

LAKE YOSEMITE REGIONAL PARK—SUSTAINING MERCED’S MOST IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ASSET

■ OVERVIEW

The general underlying themes in the University Community Area Plan relative to recreation include the importance of Lake Yosemite Regional Park to Merced County, the nature and amount of increased demand for recreational facilities caused by the new population generated by the University Community and the UC Merced campus, and the roles of Merced County, UC Merced and the University Community in providing recreational facilities sufficient to meet potential demand.

The goals and policies presented below assume, and seek to address, future demands on regional recreational facilities, especially Lake Yosemite Regional Park. These policies also establish a framework for future individual and collective action by Merced County, the University Community and UC Merced to respond effectively over time to the recreational needs of a growing population in eastern Merced County.

■ GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The University Community Area Plan affects land uses in the two-mile wide buffer surrounding the University Community. The proposed Area Plan goals, objectives and policies and related implementation strategies are shown below.

Goal

Joint use of the University of California, Merced recreation facilities, and Lake Yosemite Regional Park.

Objective

ALY 1.0 To meet the recreational needs of UC Merced students, staff and faculty, as well as University Community residents.

Policies

ALY 1.1 Work with UC Merced for the shared use of its on-campus recreational, parking and sports facilities with the Merced community, especially with regards to campus parking in areas bordering Lake Yosemite Regional Park. Such cooperative programming may diminish impacts on the existing Park by providing additional recreational opportunities and shared parking for Park users. (*Imp 3.3, 5.6*)

ALY 1.2 Encourage UC Merced to provide students, staff, and faculty with active recreational and sports facilities and programs on campus that meet or exceed any recommended standards for the anticipated campus population, concurrent with increases in campus population.

(Imp 3.3, 5.6)

ALY 1.3 Cooperate with UC Merced, to the maximum extent possible, to initiate and maintain a cooperative campus-run, water-related program on Lake Yosemite that combines academic programs with student and public recreational water sports activities year round.

(Imp 3.3, 5.6)

Goal

Expansion and Improvement of Lake Yosemite Regional Park.

Objective

ALY 2.0 To assure the continued capacity of Lake Yosemite Regional Park to serve the recreational needs of County residents.

Policies

ALY 2.1 Require that, prior to the transfer of title for any land that is currently or planned to be a part of Lake Yosemite Regional Park, UC Merced develop mechanisms for the acquisition of additional property to replace any parkland lost or impacted by the conversion for campus uses consistent with state and federal grant requirements. Eligible lands include, but are not limited to, lands contiguous with the existing developed Park and property on the Lake itself, subject to approval of the Board of Supervisors. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.2 Developers of the University Community and UC Merced shall develop additional parkland adjacent to Lake Yosemite to be included within the Lake Yosemite Regional Park in collaboration with UC Merced in order to meet the needs of the University Community and campus populations at a standard of 0.88 acres for each 1,000 residents. *(Imp 4.8, 5.6)*

ALY 2.3 Work with the City of Merced and UC Merced to expand Lake Yosemite Regional Park in response to impacts associated with buildout of the University Community and UC Merced. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.4 Encourage UC Merced to designate the County-owned property currently designated for Park expansion as an appropriate buffer for Lake Yosemite Regional Park, including, but not limited to, such lower intensity on-campus uses as athletic fields. *(Imp 3.3)*

ALY 2.5 Monitor the use of Lake Yosemite Regional Park associated with increased population and assess those impacts related to the build out of the University Community and UC Merced. The County, UC Merced, and developers shall work cooperatively with the University to assure that development adjacent to Lake Yosemite does not result in a net increase in costs to the County or decrease in service level. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 2.6 Initiate, develop, and implement a Lake Yosemite Regional Park Master Plan to determine the potential uses, necessary facilities, design standards, and funding strategies for public parkland surrounding Lake Yosemite. The Master Plan shall address active and passive recreation including playing fields, recreational equipment design and placement, a pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian recreational trail system around the Lake and connecting to existing or planned trails, parking and landscape planning and design. *(Imp 4.8, 5.6)*

Goal

Meeting the Recreational Needs of Eastern Merced County.

Objective

ALY 3.0 To establish a planning framework and identify resources to support recreation planning for Eastern Merced County

Policies

ALY 3.1 Work with UC Merced to create a joint task force to meet regularly in a public setting to achieve cooperative goals for recreation and open space planning, parkland and resource acquisition, and the provision of adequate active and passive recreation, parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the population of eastern Merced County and UC Merced. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 3.2 Work with the City of Merced to establish recreation fees to apply to all new development, including the University Community, to support the expansion of Lake Yosemite Regional Park. *(Imp 3.3, 5.6)*

ALY 3.3 Cooperate with UC Merced to maintain the use of Merced Hills Golf Course for as long as feasible (without impacting the schedule for Phase 1 UC Merced campus development) in planning and siting campus buildings, to allow sufficient time for evaluation of alternative sites. *(Imp 3.3)*

ALY 3.4 Encourage development of a public golf course in the vicinity of the University Community, UC Merced, and Lake Yosemite, as warranted by demand for such a facility. (*Imp 1.4, 5.6, 5.11*)