

REPORT BY THE
AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CALIFORNIA

**THE STATE LACKS GENERAL PLANS AND
LAND OWNERSHIP RECORDS FOR
THE STATE PARK SYSTEM AND DOES NOT
COLLECT ALL LEASE PAYMENTS ON TIME**

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OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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Honorable Art Agnos, Chairman
Members, Joint Legislative
Audit Committee
State Capitol, Room 3151
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members:

The Office of the Auditor General presents its report concerning the need for improvement in the preparation of general plans and ownership maps for the state park system, in the collection of lease payments for park property, and in the review and correction of the State's proprietary land index.

Respectfully submitted,

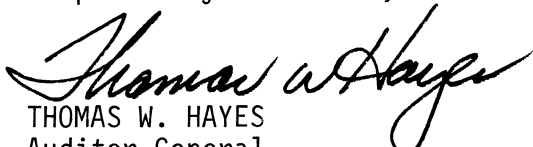

THOMAS W. HAYES
Auditor General

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SUMMARY

The Department of Parks and Recreation (department) could more effectively manage the state park system. The department has prepared general plans for 98 of the 289 units in the state park system. Two-thirds of the State's parks lack general plans, which are required before new permanent facilities can be developed in a park. In addition, the department does not collect all lease payments when they are due. At the end of fiscal year 1983-84, the department had not collected \$92,550 in unpaid lease payments. Finally, the department lacks accurate information about its land. It has not corrected the statewide land index as required or updated its maps of parks. As a result of these conditions, public access to some state parks is limited, the State loses revenue because of late lease payments, and the State does not have accurate information about the land owned for the state park system.

Lack of General Plans for State Parks

The mission of the department is to preserve California's natural and cultural heritage and provide outdoor recreation within the 1.2 million acres of the state park system. The state park system currently includes 289 park units (referred to in this report as "parks"). Much of the department's funding for acquisition and development of parks has come from park bond acts passed since 1927. The department, however, has no general plans for one million acres that it controls. Parks without general plans constitute 84 percent of the total acreage in the state park system and two-thirds of the State's 289 parks. One park lacking a general plan, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, constitutes over 500,000 acres.

The Public Resources Code requires a general plan for a park before new permanent development can occur. Therefore, new permanent facilities cannot be developed in parks without general plans, and the

public does not always have access to these parks. Although the state park system provides campsites for over 6 million campers each year, in fiscal year 1983-84, over 65,000 vehicles carrying people seeking campsites were turned away from state parks that lack general plans. In addition, park rangers lack guidance in managing resources within parks without general plans. The department's Development Division has estimated that at its current staffing level the department can complete only 3.5 general plans each year. At this rate, the department will require about 55 years to complete a general plan for each state park that does not have a general plan.

Although factors outside the department's control--such as public review of general plans, legislative mandates, and staff reductions imposed by the Governor's Budget--can affect the preparation of general plans, we determined that the department can improve its preparation of general plans. For example, the department can establish a more consistent base for scheduling the preparation of general plans. Currently, the department's schedule for preparing general plans is determined by its multi-year capital outlay program, which changes frequently. In addition, the multi-year capital outlay program rarely includes parks that need policies only for resource management.

The department can also improve its budgeting for preparation of general plans. Our review disclosed that the department does not budget accurately or monitor the time it spends for general planning. The division with primary responsibility for preparing general plans has underestimated by over 40 percent the time necessary to prepare general plans. Further, when department priorities have changed, the department has not budgeted accurately for such changes. Without proper scheduling and accurate budgeting, the department does not have control over its limited resources.

Loss of Revenue
From Late Lease Payments

The State receives revenue from leases of property that it is not using for parks. However, the department is not collecting all lease payments when they become due. At the end of fiscal year 1983-84, for example, uncollected lease payments totaled \$92,550. In addition, the department lost approximately \$13,800 in interest revenue in fiscal year 1983-84 because lease payments were not collected promptly. Moreover, the department does not assess a late charge for overdue lease payments. We estimate that the department could have earned over \$28,000 in fiscal year 1983-84 by assessing a late charge for overdue payments.

Finally, the system for collecting late lease payments is fragmented, and the department does not identify late lease payments promptly. Under an interagency agreement, the Department of General Services collects late payments for the Department of Parks and Recreation. However, the Department of Parks and Recreation does not identify overdue payments until from 30 to 60 days after the payments are due. Delay in collecting late lease payments reduces the interest income that the State earns on lease payments.

Inaccurate Information
About the Department's Land

The listing of the department's land in the Proprietary Land Index (index) is not accurate. (The index lists all land owned or acquired by the State, except land acquired by the Department of Transportation for highway purposes.) The department controls more than two-thirds of the land listed in the index, which is maintained by the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services. We found that the index does not include some of the State's parks and has incorrect names for others. In addition, when we compared the listing of the department's land in the index with the department's two other

lists of land ownership, we found that the other two records also contained errors. Although the California Government Code requires the department to review and correct the index every five years, the department has not reviewed the listing of its land for seven years. Department officials state that review of the index requires staff time and that available staff are assigned to other projects with higher priority.

The Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services estimates that it will spend about \$53,700 in fiscal year 1984-85 to maintain this index, which is incomplete because the Department of Parks and Recreation has not corrected information about its land. In addition, without a complete index, the department is unable to respond promptly and accurately to inquiries about land ownership from the Legislature and other agencies.

Lack of Ownership Maps

The department lacks maps for 62 parks and does not have current maps for another 76 parks. The department lacks accurate maps because mapping has not been a priority since 1977. The department's mapping section has been reduced, and staff have been assigned to other duties.

In addition, the department has not fully used its interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources to prepare maps on a computer. A Department of Water Resources study shows that preparing maps on a computer saves approximately 60 percent of the time needed to prepare a map manually. Using a computer to prepare and update the 138 maps would save the Department of Parks and Recreation almost \$226,000 of the cost of preparing and updating the maps manually.

Recommendations

To identify priorities for preparing general plans, by January 1986 the Department of Parks and Recreation should provide the Legislature with a priority list including all the remaining parks that lack general plans. The department should update the list as priorities change. The department should also estimate the fiscal years in which high priority general plans for these parks can be started. To prepare general plans independently of the changing multi-year capital outlay program, the department should prepare general plans based on the priority list. Further, except for parks that require immediate development for public access, the department should not include a park in its multi-year capital outlay program until it has prepared a general plan for the park. Finally, when the State proposes acquisition of land for a state park that does not have a general plan, the department should estimate the time and the cost necessary to prepare the park's general plan and then rank the plan on the priority list. To improve its budgeting for preparation of general plans, the department should monitor the actual time spent preparing general plans so that the time it budgets more closely reflects the actual time required.

To ensure that lease payments are collected on time, the department should notify lessees that rental payments are due on the date specified in the contract, that it will no longer send invoices, and that lessees must include their lease account numbers when they submit payments to the department. In addition, the department should evaluate the cost and benefits of assuming responsibility for collecting overdue payments and should implement an accounting system that will identify late payments before they are 30 to 60 days overdue. The department should include a specified late charge for overdue payments in all new or renewed lease contracts.

To ensure that the Proprietary Land Index is accurate and to comply with the California Government Code, the department should

review and correct its listings in the index every five years. Further, to review and correct the index more efficiently, the department should review additions and deletions from the index periodically during the five-year cycle. Finally, the department should regularly provide to the Office of Real Estate Services a list of current and former park names.

INTRODUCTION

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (department) manages approximately 1.2 million acres of land that constitute the state park system. This total comprises 1.1 million acres controlled by the department and almost 130,000 acres that it leases from federal, state, and local agencies. The 1.1 million acres that the department controls represent 69.5 percent of the 1.6 million acres of land that the State has acquired for all state programs. (Appendix A shows the total acreage of land controlled by various state agencies for operation of state programs.)

The state park system was created in 1927. From its early emphasis on preservation of parkland, the mission of the state park system has expanded to include preserving California's natural and cultural heritage and providing the public with opportunities for outdoor recreation. California's natural heritage includes natural and scenic landscapes and their ecological systems. The State's cultural heritage includes outstanding examples of historic sites that represent California's past. The department acquires, maintains, restores, and reconstructs historic sites to protect their historical integrity. In fulfilling its mission to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, the department acquires, develops, and manages outdoor recreation lands and provides appropriate facilities and services.

The State Park and Recreation Commission classifies parks pursuant to features described in Section 5019.50 et seq. of the Public Resources Code. Parks can be classified into several categories, of which historical parks, recreation areas, and beaches are three examples. (The term "parks" in this report refers to all units in the state park system, including classified and unclassified units.)

The state park system now includes 289 parks, including 47 parks that had not been classified as of June 30, 1984. The state parks vary greatly in size. One park, the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, contains over 500,000 acres, almost half of the acreage in the state park system. Other parks range in size from one-tenth of an acre to over 67,000 acres.

Much of the funding for acquisition and development of parks has come from six bond acts passed by voters since 1927. Four bond acts enacted since 1974 have authorized spending a total of nearly \$1.2 billion for state and local parks, beaches, and recreational and historical resources. These bond acts intended that the State provide and encourage recreational opportunities for Californians, particularly for persons in urban areas near the coast. For example, the Nejedly-Hart State, Urban, and Coastal Park Bond Act of 1976 declared that funding for state parks near coastal areas is critical because 85 percent of the State's citizens live within 30 miles of the Pacific Ocean.

State Agencies Involved in Park Acquisition and Development

The Department of Parks and Recreation is one of several state agencies that are involved in acquisition and development of state parks. The department is organized into units that carry out planning, property acquisition, resources protection, park development, field operations, and administrative functions. For example, the Planning Division identifies the statewide needs for park acquisitions and development. The Development Division and the Resource Protection Division prepare general plans for park management and development. The Operations Headquarters Office, with the assistance of 5 regional offices and 51 district offices, oversees the field operations of the park system.

In addition to the department, the State Public Works Board, the Department of General Services, and the State Park and Recreation Commission participate in park acquisition and development. The State Public Works Board approves the department's requests for acquisition of park property after the Legislature approves funding for the acquisitions. The Department of General Services carries out the transactions for acquisition and disposal of park property. The State Park and Recreation Commission is responsible for setting policy for the administration, protection, and development of state parks. This commission's responsibilities also include classifying parks for expected uses based on their physical, historical, or cultural features, naming parks, and approving general plans for park use and development.

The department's budget for fiscal year 1984-85 includes approximately \$75 million for personnel and approximately \$31 million for operating expenses and equipment. The 1984-85 budget also provides over \$45 million for capital outlay expenditures from bonds and other funds.

Preparation of General Plans

Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code requires that the department prepare a general plan for a park before new permanent facilities or concessions can be built in the park. (Construction of temporary facilities--such as parking lots where no major grading must be done, chemical toilets, gravel road surfaces, and picnic tables--and emergency repairs and construction to improve public safety do not require general plans.) A general plan includes a summary of the park's resources, with policies and a plan for managing the resources, and a plan for developing appropriate facilities in the park. The general plan constitutes an environmental impact report required by the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970. The department uses general plans to justify budget requests to the Legislature for acquiring additional land or for developing park facilities. General plans also provide guidance in managing park resources.

The department's Development Division has the primary responsibility for preparing general plans. However, the Resource Protection Division is responsible for preparing both an inventory of

the cultural, natural, recreational, and scenic resources found in a park and a plan for protecting and managing these resources; this plan is included in the general plan. The Resource Protection Division generally prepares the inventory of resources before the State Park and Recreation Commission classifies a park and before work on the general plan begins. (Appendix B describes the sequence of park acquisition and development.)

The Development Division then prepares plans for land use and for development of facilities in the park. When the plans for managing and developing the park are complete, the Resource Protection Division prepares an analysis of the environmental impact of the planned development in the park. The Resource Protection Division then circulates the preliminary draft of the general plan for public review pursuant to requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 and Section 15106 of Title 14 of the California Administrative Code.

The department's procedures for preparing general plans include opportunities for the public to comment on and evaluate the department's proposals for park use and development. In addition to providing a period for public review of the environmental impact report, the department holds other periodic public hearings near the park. These hearings occur when the department commences work on a general plan for the park, when the department proposes alternative development plans, and when the department prepares its proposed final plan for the park.

Leases of Park Property
Not Used for Park Purposes

Prior to July 1983, the Department of General Services maintained jurisdiction over and management of property acquired for parks until the Department of Parks and Recreation needed the property for use in the park system. Although the Department of General Services still acquires land for the Department of Parks and Recreation, jurisdiction over property acquired for parks by April 1 of each year is transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation pursuant to Chapter 752, Statutes of 1982, and Chapter 439, Statutes of 1983. Between January 1, 1983, and June 30, 1984, 44,315 acres of park property previously under the jurisdiction of the Department of General Services were transferred to the department.

With the approval of the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of General Services leases property acquired for parks that is not used for parks. Leased property is used for such purposes as farming or grazing, or for residential structures. Under an interagency agreement, the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services continues to manage certain park properties. These properties include land with leases and land on which are located persons or businesses eligible for government assistance in relocating. The department reimburses the Office of Real Estate Services for managing these properties. As of September 1, 1984, the Office of Real Estate Services was managing over 27,000 acres for the department.

Chapter 439, Statutes of 1983, specified that rents and revenues from leases on most park properties be deposited in the State Park and Recreation Fund. The department's accounting section currently collects all the revenues from leased properties. Under the interagency agreement, however, the Office of Real Estate Services is responsible for collecting late lease payments upon receiving notification by the department that the payments are late.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We conducted this review to assess the Department of Parks and Recreation's management of the state park system. We focused our review on the department's preparation of general plans, its collection of lease payments, its examination and correction of entries in the State's Proprietary Land Index, and its preparation of maps showing the State's ownership of park land.

To evaluate the department's management of state parks, we visited the department's regional offices in Monterey, San Diego, Santa Rosa, and Stockton. In addition, we visited the following five parks in northern California: Burleigh Murray Ranch, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, McNee Ranch, Monterey State Historic Park, and Wilder Ranch State Park. We also visited eight parks in southern California: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Crystal Cove State Park, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, Leo Carrillo State Beach, Old Town San Diego State Historic Park,

Torrey Pines State Reserve, and South Carlsbad State Beach. Some of the parks that we visited are not open to the public, some do not have general plans, and some include land that the department has leased out. At each park, we interviewed park rangers regarding problems with park management.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the department's preparation of general plans, we selected a sample of the 85 parks with land acquisitions funded by the bond acts of 1974, 1976, and 1980. Some of the acquisitions added to existing parks, and some acquisitions were for new parks. Our sample included 10 of the 13 parks that we visited. The 85 parks in our sample comprise approximately 123,000 acres, which cost the State approximately \$275 million. We determined the dates that these parks were acquired and whether the department has completed general plans for these parks.

We reviewed the department's policies and procedures, interviewed officials responsible for the planning and development process, and evaluated the budgets for and time expended for completing general plans. To evaluate the demand for campsites at state parks, we analyzed the department's report listing the number of vehicles carrying persons seeking campsites that were turned away from state parks.

We contacted the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service to determine how these agencies evaluate priorities for

the development of park and recreation facilities. In addition, we created a scale for rating the development of the 85 parks in our sample. The chiefs of the Acquisition Division, the Development Division, the Planning Division, and the Resource Protection Division, as well as one regional director, assisted in critiquing, refining, and applying the scale to the parks in our sample. The scale contains ten categories for classifying the parks. The categories range from parks with limited access and no consistent public use to parks that have a general plan and that have been developed to capacity. (Appendix C contains the rating scale.)

To evaluate the department's system for collecting lease payments, we interviewed the accounting staff and lease management staff at the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of General Services. To determine when lease payments were due and when they were paid, we reviewed the 144 leases of park property that were in effect between July 1, 1983, and June 30, 1984. To compute interest lost on late payments, we used the rate of interest earned by the State's Pooled Money Investment Account during 1982-83.

To determine the accuracy of the State's Proprietary Land Index, we reviewed the department's entries in this index, and we compared these entries with records in the Acquisition Division and in the Management Analysis and Information Systems Section. To determine the responsibilities for and the cost of maintaining the index, we reviewed pertinent state codes and the department's policies concerning records of land ownership.

We also interviewed staff from the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services who are responsible for the accuracy of the Proprietary Land Index. To evaluate the usefulness of the index in providing information on ownership of state land, we contacted the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Forestry, and the Department of Water Resources. We did not review the index for the accuracy of its information on leased land, mineral interests, or easements.

To evaluate the accuracy of the department's land ownership maps, we reviewed department maps for 265 parks. We excluded parks that are on leased land, that consist primarily of structures, or that were acquired after December 30, 1983. To compare the cost of preparing maps manually with the cost of preparing them by computer, we reviewed the Department of Water Resources' analysis of the cost of preparing maps by computer and interviewed staff who prepare maps by computer at that department.

CHAPTER I
THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LACKS GENERAL PLANS
FOR TWO-THIRDS OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM

The Department of Parks and Recreation (department) does not have general plans for over one million acres of state land that it controls. Parks without general plans constitute 84 percent of the total state park acreage and two-thirds of the State's 289 parks. The Public Resources Code requires a general plan for a park before new permanent development can occur. Therefore, facilities such as permanent campsites and concessions cannot be developed at parks without general plans, and the public does not always have access to these parks. Although the state park system provides campsites for over 6 million campers each year, in fiscal year 1983-84, over 65,000 vehicles carrying people seeking campsites were turned away from state parks that lack general plans. In addition, without general plans, park rangers lack guidance in managing resources within the parks. The Development Division has estimated that, at its 1984-85 reduced staffing level, it can complete only 3.5 general plans per year. At this rate, the department will require about 55 years to complete a general plan for each state park that presently does not have a general plan. Although factors outside the department's control can affect the preparation of general plans, we determined that the department can improve its preparation of general plans by more consistent scheduling and by more accurate management of staff time.

LACK OF GENERAL PLANS CONTRIBUTES TO
DELAYS IN MEETING RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code, effective July 1972 and amended in 1978, 1980, 1982, and 1983, requires a general plan for a park before development that makes a new permanent commitment of resources can occur. Examples of such permanent development include parking facilities, restrooms, campsites, or campstore concessions. In addition, a general plan provides policies for managing the park's natural and cultural resources. A general plan also constitutes the environmental impact report required by the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970.

Since Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code became effective in 1972, the department has completed general plans for 98 parks, 34 percent of the 289 parks in the state park system. Two-thirds of the State's parks do not have general plans. Parks without general plans cover over one million acres, 84 percent of the land in the state park system. One park lacking a general plan, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, constitutes over 500,000 acres.

The 1974, 1976, and 1980 park bond acts include in their goals the development of park facilities to meet public recreation needs. In addition, the 1984 park bond act identified \$100 million to be used for development, rehabilitation, or restoration of state parks. Land acquisitions for 85 parks were funded by the 1974, 1976, and 1980 park bond acts. Some of the acquisitions added land to existing parks. Our

review of these 85 parks found that 47 (55 percent) do not have general plans. The Chief of the Resource Protection Division told us that the department has prepared general plans more quickly for some of the State's acquisitions for the park system funded by these park bond acts.

Because new permanent development cannot occur at state parks that do not have general plans, some parks are not fully accessible to the public, and the department cannot meet the public's need for outdoor recreation. For example, although the state park system provides campsites for over 6 million campers each year, in fiscal year 1983-84, over 65,000 vehicles carrying people seeking campsites were turned away from state parks lacking general plans. This figure does not include persons who unsuccessfully sought reservations at these parks through the department's Ticketron reservation system. The reservation system does not provide data on the number of persons who tried unsuccessfully to reserve space at state parks.

General plans are needed both for undeveloped parks and for parks that were developed before Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code became effective in 1972. Although many parks were developed for public access prior to 1972, facilities in older parks may need improvement, expansion, or relocation to meet the public's recreational needs or to protect natural resources in the park. Without a general plan, however, these changes cannot be made. For example, between 1975 and 1977, the State acquired nearly 4,000 acres that were added to

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park in San Diego County. These acquisitions cost \$2.7 million. However, the park's 51-year old campground facilities cannot be expanded and the newer land cannot be developed until a general plan for the park is completed. In fiscal year 1983-84, almost 700 daytime visitors and almost 3,100 vehicles carrying people seeking campsites were turned away from this park.

Parks that are not yet open to the public also need general plans to assist park rangers in managing park resources. For example, the State acquired Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park in Shasta County in 1975, at a cost of over \$900,000. This 5,900-acre park is not fully open to the public because the State is repairing a road that will provide access to the park. Although a general plan is not required for completion of the road repairs, a general plan would have assisted the department in managing the park properly. According to a 1981 memo from the regional director responsible for the park, the park's resources were threatened by vandalism. The regional director proposed a brief interim plan for managing and protecting the park's resources. A full general plan for this park would include policies for managing park resources that are vulnerable to vandalism. Although the department has implemented temporary measures to protect the park, the department has not prepared a general plan for this park.

When we used our rating scale to assess the level of development in the 85 parks in our sample, we found that lack of development and accessibility at a park correlates with lack of a

general plan for the park. We determined that over 50 percent of the parks that lack general plans have little or no development for public use. Most of these parks were acquired after 1972. Another 19 percent of the parks without general plans have a moderate level of development. All of these parks, however, were in the state park system before the 1972 requirement for general plans. We found that 65.8 percent of the parks in our sample that do have general plans also have extensive development.

The department's preparation of general plans may be further delayed because of staff reductions. The Governor's Budget for fiscal year 1984-85 proposed a reduction in the department's staffing for planning, acquisition, and development. The Development Division provided information to us showing that it lost 31 (30 percent) of its staff, and the Resource Protection Division provided information showing that it lost 8 (19 percent) of its staff. In a memo dated May 1984, the Development Division estimated that it would be able to complete only 3.5 general plans each year at its fiscal year 1984-85 reduced staffing. At this rate, the department will require about 55 years to complete a general plan for each state park that lacks a general plan.

THE DEPARTMENT CAN IMPROVE ITS PREPARATION OF GENERAL PLANS

Some of the factors that affect the preparation of general plans for state parks are outside the department's control. For

example, Section 15106 of Title 14 of the California Administrative Code requires a 45-day period for public review of the environmental impact report for planned development of a park. The department also provides time for public comment at other stages in the preparation of general plans. Controversy during these public reviews can delay completion of general plans. In addition, legislative mandates have changed priorities for preparing general plans for some parks. Finally, the staffing reduction proposed by the 1984-85 Governor's Budget reduces the department's resources for preparing general plans. Despite these factors, however, we determined that the department can improve its preparation of general plans by establishing a consistent priority list for preparing general plans for all state parks that lack general plans and by accurately budgeting or monitoring staff time for preparing general plans.

The Department Lacks a Firm Base for Scheduling Preparation of General Plans

The department bases its priorities and schedule for preparing general plans on its multi-year capital outlay program (program) for development projects. This program is a five-year schedule for developing facilities at state parks; it identifies the year of and the funding for specific park developments. However, we found that the multi-year capital outlay program does not provide a firm base for scheduling preparation of general plans. The program does not provide for consistent scheduling because it changes frequently. In addition, the program does not include preparation of plans for parks requiring

little development. Finally, the program does not include consideration of the overall development and accessibility of each park.

First, the multi-year capital outlay program does not provide a firm base for scheduling preparation of general plans because the program changes frequently. For example, in fiscal year 1983-84, the Resource Protection Division spent time on general planning for 30 parks. We reviewed four revisions to the multi-year capital outlay program for that year and found that the revisions changed the capital outlay program for 18 of the 30 parks. Moreover, none of the program revisions included the remaining 12 parks for which the division had spent time on general planning.

The department does not have control over its schedule for preparing general plans when the schedule is dependent on the multi-year capital outlay program. Further, lack of control reduces efficiency in using staff resources. The chiefs of the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division told us that staff work is more efficient when it can be based on schedules that do not change. For example, when preparation of a general plan is interrupted, the same staff may not be reassigned to the project at a later date.

In addition to not providing a base for consistent scheduling, the multi-year capital outlay program does not provide a base for scheduling preparation of general plans for parks where little

development is anticipated. General plans for these parks provide policies for managing park resources. The chiefs of the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division told us that because of limited staff the department usually does not include in its schedule preparation of general plans for parks where development is not anticipated.

We contacted the National Park Service to learn how the federal government develops priorities for park development at national parks. We found that the National Park Service prepares a "statement for management" to provide policies for managing resources in national parks where no development is anticipated. According to the Chief of the Resource Protection Division, however, the Department of Parks and Recreation has not determined which state parks might require less-developed management plans because the parks will not require development.

The final reason that the multi-year capital outlay program does not provide a firm base for scheduling preparation of general plans is that the program does not establish priorities for development in all parks that lack general plans. The program ranks only the specific development projects that are included in the program. According to the Chief of the Planning Division, the department has not evaluated the development and accessibility of all parks in the state park system. Consequently, the department does not include the development and accessibility needs of all parks in its schedule for preparing general plans.

To respond to the need for improved access to parks, the department has begun preparing general plans that include several parks within one plan. For example, the department prepared a single general plan for the San Diego Coast in 1983. This plan included the following parks: Cardiff, Carlsbad, Leucadia, Moonlight, San Elijo, South Carlsbad, and Torrey Pines State Beaches, and Torrey Pines State Reserve. Presently, the department is planning a single general plan to include 11 state parks along the Pajaro Coast near Santa Cruz. According to the Chief of the Resource Protection Division, however, the department has not identified all parks in the State that could be consolidated into single general plans for specific regions.

The Department Has Not Accurately
Budgeted or Monitored Time for
Preparation of General Plans

Because the department has not monitored the time it spends to prepare general plans, it has underestimated the time necessary for preparing general plans and for revising existing general plans. Furthermore, when department priorities have changed, the department has not budgeted accurately for such changes. According to officials in both the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division, the divisions do not monitor most staff time spent preparing general plans or compare the time spent with the time budgeted. Consequently, the department has not developed adequate workload standards.

Two divisions in the department--the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division--have primary responsibility for preparing general plans. The Development Division estimates that it requires approximately 18 months to complete a general plan. The Development Division also estimates that it spends about 4,000 hours of staff time per plan. However, officials in the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division told us that, until 1984, neither division had monitored the actual time that staff spends preparing general plans.

In April 1984, the Development Division completed an analysis of the actual time it spent preparing general plans. In its analysis, the division found that it spent an average of 5,753 hours of staff time to complete each of the 20 general plans that were prepared between July 1977 and December 1983. The analysis further revealed that the department spent an average of 25.9 months to complete each plan from the date work on the general plan began to the date the State Park and Recreation Commission approved the plan. The analysis also indicated that the department required an average of six months after commission approval for follow-up work, such as preparing the plan for final printing.

The Development Division thus underestimated the number of hours of staff time necessary to complete a general plan by 43.8 percent. The division also underestimated the number of months necessary to obtain commission approval of general plans by

approximately 43.9 percent. Furthermore, officials in both divisions told us that they have not included in their budget for general plans sufficient time for the follow-up work that occurs after the State Park and Recreation Commission approves a general plan.

The Resource Protection Division found a similar discrepancy between time spent and time budgeted. The discrepancy, however, resulted in the division's spending less time on general planning than it had budgeted. During fiscal year 1983-84, the Natural Heritage Section in the Resource Protection Division began to monitor staff time devoted to various activities. The section's supervisor found that the section had to spend less time on general plans than it had budgeted because it had underestimated the time it needed to spend on other work. By the end of our review, the other sections in this division had not monitored the time their staff spent on general plans.

As mentioned earlier, the Development Division estimated that, with its reduced staffing for fiscal year 1984-85, it could complete only 3.5 general plans each year. However, because the division has underestimated the time to prepare general plans, its estimate of 3.5 general plans completed per year may be overly optimistic.

In addition to not budgeting sufficient staff time for preparing general plans, the department has not budgeted sufficient time to prepare revisions to general plans. When the department schedules development of facilities that were not identified in the

original general plan, the department must revise the plan. On the average, the department has revised nearly three existing general plans each year since January 1, 1980. Of the total time spent on general planning in fiscal years 1982-83 and 1983-84, both divisions devoted approximately one-quarter of the time spent on general planning to revising existing general plans. Yet, neither division budgeted accurately for this work. For example, the Resource Protection Division underbudgeted by 92 percent the time required for revising general plans in these two fiscal years; the Development Division underbudgeted such work by 68 percent.

Finally, the department's budgeting for preparation of general plans has not accurately reflected changes in the department's priorities. Factors such as legislative mandates can change the priorities for preparing general plans. Our review disclosed that the budgets of the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division for fiscal years 1982-83 and 1983-84 budgeted time for 21 general plans that neither division worked on during those years. On the other hand, these two divisions worked on general planning for 40 parks for which their budgets had not allocated time for general planning.

The following examples illustrate the department's inaccurate budgeting for general planning. In one case, Chapter 1164, Statutes of 1982, required the department to prepare one general plan for three state redwood parks in Del Norte County and Humboldt County by

January 1, 1984. The legislation became effective too late for the department to include preparation of the plan in its 1982-83 budget. However, the Resource Protection Division did not include hours for this project even in its fiscal year 1983-84 budget, and the Development Division underbudgeted by 61 percent the time it actually spent on the project for that year. Moreover, although the two divisions spent almost 4,400 hours on this project in fiscal year 1983-84, the plan had not been approved as of July 1, 1984.

In another case, the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division budgeted a total of 5,425 hours for fiscal years 1982-83 and 1983-84 for preparation of a general plan for a proposed state park at Lake Mathews, located in Riverside County. According to the Chief of the Acquisition Division, the department never acquired this park. Further, we found that the Development Division and the Resource Protection Division did not spend any time on this general plan during these fiscal years.

While the department has budgeted for preparation of general plans for some parks it has not acquired, it has not budgeted time for preparing general plans for some other parks that it has acquired. For example, Mt. Diablo State Park in Contra Costa County, which was acquired in 1931, needs a general plan so that facilities can be improved and resources can be better managed.

CONCLUSION

Although the Public Resources Code requires a general plan for a park before new permanent development can proceed, the Department of Parks and Recreation has not prepared general plans for two-thirds of the State's parks. Parks without general plans cover 84 percent of the State's park acreage. As a result, the public does not always have access to these parks, and park rangers lack guidance in managing the parks' natural and cultural resources.

Although factors outside the department's control affect the preparation of general plans, the department lacks a firm base for setting priorities for preparing general plans and does not accurately budget and monitor staff time for preparing general plans. As a result, the department lacks sufficient control over its limited resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To identify priorities for preparing general plans, by January 1986 the Department of Parks and Recreation should provide the Legislature with a list ranking all remaining state parks that lack general plans. The department should update the list as priorities change. The department should include in its criteria for ranking each park the current development and

accessibility of the park, the need for policies to manage resources in the park, the potential for preparing a less extensive plan for parks where little development is anticipated, and the potential for including the park in a single general plan that includes several parks. The department should also estimate the fiscal years in which high priority general plans can be started. This estimate should reflect accurate data on workload standards and staffing.

To schedule preparation of general plans more efficiently, the department should base its scheduling on the priority list that it submits to the Legislature. In addition, the department's multi-year capital outlay program should reflect the priorities that the department has established on its priority list. Except for parks that require immediate development for public access, the department should not include in its multi-year capital outlay program development of a park for which a general plan has not been prepared.

To improve its budgeting for preparation of general plans, the department should monitor the actual time it spends on general plans, including follow-up work, and compare the actual time with the budgeted time. The department should then budget time for general plans based on its determination of actual time requirements. The department should also increase its budgeted time for revisions to general plans and adjust its budgets when priorities change.

Finally, when the State proposes that land be acquired for a state park that does not have a general plan, the department should estimate for the Legislature the time and cost of preparing the park's general plan. The department should also rank the park on its priority list.

CHAPTER II

THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION DOES NOT COLLECT ALL LEASE PAYMENTS ON TIME

The State is losing revenue because the Department of Parks and Recreation is not ensuring that lease payments are collected when they become due. Unpaid lease payments at the end of fiscal year 1983-84 totaled \$92,550. Furthermore, the State lost approximately \$13,800 in interest revenue that year because of overdue lease payments. The State loses additional revenue because the department does not assess a late charge for overdue lease payments. We estimate that the department could have earned over \$28,000 in fiscal year 1983-84 by assessing a late charge for overdue payments. Finally, the system for collecting late lease payments is fragmented. Under the present system, the department identifies overdue payments and notifies the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services, which is responsible for collecting the overdue payments. However, delays in collecting overdue payments occur because the department does not identify overdue payments until from 30 to 60 days after they are due.

THE STATE IS LOSING REVENUE BECAUSE OF LATE LEASE PAYMENTS

The State receives revenue from leases of property that the department acquired but does not use for parks. This property is leased for such purposes as agriculture or grazing or for residential

structures.* Although the terms of the lease contracts specify due dates for payments, lessees often do not make the payments on the due dates. We reviewed all 144 of the department's leases that were active in fiscal year 1983-84. The lease revenue due the State for this period was approximately \$1.2 million. Of this amount, \$92,550 (7.7 percent), constituting rental payments from 31 lessees, had not been paid as of June 30, 1984.

In addition, 87 percent of the lease payments that were due in fiscal year 1983-84 were paid late. (We considered a payment to be late if it was made more than five days after the payment's due date.) Some payments were not made until up to 171 days after their due dates; late payments were late an average of 40 days. The average amount of the late payments due the State was \$697.

In addition to actual amounts of lease payments that were not paid in fiscal year 1983-84, the State lost interest revenue on lease payments that were paid late. The State would have accrued interest income if the payments had been made when due. Using the average interest rate earned by the State's Pooled Money Investment Account in

*For a review of the department's leasing activities at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, see Auditor General's Report P-381.1, entitled "Parking Lease at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area," June 4, 1984.

fiscal year 1982-83, we determined that the State lost approximately \$13,800 in interest during fiscal year 1983-84 because the department did not ensure that lease payments were received promptly.

Furthermore, the department does not assess a late charge for overdue lease payments. According to an official in the department's Office of Economic and Fiscal Affairs, the department is currently assessing a 5 percent late charge for overdue payments on concession contracts. If the department assessed a late charge of 5 percent of the monthly payment on all payments received more than 15 days after the due date, we estimate that the State could have earned over \$28,000 in additional revenue in fiscal year 1983-84.

THE COLLECTION OF LEASE
PAYMENTS IS FRAGMENTED

Pursuant to Section 15862.5 of the California Government Code, which first became effective on January 1, 1983, and was revised effective January 1, 1984, the Department of Parks and Recreation assumed responsibility for controlling property acquired for state parks. Previously, the Department of General Services had controlled such property until it was needed for parks. However, under an interagency agreement, the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services is responsible for collecting overdue lease payments on this property.

The Department of Parks and Recreation prepares invoices for payments that are due and mails these invoices to lessees so that the lessees will receive the invoices by the payment due date. The lease contracts do not require the department to notify the lessees of payments that are due. The department notifies the Office of Real Estate Services when payments are late. The Office of Real Estate Services then initiates procedures to collect the late payments.

According to a department official, the department does not request collection of a late payment until the payment is at least 30 days and as much as 60 days overdue. Consequently, the Office of Real Estate Services cannot collect overdue payments until the payment is more than 30 to 60 days late. Such delay increases the period that payments are late and reduces the interest income that the State earns on lease payments.

The Chief of the Acquisition Division told us that the department has proposed to have park staff collect lease payments because they have more frequent contact with lessees than do staff from the Office of Real Estate Services. The chief also told us that park staff should be able to identify late lease payments before they are 30 to 60 days overdue.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Parks and Recreation does not collect all lease payments on time. Consequently, at the end of fiscal year 1983-84, unpaid lease payments totaled \$92,550. In addition, the State lost approximately \$13,800 in interest revenue because of late lease payments. Furthermore, the State lost approximately \$28,000 in revenue in fiscal year 1983-84 because the department does not assess late charges on overdue payments. The department identifies late payments and requests the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services to collect these payments. However, the Department of Parks and Recreation does not identify overdue payments until from 30 to 60 days after they are due.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Parks and Recreation should send a notification to each lessee stating that rental payments are due on the due date specified in the contract, that invoices will no longer be sent, and that lessees must include their lease account numbers when they submit payments to the department. When negotiating new or renewed lease contracts, the department should include a specified late charge for payments submitted after a specified, reasonable time.

In addition, the department's management should evaluate the cost and benefits of assuming the responsibility for collecting late payments. The department also should implement an accounting system that will identify late payments before they are 30 to 60 days overdue.

CHAPTER III

THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION LACKS ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT ITS PROPRIETARY LAND

The State maintains a list of all land owned or acquired for state programs (proprietary land) in the Proprietary Land Index (index). State law requires state agencies to review and update the listing of their land every five years. However, the Department of Parks and Recreation has not reviewed for seven years the listing of its land in the index. Consequently, the index, which costs the Department of General Services as much as \$53,700 annually to maintain, is inaccurate. Furthermore, we found that the department's other records of land ownership are also inaccurate. One of the department's chief deputy directors told us that to perform the mandated review of the index the department would have to use staff who are assigned to other projects with higher priority.

THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT CORRECTED ITS PORTION OF THE PROPRIETARY LAND INDEX

Section 14730 of the California Government Code requires the Department of General Services to maintain an index of all state proprietary land except land acquired by the Department of Transportation for highway purposes. Section 14730 also requires each state agency acquiring land to provide information necessary to make each entry in the index. Except for park land given to the State, the Department of General Services acquires land for the Department of

Parks and Recreation. Consequently, the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services compiles the data on land ownership for the Department of Parks and Recreation and enters these data in the index. The index, which is maintained in computers, contains an entry for each parcel of proprietary land; each entry identifies the size, location, and acquisition cost, and the agency with jurisdiction over the land. The Office of Real Estate Services estimates that it will spend about \$53,700 maintaining the index in fiscal year 1984-85.

Once a land acquisition is entered in the index, the Office of Real Estate Services depends upon the landholding agencies to inform it of any changes to the information appearing in the index. Every five years, the Office of Real Estate Services sends to landholding agencies the portion of the index listing their land. Section 14731 of the Government Code requires all state agencies that hold land to review and correct their listings in the index every five years and to return their corrected portion of the index to the Department of General Services' Office of Real Estate Services within 60 days after receiving it. State agencies are not required by law to update the index between the five-year reviews, but each agency acquiring land must inform the Department of General Services so that the information can be entered in the index. The last five-year review cycle occurred in 1982.

In June 1982, the Office of Real Estate Services provided the Department of Parks and Recreation with its portion of the index. The

department's Acquisition Division is responsible for reviewing and correcting the index. As required by law, the department should have returned its corrected portion of the index to the Office of Real Estate Services by August 1982. As of August 1984, however, more than two years after receiving its portion of the index, the department had not reviewed the 1982 index to determine if the listing of its property is accurate.

In 1984, the department had 6,110 entries in the index; the department controls more than two-thirds of the total acreage listed in the index. Because the department has not reviewed and corrected its portion of the index for seven years, the State does not have an accurate listing of its proprietary land.

We reviewed a sample of the department's listings in the index and found several errors. In our review, we found that some parks were not listed in the index. For example, Silver Strand State Beach, acquired by the State in 1931, and Indio Hills Palms, acquired in October 1983, did not appear in the index. The Chief of the Acquisition Division told us that these parks would not be listed in the index under other names.

We also found listings that did not include the current names of parks. Although the department could not provide us with a list showing both the current and former names of parks with changed names, we found in our review that 28 of the 289 current park names

(9.7 percent) do not appear in the February 1984 printing of the index. The index continued to list some parks under former names after the Legislature or the State Park and Recreation Commission changed the names. We found that listings for an additional 48 parks were incorrect when compared with the department's records. For example, the department's records show that "Pygmy Forest" was renamed "Jughandle State Reserve." However, the index contains listings for both names with portions of the park's acreage under each listing.

One of the department's chief deputy directors stated that staff members who maintain other land ownership information have not been assigned to review the index because they do not have the necessary expertise to evaluate the information in the index. He also said that staff with the necessary expertise are assigned to other projects that have higher priority. In addition, the department's land agent previously responsible for reviewing the index retired in 1984; this position was cut from the department's budget.

The department could reduce the time required to review and correct the index if it utilized additional information available from the Office of Real Estate Services. We found that the Office of Real Estate Services can provide a listing of additions made to the index since the last five-year review. Frequent review of such additions would reduce the time required for the department to correct the index every five years.

THE DEPARTMENT'S OTHER RECORDS
OF LAND OWNERSHIP ARE INACCURATE

Although the department has not reviewed the index for seven years, a department official said that the department plans to use the index as a primary source of information for developing its own computer records of land ownership. In addition to its listings in the index, the department presently maintains two other lists of park property: records of the status of the department's property acquisitions (acquisition status records) and the Real Property Ledger. The Real Property Ledger includes all parks controlled by the department. However, neither the acquisition status records nor the Real Property Ledger is complete.

We found that the acquisition status records and the Real Property Ledger do not contain all property acquired prior to 1972. The State acquired property for 192 parks before 1972. Furthermore, when we compared the index, the acquisition status records, and the Real Property Ledger, we found significant differences among them. For example, the index shows 616,276 acres for the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park while the Real Property Ledger shows 542,448 acres, a difference of 73,828 acres.

Because the index is not complete and accurate, agencies (including the department) cannot use it to promptly compile data on land owned by the department. For example, in July 1983, the State Coastal Conservancy requested information from the department on the

number of acres in parks along a specific portion of California's coast. According to the department's mapping supervisor, department staff required approximately 40 hours to gather this information because it was not readily available from the department's records. The supervisor estimates it would have taken 8 hours to gather the same information if the department's land listings in the index had been accurate.

To determine how other state agencies use the index, we contacted three other landholding departments: the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Forestry, and the Department of Water Resources. Officials from all three departments indicated that they use their portions of the index to manage their proprietary land. Staff at two of the departments told us that the index is a fundamental and valuable source of ownership information. One department uses the index as its only listing of land. These departments also use the index to answer questions about their proprietary land. Because the department does not have complete land ownership information, the department cannot always provide the Legislature or other agencies with accurate information about its land.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Parks and Recreation has not reviewed and corrected the Proprietary Land Index as required by law. Department officials stated that the review of the entire

index is time consuming and that staff are not available to perform this review. Although the department maintains two other lists of land ownership, neither of these lists is complete or accurate. Because the department has not reviewed and corrected its portion of the land index, the data on the index for the State's largest landholding agency are inaccurate. As a result, the State will spend approximately \$53,700 in fiscal year 1984-85 to maintain an inaccurate and incomplete land index. In addition, the department cannot respond promptly to questions on its land ownership from the Legislature or other agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the Proprietary Land Index is accurate and to comply with the California Government Code, the Department of Parks and Recreation should ensure that the listing of its land in the index is reviewed and corrected each five years. To increase the efficiency of the review, the department should periodically review and correct additions to and deletions from the index made by the Office of Real Estate Services. The department should also regularly provide to the Office of Real Estate Services a list of current and former park names.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION LACKS ACCURATE MAPS OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM

The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for maintaining and updating land ownership maps for its 289 parks. Park rangers and headquarters staff use these maps to manage state parks. We found that the department lacks maps for 62 parks and that its maps for an additional 76 parks are outdated. The department has an interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources to prepare maps using a computer. Using a computer to prepare maps for the 62 parks without maps would cost the department approximately \$67,600; updating the maps for the 76 other parks would cost approximately \$82,900. Should the department choose to use a computer to prepare maps, it would save almost \$226,000 when compared with the cost of preparing and updating the maps manually.

THE DEPARTMENT LACKS ACCURATE MAPS FOR 138 PARKS

As required by the department's administration and operations manual, the Right-of-Way and Ownership Mapping section within the Acquisition Division maintains and updates the department's maps of land ownership. Park rangers and headquarters staff use these maps to protect park resources and to provide assistance in tasks of park management such as locating easements and rights-of-way on park property.

We reviewed the status of land ownership maps for 265 of the State's 289 parks. We excluded from our review parks that were on leased land, were actual structures, or were acquired after December 1983. We found that the department does not have maps for 62 of the 265 parks. These parks range in size from three-quarters of an acre to nearly 9,000 acres. The acquisition costs of these parks ranged from \$20,000 to approximately \$37.4 million. (Estimates of acreage and costs used in this section are based on records of the department's Acquisition Division.) Some of the parks without maps were gifts to the State. Examples of parks without maps include Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park and Wilder Ranch State Park. The department acquired these two parks more than ten years prior to our review.

In addition, the maps of land ownership for another 76 parks are not current because an estimated 77,700 acres have been added to these parks since the department originally prepared the maps. The cost of acquiring these new lands was approximately \$83.2 million. For example, the latest map available at the department for Mount Diablo State Park is dated June 1967. However, the department has acquired an additional 7,135 acres for this park since 1967. In another example, the most recent ownership map for Mount Tamalpais State Park is dated August 1967. Between 1971 and 1980, however, the department acquired an additional 1,338 acres for this park. The department also has not revised its maps for 22 state beaches where approximately 842 acres have been acquired since the most recent maps were prepared. The total

cost of these acquisitions was over \$10.8 million. Many of these beaches are located near urban areas and are heavily used by the public.

Although the department usually prepares maps to show proposed land acquisitions, these acquisition maps do not always show important detail such as easements. Without accurate maps of land ownership, the department is less able to locate boundaries, easements, and rights-of-way.

Since 1977, the department has not assigned priority to preparing maps of land ownership for its parks. According to records of the Acquisition Division, the ownership mapping section consisted of six persons until 1978, when the section was reduced by four positions. From 1979 to 1981, the remaining two staff people were reassigned to other projects because of the department's involvement in extensive land acquisitions. Consequently, the backlog of unprepared ownership maps increased. Presently, the section responsible for preparing maps consists of two persons. The Acquisition Division recently requested four more staff positions for this section to help with the workload.

THE DEPARTMENT CAN SAVE MONEY BY
USING A COMPUTER TO PREPARE MAPS

In April 1982, the department entered into an interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources to prepare maps by computer. Although the interagency agreement included \$30,000, the

department had spent less than \$7,300 of this amount as of August 30, 1984. Since the interagency agreement was implemented, maps for only five parks have been prepared by computer.

In using the computer to prepare maps for state parks, the department supplies to the Department of Water Resources ownership specifications for the property. The Department of Water Resources then uses a computer to draw the map according to the department's specifications. According to an analysis completed by the Department of Water Resources in August 1983, mapping by computer saves approximately 60 percent of the cost of preparing maps manually. In addition, once an ownership map is prepared by computer, new park acquisitions can be added easily to update the map.

To provide the information needed to prepare a map, the department must gather deed descriptions, locate natural features such as rivers and mountains, and locate structures on the property. The mapping unit staff spends the same amount of time obtaining this information whether the map is prepared manually or by computer.

We estimate that using the computer to prepare maps for the 62 parks without maps would cost the department approximately \$67,600. The cost to update maps for the 76 parks with maps that are not current would be approximately \$82,900. In total, using the computer to prepare or update maps for the 138 parks would cost the department approximately \$150,500. These costs do not include the cost of

obtaining the information necessary to prepare the maps, which would be the same regardless of whether the maps are prepared manually or by computer.

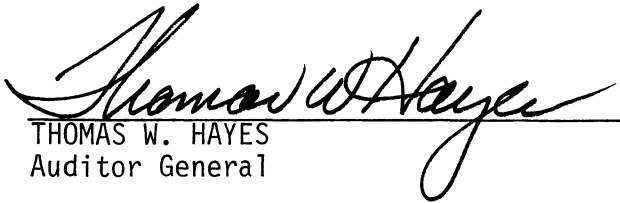
The results of the Department of Water Resources' analysis indicate that preparing maps by computer saves 60 percent of the cost of preparing maps manually. Therefore, based on our estimated cost of \$150,500 to prepare or update the 138 maps by computer, we project that the department would spend over \$376,000 to prepare maps manually. Thus, we estimate that the department would save almost \$226,000 if it were to use a computer to eliminate its backlog of maps.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Parks and Recreation lacks maps for 62 parks and has maps that are not current for an additional 76 parks. We estimate that preparing or updating the maps using the Department of Water Resources' computer would cost the department approximately \$150,500. In addition, if the department chooses to eliminate its backlog of maps, we estimate that using a computer to prepare or update the maps would save the department almost \$226,000 of the cost of preparing or updating the maps manually.

We conducted this review under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Section 10500 et seq. of the California Government Code and according to generally accepted governmental auditing standards. We limited our review to those areas specified in the audit scope section of this report.

Respectfully submitted,



THOMAS W. HAYES
Auditor General

Date: December 17, 1984

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Air Resources Board
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Regional Water Quality
Control Boards
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission
Solid Waste Management Board
State Coastal Conservancy
State Lands Commission
State Reclamation Board
State Water Resources Control
Board

DEC 11 1984

Mr. Thomas W. Hayes
Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
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Dear Mr. Hayes:

The Department of Parks and Recreation has reviewed your Draft Report (December 1984) on the Department's general planning and land management programs.

The comments are divided into two sections. The first discusses conclusions and assumptions in the body of the report and the second responds to the specific recommendations of the report.

The report indicates that the Department does not have general plans for approximately 190 units in the State Park System. Some sections of the report seem to assume that without a general plan these units are not accessible to the general public. Many of the units without general plans are fully developed. This development occurred prior to the requirement for a general plan. Other units without developed facilities are accessible to the general public through Immediate Public Use (IPU) facilities, which are temporary in nature, but do provide the public access opportunities in these units. ¹*

The report indicates that 65,000 vehicles seeking campsites were turned away from the State Park System in fiscal year 83-84 because State Parks lacked general plans. ² It is true that in some areas general plans would result in expanded development and additional campsites would be provided. In some areas, however, the existence of a general plan would not necessarily result in expanded facilities. The Department

* The Auditor General's comments on specific points contained in the agency's response appear on page 55.

Mr. Thomas W. Hayes

Page 2

recently completed general plans for the San Diego Coast District. This is one of the most popular camping and day use areas in the State. Most of the units in this area are fully developed. The result of the plan was only limited facility expansion through formal development for some IPU areas.

The above statements are not to say that the Department does not have a backlog of general plans. The Department recognizes that many units need general plans and that a concerted effort must be made to meet this need. What we are saying is that the lack of a general plan does not prevent the public from using and enjoying our State Park System units.

The report indicates that without general plans our park rangers lack guidance in managing the park resources. In some units general plans would assist the rangers in their resource management efforts, but it should be understood that our rangers are trained in resource management and are provided staff support from resource ecologists through the region and headquarters offices. The management of our park resources is an ongoing effort and is not solely dependent on the existence of a general plan. ③

Hindsight confirms that we have, on the average, significantly underestimated both the staff time and calendar time required to complete general plans. In recognition of this fact, in 1983 we monitored 20 past general plans to determine a "typical" project schedule. Based on this evaluation, we have expanded our standard from 18 months to 24 months. However, given the extremely variable nature of the Department's program and the unpredictable nature of planning issues and controversies, it is virtually impossible to accurately project general planning workload.

Each year the support budget is prepared in July for anticipated workload 12-18 months hence. Generally, projects are quite new to us at that time, and the issues which are unique to every project are unknown. In an extreme case, a single major controversy can delay a project indefinitely and add thousands of hours of staff time to an "average" project.

The fact remains that, regardless of the accuracy of workload estimates, the Department has no choice but to take the time that is required to bring general plans to a point of completion. In today's world, achieving consensus on public planning decisions is increasingly difficult; prolonged negotiations and public discourse is the rule rather than the exception.

The following specific comments are referenced by page number and paragraph:

Mr. Thomas W. Hayes
Page 3

Page 12, Paragraph 2

The completion of 98 general plans since 1972 equates to 8.1 plans per year, which is a very good record considering the fluctuation of funding and staffing in these 12 years.

Page 13, Paragraph 3

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is cited as an example of lack of campground expansion on new acquisition lands. The need at Cuyamaca is for rehabilitation or relocation of existing campgrounds, not necessarily the construction of new campgrounds. The new acquisition does not mean that a general plan would recommend many new campsites. Cuyamaca needs a general plan for resource protection and operation purposes.

Page 23, Paragraph 1

The redwood parks were used as an example of the Development Division underbudgeting by 61%. A general plan for these park units was proposed by the Director on the basis that federal funding might become available to develop these parks. The Director stated that a very quick plan should be completed due to the fact that the National Park Service had prepared a general plan on the Redwoods National Park, and we could use the information already available. It was found that this information was very incomplete and would not stand up to the scrutiny of the locals, conservation groups, and other special interest groups. Any proposal in the redwood region can be highly controversial because of past history. A great deal of research was necessary for both resources and recreation as well as the scheduling of many public meetings.

The report also comments on the inaccuracy of two park property lists. The first such list discussed is the Acquisition Status Records with a finding that these lists do not include lands acquired prior to 1972. This form was developed in about 1972 to monitor the progress of various acquisition projects and was not intended to be used as an ownership record.

The second list discussed is the Real Property Ledger. This document is maintained by the Management Analysis and Information Systems Unit of the Administrative Services Division. The data in this Ledger is taken from the Transfer of Jurisdiction (Form 243) forms that are prepared in the Acquisition Division. Perhaps the primary reason for differences between this Ledger and the PLI is the number of parcels not yet transferred or in the process of being transferred from General Services to DPR.

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The following are the Departments comments on specific recommendations:

Section 1

1. To identify priorities for preparing general plans by January 1986, the Department should provide the Legislature with a list ranking all remaining state park system units that lack general plans.

The Department agrees with this recommendation, but it must be recognized that there are many forces impacting the general plan schedule. As a result, this list will be dynamic and constantly subject to change.

2. The Department should estimate the fiscal years in which high priority general plans can be started.

The Department can develop such a list for a five year period to reflect a general plan schedule for high priority projects. It should be recognized, however, that this list is subject to change based on the dynamics of the Capital Outlay Program.

3. To schedule preparation of general plans more efficiently, the Department should base its scheduling on the priority list that it submits to the Legislature.

The Department can develop such a list for a five year period to reflect a general plan schedule for high priority projects. It should be recognized, again, that this list is subject to change based on the dynamics of the Capital Outlay Program.

4. The Department should not include in its multi-year capital outlay program development of a park for which a general plan has not been prepared.

The Department feels that this is an unworkable recommendation. (4)

In many instances, current acquisition projects will become high priority development projects once acquired. In order to schedule early development of these projects, we list them in our MYCOP although they have no approved general plan. In this way, we can put these projects on a fast track so that once a general plan is completed the project is scheduled for funding within the next two fiscal years.

As suggested in the report, once a general plan is approved, a project would be placed in the last year of the MYCOP and, therefore, would be five years away from receiving funding.

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The other alternative under this recommendation would be to insert the project in an earlier year of the MYCOP when the general plan is completed and thus disrupt the MYCOP scheduling program.

The Department recommends that a proviso should be included that would allow high priority projects to proceed through the MYCOP without an approved general plan.

5. The Department should budget time for general plans based on its determination of actual time requirements.

As indicated, the Department has analyzed previous general plans to determine actual time necessary to complete these plans. This information will be used in future budget requests. The Department will monitor through computer analysis ongoing general plan staff requirements and will modify future budget accordingly. This analysis will include all aspects of the Department's general planning program including revisions.

6. The Department should estimate for the Legislature the time and cost of preparing the general plan for a new acquisition proposals.

Computerization of the general planning workload requirements for various units will allow the Department to comply with this recommendation.

7. The Department should rank all new acquisition projects on its general plan priority list.

The Department agrees with this recommendation. Once the list is established it will become an easy matter to add new acquisitions.

Section 2

1. The Department should send a notification to each lessee stating that rental payments are due on the dates specified in the contract and invoices will no longer be sent.

The Department should continue to prepare invoices to be sent for the following reasons:

The Department's receipts are over \$44 million annually within the Accounty-Cashiering Unit. Unless some information is received with a payment, there is considerable workload in attempting to tie a payment to an account due and remit the

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payment to the State Controller for credit to the proper account. It may not be necessary to use the current invoicing system, but some form of invoice is needed whether it be coupon booklets, pre-printed identification stickers or some similar means of identifying payments as they are received. The invoicing operation and the receipt of an invoiced amount also make it easier to determine when payments are overdue (open account receivable invoices), (5)

2. When negotiating new or renewed lease contracts the Department should include a late charge payment after a reasonable amount of time.

The Department agrees with this recommendation and will take steps to include late charge fees in future lease agreements.

3. The Department's management should evaluate the cost of assuming the responsibility for collecting late payments.

The Department will make such an evaluation and if economically feasible will establish a program to collect late payments.

4. The Department should also implement an accounting system that will identify late payments before they are 30 to 60 days overdo.

The Department is currently preparing a feasibility study to determine if computerization of work being done by the Cashiering Unit is feasible. Initial indication is that considerable overtime would be eliminated and the cashiering/clearance operation would be speeded up considerably with the implementation of microcomputers. The computerization of this function will allow the Cashiering Unit to identify overdue payments within a reasonable period of time.

Section 3

1. The Department should ensure that the listing of its land in the Proprietary Land Index is reviewed and corrected each five years.

The Department agrees with this recommendation and is proposing to place its land inventory information on computer to facilitate this update.

2. The Department should periodically review and correct additions to and deletions from the index made by the Office of Real Estate Services.

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The Department agrees with this recommendation and is proposing to place its land inventory information on computer to facilitate this update.

3. The Department should provide to the Office of Real Estate Services a list of current and former park names.

The Department agrees with this recommendation and will supply such a list to Real Estate Services by July 1, 1985.

Section 4

1. The Department should use the DWR mapping service to bring its land ownership maps current.

The Department agrees with this recommendation and is proposing to use consultant funds in the 1985/86 fiscal year to begin this effort by providing the base information needed by DWR to prepare land ownership maps.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review this report.

Sincerely,

Gordon K. Van Vleck
Gordon K. Van Vleck
Secretary for Resources

**AUDITOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS ON
THE RESOURCES AGENCY'S RESPONSE**

- ① The report does not state that without a general plan parks are not accessible to the public. The report does state, however, that some parks are not fully accessible because new permanent development cannot occur at state parks that do not have general plans. Furthermore, the report recognizes that many parks were developed for public access before 1972. However, the facilities in these older parks need general plans in order to be expanded or relocated to meet the public's recreational needs or to protect natural resources in the park. (See page 13 of the report.)
- ② The report points out that vehicles were turned away from parks lacking general plans only to show that the public's need for outdoor recreation has not been met. Although existence of a general plan would not necessarily result in expanded facilities, lack of a general plan precludes development of new permanent facilities. (See pages 12 and 13 of the report.)
- ③ The report does not state that the management of park resources is solely dependent on the existence of a general plan. Instead, the report states that general plans assist park rangers in managing park resources. (See page 14 of the report.)
- ④ Our recommendation includes an exception for parks that require immediate development for public access. (See page 25 of the report.)
- ⑤ Our recommendation includes a provision for lessees to include lease account numbers on payments submitted to the department. (See page 31 of the report.)

LAND CONTROLLED BY STATE AGENCIES

The table below shows the land controlled by state agencies for the operation of state programs. The Department of Parks and Recreation controls 69.5 percent of this land. The table does not include approximately 4.6 million acres of land managed by the State Lands Commission (including tidelands, submerged lands, and other lands granted to the State at the time of statehood) and approximately 10,000 acres of land endowed to the University of California.

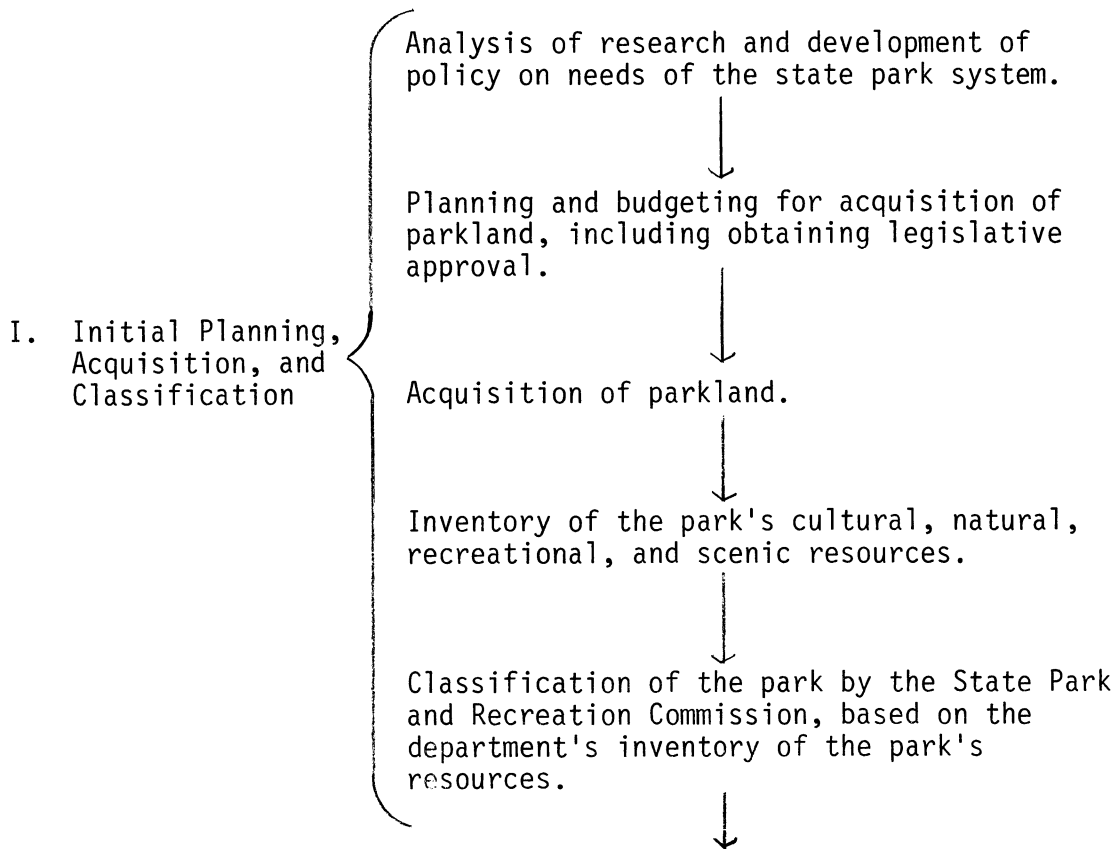
<u>Controlling Agency</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent of Total Acres</u>
Resources Agency		
Department of Parks and Recreation	1,126,022*	69.5
Department of Fish and Game	219,684	13.6
Department of Forestry	76,785	4.7
Department of Water Resources	65,694	4.1
Other Resource Agencies	<u>271</u>	<u>0.0**</u>
Subtotal	1,488,456	91.9
Twenty-five other agencies	<u>130,859</u>	<u>8.1</u>
Total Acres	<u>1,619,315</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*The department also manages 129,844 acres of land leased from federal, state, and local agencies.

**Percentage is less than 0.1.

ACQUISITION, GENERAL PLANNING,
AND DEVELOPMENT OF A STATE PARK

The flowchart below shows the phases of acquisition, planning, and development of a park as it becomes part of the state park system. The chart indicates the process of initial planning for park acquisition and classification of the park, preparation of a general plan for the park, and development of budget proposals leading to design and construction in the park.



II. Preparation of General Plan

Preparation of policies and plan for management of the park's resources; public involvement.



Developing alternative plans for land uses, facilities in the park, and park operations; public involvement.



Preparation of draft general plan for the park; public hearing.



Preparation of environmental impact report.



Public review of draft general plan and environmental impact report as required by the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970.



Hearing by State Park and Recreation Commission; approval of general plan.



III. Budgeting, Design, and Construction

Development of specific plans for projects that will be budgeted. Preparation of budget proposals and approval of plans for development of facilities in the park.



Design and construction of park facilities.

**SCALE FOR ASSESSING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF STATE PARKS**

The scale below contains ten categories of development in state parks. The categories range from parks that have no development and no consistent public use to parks that have a general plan and that are developed to capacity. The chiefs of the Acquisition Division, the Development Division, the Planning Division, and the Resource Protection Division used this scale to rate the level of development of the 85 parks in our sample.

RATING CATEGORIES:

1. No consistent public use; limited access to the park; no facilities; no general plan.
2. Some access to the park; public use advertised; no facilities; no general plan.
3. Either temporary developments such as trails and primitive campsites, or minimal development in parks acquired prior to 1972; no general plan.
4. General plan completed; no construction of facilities in the park.
5. General plan completed; park moderately developed with facilities such as campgrounds; requires a new or revised general plan for any expansion.
6. General plan completed; park has either the initial stage of development indicated in the plan or some facilities pre-dating the plan.
7. Park has extensive development such as multiple campgrounds or historic buildings, but requires a new or revised general plan for any expansion.
8. General plan completed; park has two or more stages of construction completed as indicated in the plan, or has extensive development pre-dating the plan.
9. No general plan; developed to capacity.
10. General plan completed; park developed to capacity.

cc: Members of the Legislature
Office of the Governor
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
State Controller
Legislative Analyst
Assembly Office of Research
Senate Office of Research
Assembly Majority/Minority Consultants
Senate Majority/Minority Consultants
Capitol Press Corps