Council to assist with these efforts. Information developed during the General Plan process may help identify resource considerations and data gaps that could inform future trail maintenance activities that would require additional review under the California Environmental Quality Act.</p>

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.34	If State Parks had access to as much Prop. 4 funds as it wanted, how much money could the public assist this region in requesting for GP projects??	The potential need for capital improvements across the three parks is substantial and could reasonably total hundreds of millions of dollars. Major needs include replacement of aging restroom facilities, roadway and bridge improvements, trail repairs and expansion. While funding sources such as Proposition 4 may help support some of these projects, the Department's capacity to design, permit, and construct major capital improvements is limited. Districts typically manage only a few large capital projects at a time, so improvements must be prioritized and implemented over time as funding and staffing capacity allow.
Q.35	All the Native Chumash signs needs to be updated & fixed. Land acknowledgment is key so visitors know whose land their visiting	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward. The Department's Reexamining Our Past Initiative is currently working on projects such as land acknowledgement and signage through consultation with tribal partners, with more information available here: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30464 .
Q.36	is there any plan to connect them all with a coastal trail?	The California Coastal Trail is a statewide concept supported by multiple agencies and referenced in the Santa Barbara County Gaviota Coast Plan (Policy REC-P6: Coastal Trails). California State Parks supports the broader vision of a contiguous coastal trail and would work with partner agencies and landowners to help identify alignments in this region that both provide meaningful public access and protect important natural and cultural resources. Specific alignments in this area have not yet been determined and would require further

Q. #	Question	Response
		planning, coordination, and environmental review before implementation.
Q.37	on the west Gaviota park rd that terminates at the Hollister Ranch is a landslide onto the road just above the park kiosk-entry that has not been cleared and presents a daily and significant traffic hazard	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.
Q.38	once the General plan is complete, will it actually be implemented as it is written, or is it more of a loose list of recommendations that may or may not come to fruition? And to what extent does funding affect which, if any, elements of the plan are carried out?	See Q8
Q.39	Who has the responsibility at Gaviota State Park to maintain safe and fire resistant maintenance? The SB County or CA State Parks?	California State Parks is responsible for maintenance and fire safety within areas and roadways owned and managed by the park. The Department works in coordination with CAL FIRE to maintain defensible space around structures and ensure appropriate clearance along park roads used for access and emergency response. Some roadways within the Gaviota area are under other jurisdictions, and certain utility easement holders are also responsible for maintaining vegetation clearance and access along their easement corridors in accordance with their agreements.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.40	other parts of that road are in significant and dangerous disrepair and is used regularly use by the public -please address immediately	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward.
Q.41	Why are the restoration plans for Gaviota Park falling short of the agreement the agreement with Coastal Ranches many years ago?	It is unclear which agreement is being referenced here.
Q.42	Where can we get information to be able to attend In the future	<p>Progress on the planning project will be shared on the website, with participation opportunities posted here: https://ecrgplanupdate.com/participate/</p> <p>To join the ECRG Plan Update email list, please complete the form at the bottom of every page of the project website, https://ecrgplanupdate.com Entering your email on this form will subscribe you to project updates.</p>
Q.43	Can there be more meetings in person can that fall draft meeting be in person and how do we get notices	Thank you for your comment. All comments will be considered as this planning effort moves forward. See Q.42 for information about receiving notices.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.44	Regarding the roads on Gaviota Park - the parks own the roads - why does not Parks repair and maintain them ??	, A timeline for roadway repairs at Gaviota State Park cannot be provided at this time. Maintenance work such as striping, patching, and hole repairs is conducted by DPR as funding allows; additional collaboration on road repair in certain areas is conducted through MOU and other agreements, especially in response to storm debris and damage. The section of roadway between U.S. 101 and the bridge involves multiple jurisdictions. A bridge replacement project initiated by Santa Barbara County in 2005 underwent extensive interagency review regarding project scope and regulatory considerations. Because a final, mutually agreeable design could not be completed within the available funding timeframe, the project funding ultimately lapsed. State Parks intends to re-engage with partner agencies to explore a revised, sustainable approach that can be supported by all involved parties.
Q.45	Since El Capitan is more than just a beach, has there been discussion about renaming it El Capitan State Park or about park naming more generally as agencies rethink historic place names?	This topic is being discussed as part of the planning process.
Q.46	What will be done about the grass fields at Refugio? The fields are uneven and not well maintained. The ADA trail to bathroom from the ADA site is often covered by weeds.	The grass areas at Refugio State Beach are maintained as open space rather than athletic playing fields. As such, they are mowed periodically but are intended to remain more natural in character rather than maintained as level playing surfaces. Thank you for noting the condition of the ADA path. Maintaining accessible routes is an important priority.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.47	Has our region received any Prop. 4 funds for the Gav. Parks?	Proposition 4 funds have not yet been dispersed. As a result, no funding from this source has been allocated to projects in the Gaviota-area parks at this time.
Q.48	Can you provide contact email address for Kate Wilson? (specific questions and comments)	Please direct questions and comments to the district's general information email at channelcoastinfo@parks.ca.gov . This inbox is monitored by a team that helps route inquiries to the staff member best suited to address the question. Because the volume of email received by individual staff can be substantial, this process helps ensure that questions are reviewed promptly and directed to the appropriate subject matter expert. If a matter specifically requires Kate Wilson's attention, the message will be forwarded to her for follow-up.
Q.49	Jim - sounds like there's no money for road maintenance at the Gaviota Park ?	Road maintenance funding within California State Parks is limited and allocated on a rotating basis across park units. While there is not currently dedicated funding for roadway improvements at Gaviota State Park, district-level annual roadway maintenance needs are evaluated and prioritized alongside other units within the district as funding becomes available.

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.50	was this the address you shared for updates: info@ecrgplanupdate.org ?	<p>The project email address is info@ECRGplanupdate.com where written comments and questions can be sent directly.</p> <p>To join the ECRG Plan Update email list, please complete the form available at the bottom of every page of the project website, https://ecrgplanupdate.com Entering your email on this form will subscribe you to project updates.</p>
Q.51	If Prop 4 funds are available, would it be feasible to purchase the Gaviota oil processing facility area on the north side to locate a campground there as well as Park District offices? The Mariposa Reina off and on ramps make this area very attractive for campers. A shuttle could provide access to the main Gaviota beach for campers.	California State Parks is not currently pursuing acquisition of additional property in that area. The Department does hold an easement across the property for potential future segments of the coastal trail and has been coordinating with Santa Barbara County regarding their planning for the site and opportunities that could provide mutual public recreation benefits.
Q.52	Could Prop 4 funds be made available to provide free day access to the Parks? (first come first served until the parks reach capacity)	<p>Proposition 4 funds are primarily intended for climate resilience, natural resource protection, and infrastructure projects rather than subsidizing park operations or day-use fees. The measure authorized \$10 billion in bonds for activities such as water resilience, wildfire prevention, coastal protection, biodiversity projects, and park infrastructure improvements related to climate impacts.</p> <p>Because these funds are intended for capital projects and environmental resilience, they would not typically be used to provide free day-use access. If Proposition 4 funding becomes available for projects in this region, it would more likely</p>

Q. #	Question	Response
		support needed improvements such as infrastructure upgrades, resource protection, or climate-adaptation projects within the parks.
Q.53	Without the Gaviota Pier reconstruction, are there options being considered for our fishing and boat launching communities?	See Q11. California State Parks continues to seek public input on the future of the Gaviota Pier through the General Plan update process. In the interim, the park has supported beach launching of vessels where feasible.
Q.54	Are the campground configurations, particularly at El Capitan going to remain the same as prior to the extensive refurbishment work on the entrance road?	The campground configuration at El Capitán State Beach is not proposed to change. The layout, camping capacity, and general use of the campground will remain consistent with existing conditions.
Q.55	Thank you Isabelle.	N/A

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.56	Is it correct that all three state parks currently allow motorized watercraft, because i saw it on el capitan and gaviota but not refugio. refugio has always been a beach launch site for small boats	<p>Refugio State Beach has historically allowed beach launching of small vessels. Vessel launching within the Channel Coast District is governed by a District Superintendent’s Order that allows vessels that can be launched and retrieved by hand from the beach at Refugio State Beach and Gaviota State Park. This policy is described in District Superintendent’s Order No. 910-10-06 (Vessel Launching), which can be viewed here: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=31053</p> <p>In practice, this means Refugio functions as a hand-launch beach for small boats, consistent with its long-standing use by local boaters. Small vessels, including those with motors, may be launched by hand where allowed under the order. Non-motorized watercraft launching at Refugio SB is listed as an allowable activity in the “Beach and Bluff” zone on the Refugio Draft Concept Management Matrix; revision to include hand launch of small boats, including those with motors, will be considered</p>
Q.57	the residentil buildings at Refugio are used for what currently and what is their planned future use?	<p>Refugio State Beach includes several residential structures that were acquired with the property and are considered part of the historic fabric of the park due to their age and their association with the former Rutherford family ownership of the land. Three historic houses and a barn fall into this category.</p> <p>One of the historic houses is used as a park residence for staff who must remain on site to respond to emergencies. Another functions as an education center supporting Junior Lifeguard</p>

Q. #	Question	Response
		<p>and interpretive programs. The third is used as a sector office for park operations staff, and the barn is used for storage. Additional residences located outside of the primary public use area are used to house staff who provide 24/7 response capability. Because the park is located far from nearby towns, on-site staff housing helps ensure timely response to fires, medical emergencies, law enforcement needs, infrastructure issues, and other urgent operational matters.</p>
Q.58	Will the paved trail between El Cap and Refugio be rebuilt or abandoned?	<p>California State Parks has explored options to restore the paved trail between El Capitán and Refugio; however, significant coastal erosion has eliminated much of the buildable area along the bluff. At this time, the Department is not aware of a feasible engineering solution that would allow the trail to be safely reconstructed. As a result, the trail currently remains as two separate partial segments that cannot be connected. If a viable method for addressing the erosion constraints becomes available in the future, the Department would be open to exploring options for restoring the connection.</p>
Q.59	THANK YOU ALL!	N/A
Q.60	What is the plan to restore the pier and boat hoist?	See Q.11

Q. #	Question	Response
Q.61	If the path between El Cap and Refugio is not practical buget wise, are there alternative plans to extend existing trail infrastructure to provide for long treks from the El Cap camping areas?	Yes. While reconstruction of the coastal path between El Capitán and Refugio may not currently be feasible, California State Parks has been working with the Santa Barbara County, the United States Forest Service, and the Santa Barbara Trails Council to explore development of a broader trail network. A key goal is to create new trails utilizing the El Capitán backcountry that would connect to existing trail systems on U.S. Forest Service lands and other regional trail networks. Expanding these connections is an important objective being evaluated through the General Plan process.