

# News Release



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## **Department Chooses More Comprehensive Public Planning Process for Hunting at Tolowa Dunes**

### **General Plan Process Provides Better Decision Making**

California State Parks has deleted the proposed reclassification of Tolowa Dunes State Park from the October 8 agenda of the State Park and Recreation Commission. The item called for consideration and possible action by the Commission to reclassify a portion of the park to a state recreation area to continue limited waterfowl hunting.

While many people in the community support the reclassification and the continuation of waterfowl hunting, many others oppose it. With this controversy, it became clear that a different course of action would be more appropriate. State Parks has decided not to proceed with the reclassification at this time and instead, will produce a comprehensive general plan for the park, in which, reclassification will be one of the alternatives.

Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks, said she wants to make the resumption of hunting on the property one of the considerations to be studied in the process of preparing the general plan. State Parks will also be looking at other issues and activities, including the protection and preservation of important natural areas and the cultural resources at the site, like the Native American cemetery.

The procedure for developing a general plan offers the public a greater opportunity to participate and provide input for the future of Tolowa Dunes. It is an open and transparent process. It will examine the type, quality and extent of the various public needs and proposed uses for access and recreation within the park.

Limited waterfowl hunting had occurred at Tolowa Dunes since before the state took ownership in 1979. When it was acquired by the state, one of the purposes was the preservation of outdoor recreational opportunities that had historically been offered. Since that time,

including after it was classified as a state park in 2001, hunting was allowed, until last year when the regulation that governed the hunting was repealed.

To continue hunting, Parks considered several options, including the original proposal to just reclassify the current park to a state recreation area. All other state park units in which hunting takes place are state recreation areas.

General plans are the tools by which overall park management of all units in the state park system is governed. These comprehensive documents include an environmental assessment of proposed park uses. This process will result in a more thorough examination and public input process for how this property should be managed in the future.

The other major issue before the Commission is the recommendation to adopt a general plan amendment for Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park to accommodate the addition of the Mill Creek Property to the park. That proposal will remain on the October agenda.