

# Calero Trails Master Plan

## Site Tour Summary



October 2010  
*Draft*



Santa Clara County Parks

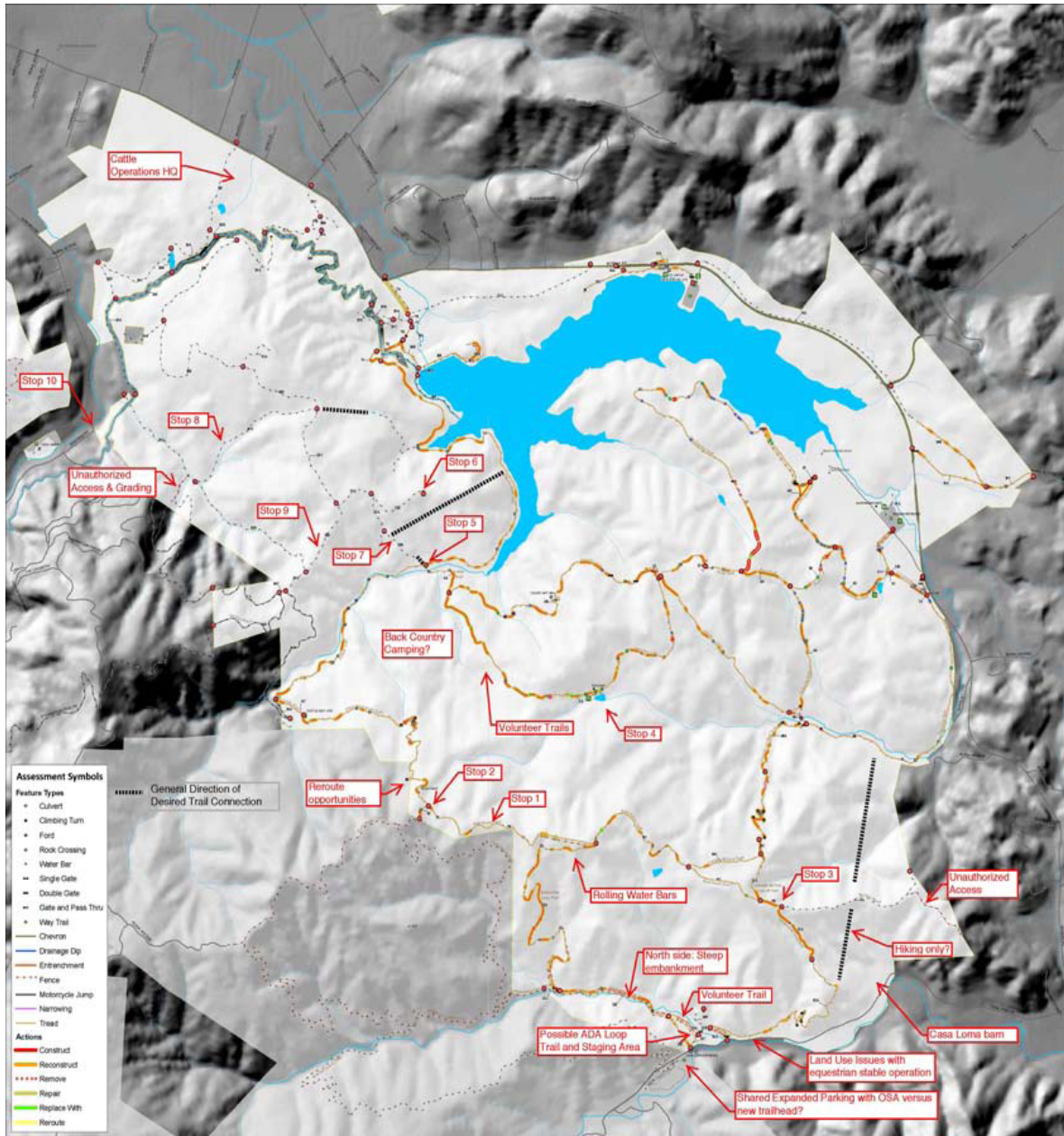
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*Landscape Architecture*

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# INTRODUCTION

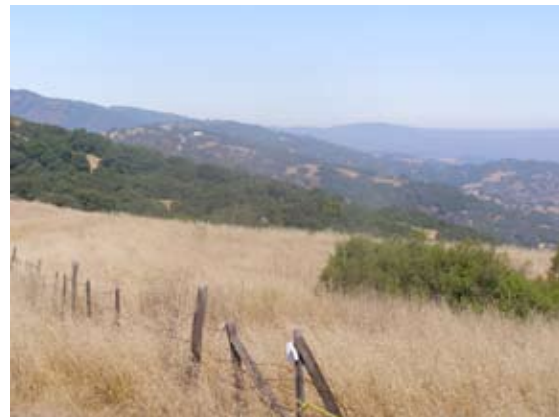
On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 the Calero Trails Master Plan project team embarked on a field trip of Calero Park and the newly acquired Rancho San Vicente. Our crew of 7 included Elish Ryan, John Falkowski, Drew Merry, William Burr, Greg Bringelson, Lee Steinmetz and Elke Ikeda. We started our tour from the Calero Park McKean Entrance parking lot. Comfortably seated in a van and one staff pick-up truck we spent the better part of a day touring the terrain on existing trails and service roads. Frequent stops allowed us to review particular site conditions and to get a “feel” for the land, its topography, views, vegetation, constraints and opportunities. An account of our findings is captured in the following image report and the annotated map.



## PHOTO SUMMARY

**Stop #1 on top of Bald Peak's Trail:** From Casa Loma Road we followed the west branch of the Serpentine Loop Trail and portions of the Bald Peak's Trail. Spectacular vistas opened up to all sides including to Loma Prieta, Bald Peak and Mt. Umunhum.

**Topics of Discussion:** Desired trail widths; interface with regional trails and OSA trails; trail drainage approaches; service spine roads; need for emergency access; what can and cannot be accomplished with quads.





**Stop #2 @ Chisnantuk Peak Trail:** Following Bald Peaks Trail further west we arrived at the trail end of Chisnantuk Peak Trail. The trail was built by County crews and in steep areas has severe erosion problems that prohibit use during the winter months.

**Topics of Discussion:** Trail construction practices; opportunities for trail realignment; treatment of abandoned trails.



**Stop #3 @ East Branch of Serpentine Trail:** Backtracking east on Bald Peaks Trail we stop at a service road intersection just beyond the intersection with the Canada del Oro Cut-off Trail. The service road is used as an unauthorized trail access mostly by equestrians.

**Topics of Discussion:** Access control; connection north to join with Figueroa Trail; connection south to connect with Serpentine Loop Trail along Casa Loma Road.





**Stop #4 @ Fish Camp:** After returning to the McKean Parking Lot for a restroom break we proceeded via the Access Trail, Pena Trail and the southern segment of Lavelina Loop to a lovely shaded picnic area at Fish Camp.

**Topics of Discussion:** Placement of grazing control fence; pond water use for illegal crops; County construction projects such as trough and observation deck building; benefits of destination “rest stops” along trails; environmental impacts of bullfrog population; diminished Western Pond turtle population.



**Stop #5 @ upper end of Cherry Cove Trail:** After a great lunch at Fish Camp we continued west on the Lavelina Loop to Cottle Trail and Cherry Cove Trail, the boundary between Calero Park and Rancho San Vicente (RSV). A small hike up the hill brought us close to a dead-ending trail from RSV. Fencing attested to the existing grazing program at RSV. The fence which now runs about half-way up the hill at one point encompassed a long stretch of the valley creek for animal watering. A survey proved that this was an unauthorized use and fences were relocated accordingly.

**Discussions:** Connection of existing RSV trail to Calero trails; desired trail alignments parallel to hillside slopes to control trail grades and to make trails more accessible; presence of large stands of poison oak.





**Stop #6 @ Rancho San Vicente Radio Tower:** After taking some of our team members back to the McKean parking lot we took McKean Road west to the RSV service entry leading to the radio/cell tower. Past the ranching operation headquarters we rumbled over a very rugged and rocky service road to the top of the hill with its radio tower beacon. Immense vistas over Calero Reservoir unfolded and large boulder outcroppings rimmed the edges of the plateau and beyond. Serpentine soils dominate the area.

**Topics of Discussion:** Maintain access to radio tower; lack of non-serpentine access routes; existing grazing operations, spectacular vistas.



**Stop #7 @ Rancho San Vicente service road branch just beyond radio tower:** Following an existing service road west and south of the radio tower we soon reached the hillside that we had previously observed from below at stop #5.

**Topics of Discussion:** Apparent trail connection opportunities; potential connections to Cherry Cove Trail; reservoir trail loop.





**Stop #8 @ Rancho San Vicente service road @ Silvaden:** After backtracking for a short distance we followed an existing service road west. This small valley provides habitat for several endangered plants. Downhill and past a seeping spring we parked the car and proceed on foot to a creek crossing at the bottom of the hill. This crossing is not usable during the winter months. A short distance beyond we observed to the property boundary where illegal grading activities have degraded the hillside.

**Discussions:** Unauthorized access; protection of habitat versus public access.



**Stop #9 @ southern edge of Rancho San Vicente:** A short backtrack west and south brought us to a location that brought us visually close to the hillsides beyond.  
**Topics of Discussion:** Future trail connection; possible backcountry/overnight hiking/camping possibilities in hillsides south of location.





**Stop #10 @ Town of Almaden:** Back on McKean Road we proceed west and then south on Almaden. We parked our cars at the quaint town's post office and proceeded on foot along Almaden Road to Bertram Road. After crossing an old wooden bridge we faced a fence on the left hand side of the road with a no entry sign. Here, a narrow sliver of Rancho San Vicente property extends into town.

**Topics of Discussions:** Future trail connection; Parking needs and impacts on neighborhood.

