

Park roads and trails are the backbone for recreational opportunities, as well as park operations and management.

Following the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, safe access and circulation quickly emerged as a high priority for initial recovery as well as for longer-term reestablishment of public access at Big Basin.

miles of trails and unpaved routes

> **14** miles of paved roads

Big Basin Redwoods State Park: Park Access and Safety Post-Fire



California Department of Parks and Recreation

547,000+ visitors per year (2019-2020) Big Basin Redwoods SP Most Severely Burned Areas* Regional and Paved Routes Trails and Unpaved Routes Park Access Point Bridges with Fire Damage (53) *97% of the park was burned, areas highlighted indicate highest burn severity

IMMEDIATE RECOVERY

The first step in the recovery process included thorough damage assessment followed by addressing immediate safety hazards, such as toxic debris, hazard trees, and unstable slopes. At least 47 pedestrian bridges, 6 vehicular bridges, and many other trail structures were destroyed, making it additionally difficult to assess many areas of the park. Hazard tree removal is now complete along most park roads and facility areas and the burn debris and associated toxic soils from all damaged facility areas have been removed within burned areas. Future phases of work will include the extensive repair of 73 miles of trails along with hazardous tree removals in remote locations along these trail segments prior to opening trail segments to public use.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Reestablishing public access at Big Basin will focus on a road and trail network that allows visitors to safely experience the park's resources, while also protecting sensitive and recovering habitats. Post-fire access planning at Big Basin will exemplify the integration of forest stewardship strategies such as expanded prescribed fire management with the need to provide safe access for high quality visitor experiences.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN REESTABLISHING PARK ACCESS



- Roads and trails should be located and designed to help visitors avoid hazards, and to include well-planned evacuation routes and emergency vehicle access.
- The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) provides regulations for emergency vehicle access and safe egress.
- Through creative planning and design, the regulations can be met while maintaining the spirit of the forest and sense of natural wildlands.



- While the flora and fauna of redwood forests are incredibly resilient to wildfire, it will take decades for Big Basin to heal. Road and trail systems will need to be adaptively managed in response to the forests' long-term recovery, including closing access to areas with recovering resources.
- Stewardship, including fuel reduction and other restoration and management efforts, will help the forest evolve to a more robust and stable ecosystem.
- Following fire events and during/after reconstruction of park infrastructure, it will be critical to ensure the protection of the park's watersheds.



Big Basin welcomes a range of user groups that arrive at the park by different transportation modes, move throughout the park in different ways, and participate in a variety of activities. Providing equitable access for all these user groups is critical. Key considerations include:

- Creating a scenic and uncongested park access and circulation experience.
- Supporting access by a range of transportation modes and user types including by car, bike, walking, equestrian, and shuttle routes.
- Accommodating an appropriate amount of car, equestrian trailer and bike parking at key trailheads and facility locations.

EXAMPLE PROJECT

Muir Woods National Monument The National Park Service is implementing 'Redwood Renewal' projects designed to ensure the preservation and health of Muir Woods National Monument's fragile old-growth coast redwood ecosystem. Projects include a parking and shuttle reservation system as well as improvements to roads, trails, and visitor amenities, which together enhance visitor experience while protecting park resources.



ReimaginingBigBasin.org

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