



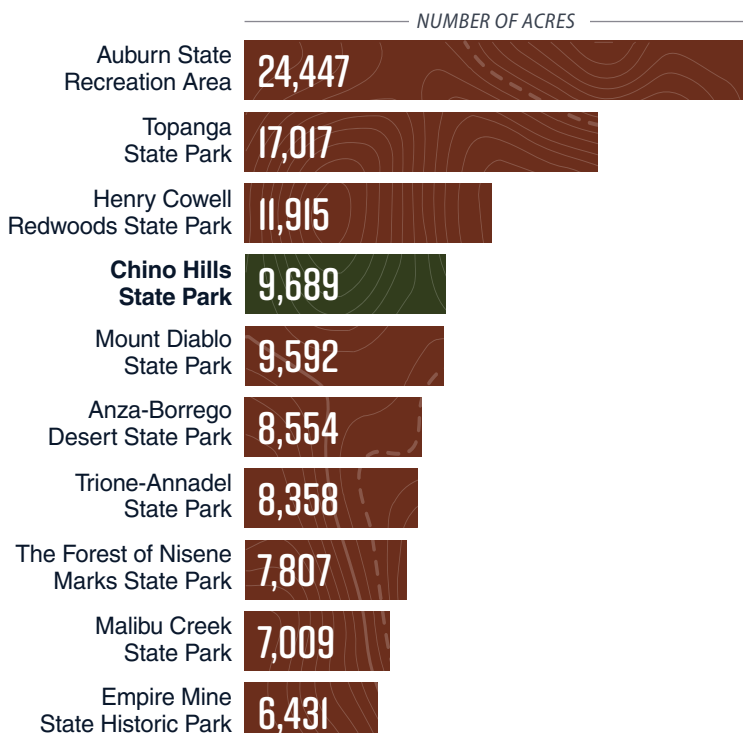
## Chino Hills State Park

### State Parks' Wildfire Resiliency Efforts Face Few Requirements and Limited Coordination

#### Background

Chino Hills State Park (Chino Hills Park) is a 14,000-acre state park located in the Chino Hills area southeast of Los Angeles. It is also the fourth largest of California's state parks with wildland-urban interface (WUI)—a zone of transition where structures meet with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. The WUI is especially susceptible to wildfire ignition near homes and increased structure damage and destruction as a result. This park is the 18th largest in the State and is home to diverse ecosystems, including chaparral, grasslands, woodlands, and protected species. Chino Hills Park also preserves several hundred acres of walnut woodlands, which represents a significant portion of the few thousand acres that still exist. Our audit sought to understand the role and responsibility of State Parks as the resource manager of Chino Hills Park, which has a history and increased risk of wildfire, and whether State Parks has fulfilled these responsibilities.

#### Within the State Park System, the Park Has the Fourth-Largest Land Area Where Housing is Adjacent to or Interspersed With Vegetation Within Two Kilometers of Its Borders



#### Key Findings

- We found that State Parks performs some wildfire resilience activities in Chino Hills Park but does not consistently document such activities.
  - » As land protected for conservation, Chino Hills Park is exempt from state defensible space requirements but still maintains defensible spaces around structures in the park.
  - » Staffing problems have impeded State Parks' ability to conduct and document wildfire resilience activities performed in Chino Hills Park.
- State Parks could benefit from increased collaboration with neighboring landowners, local entities, and other fire suppression agencies through changes to existing statewide programs and by attending meetings with local governments, local fire suppression agencies, and CAL FIRE.
- Chino Hills Park's wildfire mitigation plan does not include elements recommended by State Parks' wildfire mitigation plan template, and the plan could more closely align with federal best practices.
- Southern California Edison performs wildfire resilience activities on its power lines and often coordinates with State Parks.

#### Key Recommendations

- State Parks should systematically document its wildfire resilience activities at Chino Hills Park and annually report to the public on its performance of these activities to reassure surrounding communities of Chino Hills Park's commitment to wildfire resilience.
- State Parks should meet with surrounding communities, local suppression agencies, and CAL FIRE to discuss familiarity with—and potential updates to—Chino Hills Park's Wildfire Management Plan in accordance with current agreements, plans, and best practices.
- Chino Hills Park's Wildfire Management Plan should be updated to meet the most recent and relevant guidance, which includes adding a section to the plan about the park's WUI.
- The Legislature should amend eligibility for the California Wildfire Mitigation Program to include communities surrounding Chino Hills Park so that landowners have funding opportunities for wildfire resilience work that may overlap with park boundaries.