

ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE PARK:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CULTURAL AND CIVIC POTENTIAL OF  
PUBLIC SPACES

A Project Report  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology  
San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Arts

By  
Emily Green  
May 2014

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The Undersigned Graduate Committee Approves the Project Report Titled  
ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE PARK:  
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Emily Green

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

  
Dr. Charlotte Sunseri, Department of Anthropology 5/14/14  
Date

  
Dr. Chuck Darrah, Department of Anthropology 5/13/2014  
Date

  
Dr. Marco Meniketti, Department of Anthropology 5/14/14  
Date

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Charlotte Sunseri for all of her support, encouragement, and guidance. It was with her help that I was able to conceive of this project and complete this project. Her patience and understanding are venerable, and I am grateful to have had the honor of her chairing my committee.

The next person I would like to recognize is Dr. Chuck Darrah. His expertise in applied work was invaluable to me throughout this project. He helped me gain experience and has played a vital role in development of the practitioner that I am today. I am indebted to him for his counsel and wisdom he has shared with me throughout this program.

I would also like to thank Dr. Marco Meniketti for his insightful recommendations on this project. His attention to style and detail were greatly appreciated.

The most important thank you goes to the staff members at the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy for opening their doors to me and making this project possible. I will forever be grateful for their participation and generosity.

## ABSTRACT

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy is a non-profit organization that provides leadership for the active use of the Guadalupe River Park in San Jose, California. The purpose of this project was to identify avenues of resource acquisition and allocation that would serve to increase the civic and cultural potential of the Guadalupe River Park. This was done by administering an ethnographic evaluation in order to discern how different staff members interpret the organization's broad mission statement, as well as how resource allocation affects their ability to accomplish the goals set forth for them. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the then seven current staff members. I also interned and volunteered in different capacities within the organization.

# Anthropology In the Park: An Investigation Into the Cultural & Civic Potential of Public Spaces

I. Introduction.....	7
II. Background.....	10
A. Guadalupe River: History of Occupancy.....	10
B. The Creation of the Guadalupe River Park.....	13
III. Literature Review.....	21
A. Park Functions & Importance.....	22
B. Designing for the User.....	29
C. Private Partners.....	30
IV. Theoretical Approach.....	36
V. Methods.....	44
A. Project Narrative.....	44
B. Project Instruments.....	45
C. Data Collection.....	47
D. Analysis.....	49
VI. Results.....	51
A. GRPC's Role as a Private Partner.....	52
B. Social Inequality & the Economic Recession.....	54
C. Mission Statement Adherence.....	60
i. Stewardship.....	61
ii. Education.....	62
iii. Advocacy.....	63
D. Place Attachment.....	64
E. Collaborative Governance.....	67
F. Spatial Analysis.....	71
G. Reflections.....	76
VII. Conclusion.....	82
VIII. Works Cited.....	84
IX. Appendices.....	93
A. Interview Instrument.....	93
B. Map Interviews (1-7).....	96
C. GIS Map Printout.....	103
D. Evaluation.....	105
E. GRPC's Response.....	123
F. IRB Approval.....	125

## **I. Introduction**

Coming from a rural area in northern Wisconsin I took for granted open spaces for most of my life. After moving to densely populated urban areas I now realize how important to me it is having areas of open, natural spaces available. Furthermore, during the Occupy Movement, a national demonstration that centered on equality that utilized public spaces, my eyes were opened to how important these open areas are for social cohesion and as assembly spaces. Getting involved with the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC) in San Jose, California showed me that there are many other people who see open spaces as paramount for the collective good. Open spaces are vital to urbanites; both those who seek them and those who do not yet know the power they have. Not only do parks and open spaces have social benefits and individual restorative effects, there are economic and environmental benefits to these areas as well.

Many benefits of urban parks are only gained if the park is well managed and have facilities that are locally relevant. GRPC is the organization that helps the Guadalupe River Park achieve these benefits. They have a simple mission statement: The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship. In addition to what they provide through environmental education, animal advocacy, and environmental stewardship is much more meaningful than the mission eludes.

Using an applied anthropological framework I researched GRPC in order to understand how they prioritize demands as well as acquire and allocate resources. I compiled much of this information into an evaluation in order to understand the issues and complications GRPC faces

as an organization who must collaborate with other agencies and the public with nearly every decision that affects the park. I also administered a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to understand how different areas throughout the park are differentially governed. Differing jurisdictions arise because it is a redevelopment park and different stakeholders have dissimilar involvement in areas throughout this long and linear park. The intention of all of this research was to identify ways that GRPC can better utilize resources in order to increase the civic and cultural potential of the Guadalupe River Park.

Most private partners of parks have limited resources and exacting demands. This is true for GRPC whose budget only allows modest yearly growth. I completed the research documented here in 2013, five years after the beginning of a national recession. The effects of this national financial instability were lessened, but it still had an impact on their ability to acquire resources in unpredictable ways. I have chosen to investigate resource acquisition and allocation at GRPC using an ethnographic evaluation.

Ethnographic techniques are employed when the information sought is qualitative in nature and is based on experiences of the participants. GRPC allowed me access to more private areas of the organization, and every participant agreed to have their name published in this report. This allows for an honest and open analysis that will hopefully provide the most insight into how they can best prioritize demands and resources.

This project report has been organized in order to understand both the Guadalupe River Park and GRPC. Chapter two provides background information on the Guadalupe River. This river has had continuous human occupancy for over 5,000 years. It has been a site of conflict and growth for Santa Clara Valley. Chapter two also uses organizational documents to explain

the evolution of how the Guadalupe River Park came into existence. Chapter three contains a literature review on park functions and importance generally. It also includes how private partners can increase civic and cultural potential, as well as how designing for the user is important to create relevant public spaces. Chapter four explains the theory that this research is embedded in. It is important to understand how people become attached to place as well as how organizations can best work together to achieve maximum benefits. Chapter five is an overview of the methods employed in this research. Finally, chapter six reports the findings of this research. This includes both results of the ethnographic evaluation (Appendix D for full report) as well as an explanation of the spatial analysis. There are elements of both the park and the conservancy in the results because the two are intertwined and in order to understand GRPC's responsibilities it was necessary to understand the park they govern holistically.

## **II. Background**

### **History of Occupancy: Guadalupe River, San Jose, California**

The Guadalupe River's history of human occupancy extends back over 5,000 years. The river has only been called the Guadalupe since 1776, when De Anza's expedition first spotted it and named it after their patron saint (Cartier 1984). Prior to that it had been called Tamien by the previous occupiers, the Ohlone. According to the archaeological record, the area surrounding the river has had a history of human occupancy since the Lower Archaic Period, from 8000 B.C. to 3000 B.C. (Allen and Hylkema 2002; Cartier 1984; 1985; Cartier, Bass and Ortman 1993).

Not much is known about the lifestyle of the earliest inhabitants and exactly when they started to self-identify as Ohlone, but it appears that once humans settled in this area it has been continuously settled ever since (Allen and Hylkema 2002; Cartier 1985). Most of the knowledge we have of Native American subsistence is due to archaeological endeavors and oral histories. When Route 87 expanded Santa Clara County Archaeological Society, in conjunction with Archaeological Resource Management, undertook an extensive study employing archaeologists and historians to uncover the past before it was destroyed (Allen and Hylkema 2002; Cartier 1984; 1985; Cartier, Bass and Ortman 1993). Other excavations throughout the Silicon Valley have helped understand how indigenous occupants relied on the Guadalupe River in relation with other resources for subsistence (Allen and Hylkema 2002).

The Spanish recorded very little about Ohlone subsistence patterns. The archaeological record, however, indicates that the Ohlone were able to utilize the native flora and fauna with a resource management strategy that has been called "semi-agricultural". They did prune and reseed some plants, but the largest impact seemed to come from their burning of woodlands.

They did this to create favorable conditions for hunting. This area was rich in natural resources and the Ohlone were able to subsist without the need to employ extensive resource management techniques (Cartier, Bass and Ortman 1993). They were, however, subjected to the frequent flooding of the river (Allen and Hylkema 2002). It was these same resources that made this valley desirable to the Spanish, which led to the disenfranchisement and resettlement of the Ohlone.

Spanish expeditions began as early as the 1760s, but it wasn't until January 12, 1777, that the Spanish first settled in the Santa Clara Valley with the erection of Mission Santa Clara in the vicinity of what is now San Jose's airport. The Guadalupe River flooded and they moved the mission the following year. By November of that same year it was decided that the first Spanish Pueblo would be established in Santa Clara Valley in order to supplement supplies to the missions in Monterey and San Francisco. Floods and inhospitable natives would have them relocating the Pueblo in 1797 (Cartier 1984; 1985). The Pueblo consisted of 66 persons living on the east bank of the Guadalupe River (Muller 1988). Moving away from the river meant that irrigation ditches intensified in order to water fields even further from the banks. A dam was built, but it could not withstand the winter storms and would have to be relocated as well (Cartier 1985).

Following Spanish settlement, Mexico took control of California in 1822. During this period ranching was the primary industry. Hide and tallow trade would accompany it, but the fertile soils would remain largely fallow during this period (Cartier 1985; Muller 1988). The 1830's and 40's would be when American and European (non-Spanish) settlers began to move into the area. In 1834 the secularization of the mission system took place and by 1846 America

would annex California and officially declare it a state by 1848. This was the genesis of Manifest Destiny and the Gold Rush, which would mean that the valley quickly changed in a few short years. The economy grew and with it they dammed streams, altered channels, cleared forests, and built homes, schools, and businesses (Allen and Hylkema 2002). Different ethnicities laid claim to different areas around the river and the landscape was freckled with temporary structures. The cultural landscape was in flux with an Americanization dominating over the previous Mexican lifestyle (Cartier 1984). Throughout history each new group found the Guadalupe River a necessary resource in their struggle for survival.

Simultaneous to this Americanization was the emigration of Chinese to California. There were twenty-two Chinese living in Santa Clara County in 1860, but by 1870 there were 1,525. The discovery of gold fueled this growth, but generally the promise of a more prosperous life enticed many to settle in Santa Clara Valley. In 1870, the New Chinatown Land Association purchased four acres that bordered the Guadalupe River. Like their predecessors, the river would welcome them with a flood (Cartier 1984). The Chinese faced grave discrimination, and since testifying in court was prohibited, violence against them was functionally legal. They lived separate lives from San Jose proper, celebrated holidays, remembered tragedies, and even attended oriental schools within the confines of their own town (Yu 1991).

Anti-Chinese sentiment only grew and in 1887 Chinatown was burnt in an act of arson. The Chinese population splintered into two new Chinatowns, one remained on the banks of the Guadalupe River. This settlement was called Woolen Mills and functioned, for all intents and purposes, as an autonomous town (Cartier 1984). Their life and subsistence patterns made an impact in the archaeological record.

Industry also changed and between the 1850s-1870s wheat farming was paramount to the valley and along with the milling of it. By 1880, however, it was realized that the valley's true economic potential lay in horticulture, not agriculture, and by 1885 the last flour mill was closed, marking the end of the wheat market in the area (Allen and Hylkema 2002). The railway was completed in 1864 and this would open new markets to the Santa Clara Valley, having a direct route to San Francisco (Muller 1988). Horticulture was more profitable than grains, and soon the banks of the Guadalupe River would be dominated by orchards of fruit trees. By 1876 the parcels bordering the Guadalupe River were mostly orchards. Fruit trees were ideal for lining the banks of the Guadalupe because they like a lot of water and thrived due to the annual flooding, while residents and businesses would be damaged due to the flooding (Cartier 1985).

With all this excess fruit, canneries were an obvious addition to the industrial landscape. The fruit industry was an immediate success and by 1890 fruit culture dominated the valley. Canning would remain strong throughout the 20th century and in 1958, there were forty canneries that employed over 26,000 people, but by 1981 there were only seventeen canneries left due to the shift of industrial focus to high-tech (Cartier 1985). This is accompanied with a shift away from natural resources and as "The Valley of Heart's Delight" transitioned into "Silicon Valley" the Guadalupe River's role changes and it became a nuisance instead of the lifeblood it once had been. In order to mediate its damage a proposed flood control project became paramount to protect the infrastructure of the Silicon Valley.

### **The Creation of Guadalupe River Park: How it Became More Than Just Flood Control**

Nearly everyone who settled in San Jose saw the Guadalupe River as some type of resource, but hopes of living alongside it were quickly dashed due to its regular flooding. The

Ohlone only lived on its shores seasonally (Cartier, Bass, and Ortman 1993), the Spanish had to abandon it the first year because the mission was inundated with water (Tito Patri and Associates 1994), and the first capital of California was San Jose in 1849, but moved after that first year because of the floods (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001). Regardless of this periodic flooding it seemed that San Jose was destined to be a metropolis and the residents would have to figure out a way to manage the river's violent nature. As early as 1871 the City's engineer surveyed the river and made control recommendations (Cartier 1985). Floods in 1849, 1862, 1895, 1911, and 1917 are still discussed today as historic events. Post-World War II there have been fourteen major floods. The worst recorded flood in history was in 1955 and it flooded 8,300 acres and caused \$1.3 million in damages (1985 currency). In 1995 and 1997 the floods were so severe that President Clinton declared it a natural disaster (Concur 1998; San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001).

In 1941 the US Army Corps of Engineers had already begun looking at the Guadalupe River and flood control options. The Korean War broke out in 1950 and halted the federal engineering project, but Santa Clara Valley Water District did alter the river's flow by straightening the meanders. This was fairly insignificant and the city was still unprepared for peak flood events (Concur 1998). It wouldn't be until 1986, prompted by another flood, that the Corps of Engineers would seriously reconsider another flood control effort (Department of the Army 1986).

While there was not any serious flood control measures in the works, San Jose was growing in population and urbanizing, which did change the face of the land around the Guadalupe River. At the beginning of the late 1960's the Airport Task force began acquiring

residential land. The airport's planned expansion meant that many homes and businesses would be in the airplane approach zone. This acquisition would go on into the early 1990's. After more than twenty years of stagnation the surrounding communities were eager for re-establishment (Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department 2002). In 1969 the first masterplan for the park was developed by the City. It was community-based and focused on cultural and environmental resources. There were a lot of initial ideas floating around, but the 1969 masterplan would be tabled and not revisited for many years (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001; Wessells 2007a).

In the early 1980's there was another flood event which had both the City of San Jose and the US Army Corps of Engineers reinvested in flood control. The City developed a new plan in 1983 that was published in 1985. The plan again focused on cultural and environmental aspects. These benefits were of no interest to the Corps of Engineers and they disregarded the City's plan (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001). The City's plan was developed by a Task Force that was formed with the purpose to push the park's agenda forward. The Task Force included representatives from key agencies and advocacy groups and their purpose was to create the masterplan for a three mile long park. Their plan's financial feasibility report included federal involvement (Concur 1998). In 1986, however, the Corps of Engineers released their own flood control plan. The plan included no recreation, while it does acknowledge the city's intention for a wilderness area. The Corps of Engineer's plan is strictly about flood control and in no way compromises to San Jose's wishes for a park (Department of the Army 1986).

That same year, 1986, Congress authorized construction of the flood control project, only to be met with immediate delays. In 1987 the project started, but the Corps of Engineer, Santa

Clara Valley Water District, and the City of San Jose could not agree on what the project should include. The Corps of Engineers were only concerned with the flood control. They wanted to install concrete safety fences that wouldn't even allow people near the river. The City of San Jose wanted a park which included accessibility to the river, and the Water District was caught in the middle and just wanted the project to move along, because negotiations were costing both the City of San Jose and the Corps of Engineers precious project funds (Concur 1998).

A fourth masterplan was created in 1989. It was an attempt to synthesize flood control and park design into a cohesive whole (Hargreaves Associates 1989; San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001). The Corps of Engineers recognized the environmental protection and features of recreation (US Army Corps of Engineers 2001). An Environmental Impact Report was administered and the seven types of impacts assessed were all able to be mediated in some way (City of San Jose Planning Commission 1989). The masterplan of 1989 is very technical and is not written for public consumption, but more as a compromise between agencies. The plan includes few specifications and is not so much a park and flood control design, but is more along the lines of early negotiations between agencies (Hargreaves Associates 1989).

The 1990's brought about more hesitations from the Corps of Engineers. After reconsidering the design they felt that it was too focused on a city's park and that a 50-50 cost sharing (which had been the agreement) was inappropriate, so they suspended funding in 1991 to renegotiate costs (Concur 1998). Simultaneous to these negotiations, the City of San Jose was supporting the development of the Guadalupe Gardens, which was located in the reclaimed land the Airport Task Force acquired. This was near the Guadalupe River, but unrelated to flood control measures. The first garden (Courtyard Garden) was completed in 1990 (Parks,

Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department 2002). It would seem the City was building a park whether the Corps of Engineers would help or not.

Due to suspended funding the Corps of Engineers and the City of San Jose would have to re-enter negotiations and it appeared that the federal administration was more amenable to compromise. By Fall 1991, the delays were costing everyone and an agreement was needed. This coincided with a federal administration change and the new Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works agreed to the project (Concur 1998). During this same time period a thesis by a San Jose State student, Christopher Cocker (1990), called for protection and oversight of the park. He argued the holistic value of the park environmentally, socially, and economically. In the heart of San Jose this was a resource that would not just be available to the residents, but the tens of thousands of workers that come to San Jose every week.

After the agreement a Clean Water Act Certificate would need to be obtained and by 1992 construction began (US Army Corps of Engineer 2001). While this was just the beginning for the Guadalupe River Park, Guadalupe Gardens was exerting their control over part of the area with a 1994 Guadalupe Gardens masterplan. The airport approach zone reclamation area was already being redeveloped. The masterplan was a fairly lengthy document that focused on historic and cultural relevance that dated occupancy to 5,000 years back. Since this zone is restricted to gardens, the Guadalupe Gardens project was focused on community redevelopment. They strategically did not connect themselves with flood control measures and were able to proceed with redevelopment (Tito Patri and Associates 1994).

By 1995 it was apparent that the Corps of Engineers were not seriously pursuing the park and the City felt they needed to re-emphasize the importance. This meant developing a new

masterplan that questioned the priorities of the project (Wessells 2007a). The 1995 masterplan was a work of art. It is a fold out map that condenses all the information into an interactive, understandable format. Since it is a fold out, it is able to display the park unbroken in its linear form. There is one image that is of the river alone. The second image contains the proposed park features. It then breaks the park into different zones that explain what amenities will be available in the different zones (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 1995). This plan refocuses the future park priorities on community and cultural resources. It also was developed for regular resident's consumption, as where other masterplans were technical documents that were not very digestible for anyone untrained in reading these types of documents.

Furthermore, in 1995 Chinook Salmon (present in the river) were declared a species of Special Concern by California Department of Fish and Game. Later, in 1997, Steelhead (also present in the river) were declared threatened by the Endangered Species Act (Wessells 2007a). This halted the already delayed project. In 1997 the City of San Jose and the Corps of Engineers were once again at odds with one another and in December they hired Concur, Inc as a facilitator to avoid any further litigation. Concur helped them to create a mission statement and the ground rules for a long-term resolution. They had to negotiate the park design on a case by case, site by site basis. By using this process they were able to reach a comprehensive design that everyone agreed with (Concur 1998).

Through this process the Corps of Engineers appreciated the importance of ecological habitats, which included a minimum flow for the fish species. Also, by this time, the federal requirements expanded and the Corps of Engineers had to adhere to acts concerning the environment, fishing and management, wildlife coordination, clean water, clean air, historic

preservation, floodplains, wetlands, environmental justice, and migratory birds. Environment Impact Reports had been completed in 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1991. Construction on the river had to be regulated in relation to erosion, vegetation, stormwater, groundwater, soils, toxic materials, ensuring spawning gravel could be easily replaced yearly, water temperature, dissolved oxygen in the water, and in addition to the Chinook and Steelhead, they had California Red-Legged Frog, the Burrowing Owl, and the Southwestern Pond Turtle which are all Special Status Wildlife. It was a logistics problem and the 1997 Corps of Engineers was able to accommodate all the new restrictions that the 1989 Corps of Engineers found too cumbersome. In their final report, the Corps of Engineer even highlighted the cultural resources of the area. Their transformation to focus on community was fundamental to this report (US Army Corps of Engineers 2001).

Soon after the completion of the flood control project Guadalupe Gardens was absorbed into the larger park. In 2002 Guadalupe Gardens released a final report stating all that they had accomplished as a group. The document was still forward looking and included future goals for their new collaboration. Those goals would then became Guadalupe River Park goals (Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department 2002). The Guadalupe River Park released a technical masterplan in 2001 that outlines their six objectives:

- provisioning of open space along the river front for passive and active recreation
- enhance the riparian habitat
- provide economic opportunities (both public and private)
- protection from a 100 year flood
- create a balance between human and natural habitat
- provide citizen education about hydrology, flood control, natural habitat, and cultural resources

The masterplan also explains the park's history, collaborators, and previous work with the Corps of Engineers to illustrate its success (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2001).

Finally, in 2002, the park Task Force, as part of the Redevelopment Agency, created a masterplan marking their achievement that made the information available to the public. It includes stories of influential resident's connection to the park. It highlights the park's features and tributes. The document is full of colored images and has a fold out map of the park. This is still the masterplan available to the public at the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2002). The masterplan illustrates that the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's (GRPC) focus is supposed to be spread amongst cultural, environmental, and economic resources. GRPC is supposed to be educating the public on these resources, as well as completing the park in order to provide economic opportunities for the community. Some of the intended outcome of this research is investigating how GRPC is accomplishing these tasks and whether there are more efficient ways to do so.

### **III. Literature Review**

Parkland in the US has a relatively short history, extending back approximately 150 years. The rationale behind the origin of park creation is similar to ideals that are still currently held, that natural grounds in urban settings are necessary for an escape from the deplorable conditions of urbanization (Cranz 1982). People enjoy parks because they allow them to romanticize nature without the harsh realities of rural lifestyles (Bachin 1982). Parks, however, can function as a contrived form of social control. The activities that are often presented are those that are enjoyed by middle and upper classes, while it is often lower and working classes that most regularly attend parks (Carr et al. 1992). Furthermore, since the suburbia exodus, many parks have been in a state of decay and there tends to be little funding or attention directed towards maintenance. Due to park's dilapidated state, many parks became dangerous places that are unsuitable for children to be left unattended in. Gangs, drugs, and violence have become synonymous with the urban park and reclaiming these areas are costly projects often left for social activists (Cranz 1982).

Parks tend to be administrated by top-down policies that reinforce the majority's perspective, even though the users are often minorities and lower classes. Even after public funding was provided for park maintenance and land acquisition, there was still no attempt to shape parks according to user needs, it was always the other way around (Cranz 1982). It has only been a recent trend that anthropologists and urban ecologists have used rapid assessments to uncover local users needs (Low et al. 2005; Taplin et al. 2002). Even with these attempts, public parks are still poorly funded and user assessments optional. The paradigm still reigns that designers are chosen by city officials and the users must make do with what is installed.

While parks are usually considered a bastion of democracy and equality, they are rarely that in practice. Usually park administration reinforce classist politics. Park administrators struggle keeping out ‘undesirables’ while maintaining they are for all citizens (Carr et al. 1992; Cranz 1982). What is deemed undesirable changes throughout times, but there has always been a subtle vetting process of who should be allowed to use parks. Recently, however, there has been an upsurge in designing for the user needs in order to make these places locally relevant (Francis 2003). This shift is coupled with the rise of conservancies and other private partners that enable park administration to maximize benefits of these areas. With the aid of private partners the many disparate benefits can be actualized due to efficient use of funding and wiser use of space (Madden et al. 2000).

### **Park Functions & Importance**

Urban parks are unique because they are set aside as areas of play for urbanites. They are then only relevant if people use them. Urban parks are intended to be a respite from the urban grind. A park should improve quality of life for that city, the locals, and those that come to visit them. There are many expectations from locals of what an urban park should provide, and often expectations exceed reality. People’s expectations can include physical health, social benefits, economic benefits, and environmental improvements (Garvin 2011). It seems impossible that these disparate topics could all be expected out of a single plot of land, but it is a park manager’s goal to accomplish all of these, at least in some form.

The term is so old that it is disputed who even coined the phrase, “lungs of the city”, which has been used in relation to trees, open areas, and parkland. It is considered common-sense that these areas provide health benefits by filtering carbon dioxide (Bachin 2003; Carr et

al. 1992; Spirn 1984). Most studies point out that health benefits are over-emphasized in relation to parkland, except when it comes to providing a place to engage in exercise (Garvin 2011). The World Health Organization has declared that over one third of the world's population is either overweight or obese and that many of the factors are culturally or spatially bound.

Environmental conditions are considered to be the leading cause of obesity and it has been declared that urbanization leads to more sedentary lifestyle, hence more obesity (Brewis 2011). Studies have determined that one's place of residence is the single most important indicator for determining body size, not income or social standing. Environments either restrict or encourage physical activity and neighborhoods with public space can have a positive impact on physical health (Ellaway et al. 2013).

As mentioned, parks have shown to have little effect on environmental purification, but this does not mean they have no beneficial environmental impacts. Parks, especially large parks with unbroken land tracts, provide a healthy habitat for plants and animals (Garvin 2011). Furthermore, proper park planning can mitigate floods, pollution, and urban debris. Since many pollution pathways are predictable, this is a very attainable benefit (Spirn 1984). Projected figures indicate that the urbanization trend is not going to lessen, but in fact urban areas are bracing for an increase of population. Many governments are discouraging rural to urban migration, viewing urbanization as a social ill that is destroying the environment.

William Meyer (2013) has set about to dispute what he calls 'commonsense antiurbanism'. He argues that putting more people on less land attenuates more problems than it creates. Starting with ecology, he reasons that more people closer together will leave more areas undisturbed and allow animals to regain much of their lost habitat. Furthermore, while there is

more general consumption in cities it has been shown that people living in the inner core of cities consume less resources per household than anywhere else. Ultimately, his message is that cities can be the solution to environmental problems, instead of the commonly held view that they are the problem (Meyer 2013). The way to attenuate the problems of urbanism is not to move people to suburbs where they must drive everywhere, along with destroying more habitat, but it is building more sustainable and healthier cities. This means including open space so people do not have to leave the city to go to a park and making parks accessible without needing a vehicle.

In addition to physical benefits and environmental improvements, urban parks are expected to provide social value for the city. Community and social benefits are just as diverse as communities are from one another. What one group considers to be a positive, another may see as a negative. Parks, however, can only provide a community with benefits if the inhabitant's perception of safety, and the reality, makes them feel comfortable to be there. It is only after they feel an attachment to the location that connections with others can take place (Carr et al. 1992).

Many have eulogized the capabilities that parks have of erasing differences of age, sex, gender, race, history or physical capabilities (Bachin 2003; Garvin 1997; 2011; Lejano 2006; Low et al. 2005). And there does seem to be something unique in the way parks can become the place where "... boundaries separating groups could be erased" (Bachin 2003, p15). Urban parks can effectively be a neutral ground where disparate groups can come together and share a single civic identity (Bachin 2003).

This unity is often disrupted by a single group that becomes the villain in relation to parks. The presence of homeless individuals may often make people feel unsafe, even though they are typically just seeking a place to rest. Homelessness is a growing problem in our society

and the privatization of public space is increasing the pressure that many homeless experience. Often times increasing policing of areas just keeps homeless individuals on the move, but it does not provide them with any long-term solutions (Marcus and Frances 1998). There is often not a sustainable solution for homelessness, with housing being highly restrictive and often inadequate to accommodate a city's homeless population (Burt et al. 2001). Forcibly removing homeless individuals in lieu of more sustainable solutions, like job training, just deepens the divide of homeless people being the 'other' and being unsuitable for public places (Marcus and Frances 1998).

This plight of the homeless has been highlighted in past social movements. Recently, the Occupy Movement has shown the deep inequalities of society and how public space is highly restricted, indicating that it is not as public as people believe it is. In fact, Zuccotti Park, which was the site of the famous New York City protest, is a privately owned park. The Occupy Movement was predominately about physical occupation and was expressed through encampments that in many ways became autonomous cities. Most of the protesters had homes to live in, but many homeless people found that they were able to get food and protective shelter by joining the movement (Juris 2012).

The Occupy Movement was not the first time social unrest put parks and homeless people into the media spotlight, however. In the late 1960's the University of California-Berkeley purchased land around the university and forced people to move out due to eminent domain. Shortly after that the university razed the neighborhood. After the university failed to use the land for growth, people joined together to build a park there. The university's response was unbelievably violent. One person was killed in the clash and 128 people were hospitalized due

to the excessive force used to remove people and this park. Ultimately, it was voted by the school that the park should remain therefore making People's Park official (Compost 2009; Copeland 1969). Since that time the relationship between the park and UC-Berkeley has been tense and there have been times of violence. This park provides a retreat for homeless individuals and offers hot meals served at least every weekday (Compost 2009). The people of this neighborhood began their quest for a public space and it turned into a historic social movement. The park remains available as a service for the marginalized.

Finally, economic benefits are the most quantifiable benefit of parks. Great parks can attract tourists to a city, and may even become synonymous with that city, such as New York's Central Park or San Diego's Balboa Park (Harnik 2010). "World class public parks came to be seen as a reflection of civic-mindedness and a testament to the degree which a city valued the public good" (Bachin 2003;15). This attracts citizens and businesses alike that want to invest in the sustainability of a city. Much has been said about the suburb exodus, but many are finding suburbs to be intolerable traffic messes. Often times one must drive to get anywhere and gridlock freeways become a daily drain. In this way cities can capitalize on public transit and the ability to walk places, without needing a vehicle (Garvin 1997). While rent may be higher, not needing a vehicle and having a public park that substitutes for the open-space of the suburbs can make inner-cities competitive once again.

Fredrick Law Olmsted hypothesized that the taxes from increased real estate values would exceed the cost it took to build Central Park (Harnik 2010). Most would consider this an under-estimation. Rents raise faster in areas that have parks, but it was incredible what Central Park did for the housing values. The tax revenue had an increase of 900% in 15 years. This is

true of pretty much every great park, not just New York's Central Park. In Philadelphia a study found a 33% increase in land value if you were 40 feet from a park, 9% increase if you were 1000 feet from a park, or even a 4% increase if you were 2500 feet from a park (Garvin 2011). Parks can also provide opportunities for small businesses and most successful parks will spur economic growth outside the park, such as cafes and shopping centers that park-users will frequent as well (Garvin 1997).

Additionally, there are also economic benefits that come in small packages. There are many residents in a city who do not have a home with a yard and many other who live in public housing find that it is inadequate to spend the majority of their time there (Mehrabian 1976). It seems that public parks are most needed in areas where incomes are the lowest and it was shown that "...lower-income citizens vote more strongly for park funding measures" (Harnik 2010; 39). Yet it is well documented that it is these exact neighborhoods that have the least amount of parkland. It is also shown that these low-income neighborhoods are the areas that prevent the most crime with the addition of an active park. For example, residents were allowed to build a garden in Philadelphia and the crime rate dropped 90%. Or in Phoenix where they left their basketball courts open until 2am during the summer and juvenile crime dropped by 55%. The residents of these neighborhoods have taken notice and have said that parks and recreation are more important for their neighborhood than health care or business development. The midnight youth recreation cost Phoenix sixty cents per youth, but the costs of keeping them in juvenile prevention was \$30,000 (Marcus et al. 1998).

These benefits are not only notable in contemporary times, but can be seen in the historic record as well. The creation of parkland began in the late 1800s and social benefits were

gained almost instantaneously which further perpetuated the demand for public spaces. Suzanne Spencer-Wood (2003) discusses these benefits in her gendered critic of the origin of public parks which focuses on the dominant role women played in the late 1880s and early 1900s in championing the City Beautiful Movement. At the genesis of the park movement women played a pivotal and underrepresented role in cultivating parks and increasing park's civic potential. Parks were originally created with the user in mind. Main concerns were ease of access for young children, what programming would be relevant for the users, and ultimately using these spaces to help children become "moral citizens." It was only after parks rose to popularity that men co-opted the movement and design and aesthetics took precedence over user relevance.

Urban parks are not a panacea for all urban ills, they cannot change a society that does not want to change. Ultimately, what urban parks do is provide a space. The space is where change can happen. This space can either reinforce detrimental practices or it can encourage understanding and diversity. The space is meant for people to come together and have a place to share. There is not enough space in cities for everyone to have their own private backyard, nor would this be a desirable way to have communities come together. Parks are what people make of them and every user has a different experience with that space. It is not enough to merely provide space, but that space must be adequate in the facilities it offers. This has made many park officials question the old design paradigm of aesthetics as first priority. It seems that a better process is to focus on user needs and design collaboratively because it is the user who will utilize this space once the design is complete.

## **Designing For the User**

Merely having urban parks does not ensure that any societal, economic or environmental benefits will be gained. Proper use of space means designing a park that is relevant to the intended users. It is important that urban parks are not only designed well, but also managed well to ensure that any gains will be had. Design and management may appear to be disparate topics, but they are very much intertwined. The largest difference is that the design process is a punctuated event while management is continuous. A good design will have management planned as part of the ongoing process (Carr et al. 1992). All parks need management that has the capacity to alter things when necessary. Parks are always undergoing change and unforeseeable events may take place and there needs to be a system in place that can react as these things occur (Garvin 2011).

William Whyte worked with the New York City Planning Commission in understanding what it means to be a successful urban, open space. Whyte is considered a pioneer of user research (Francis 2003). He undertook a massive study in the late 1960's to the early 1970's on what works and what doesn't in urban parks and his recommendations are still the standard that are used today. He came up with five main 'needs' in public space: comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement, and discovery (Carr et al. 1992; Francis 2003).

Designers often emphasize aesthetics as the most important feature of a park, but Whyte discovered that this did not seem to matter much to most users. Functional aspects like seating were the most important factors to the success of a park, then the grander vision of a park theme and world-class design (Whyte 2001). The problem arises that most designers are hired because they are top in their field, but rarely because they have an attachment to the city they are

designing for (Basset et al. 2002). The designer may not feel that creating a relevant park is the most important thing, but designing the most elegant park is. Through research it is known that an elegant park does not necessarily mean it's well-loved or used. It is important to accommodate the current needs of the users, but also anticipating future demand when possible (Garvin 2011).

Ultimately, most successful parks were designed with a participatory design process that involved users initially (Carr et al. 1992; PPS 2000; Francis 2003). Project for Public Spaces (2000) recommends viewing the community as the 'expert' because they are the ones who have the most experience with that place and they will be the ones using it. Communities remind designers that they are creating a place, not a design. Even if a park is designed well, however, it takes ongoing management to ensure that the park remains relevant. This can be done with the aid of private partners. Private partners can be flexible to user needs and can act as a facilitator between government agencies and the public. The rise of conservancies illustrates the necessary role they are playing for increasing the potential of urban parks (Madden et al. 2000).

### **Private Partnerships: Implications for Urban, Watershed Parks**

Private partners come in many forms; some that are small, mostly volunteer-staffed to conservancies that have multi-million dollar yearly budgets. How large of a conservancy it is will depend on what they are able to provide for the park. An enormous and well-renowned park like New York's Central Park will have a conservancy that manages all aspects of the park, including general maintenance to park programming (Madden et al. 2000). Without someone organizing these affairs, Central Park would soon fall into disrepair and disorder. Most parks do not require this level of commitment, but nonetheless someone has to be able to ensure that the

park will run smoothly and that all park needs are attended. From the smallest vest-pocket park to the largest city-wide park there needs to be someone who provides oversight and safety, as well as safeguards the future for the park. Ultimately, the goal of every park is sustainability (Garvin 2011).

Achieving sustainability is a vague concept that has many different connotations. Alexander Garvin (2011) distilled that there are six dimensions of sustainability: social, functional, environmental, financial, political, and aesthetic. These six dimensions take on differing ranges of importance throughout the life of a park, but they all play a pivotal role for the success of a park. This is especially true for watershed parks because of the added dimension of a water resource. This intensifies all the other dimensions, especially the need for ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and recalibration. Not only is there water which is a human necessity (and joy), but there are fish and other aquatic life that may even have some type of protective status, including the riparian habitat itself. Also of great concern to the neighborhood is the potential of flooding (Bassett et al. 2002; Otto et al. 2004). All of these factors mean an increased amount of people who engage in the park both personally and professionally.

This means that sustainability for a watershed park takes more careful initial planning, because the design must have the foresight to counter common and predictable problems. Watersheds, rivers, and other water resources are altered by the development of a city. Many urban rivers are deepened, dammed, straightened, and even separated from their floodplain, therefore leading to ongoing maintenance and concern. A deepened channel will need to be dredged, usually yearly or maybe even more frequently. Straightened meanders will mean water flows faster and will increase the chances of flooding due to the fact there is a decreased ability

to hold water. Dams can fall to disrepair and pose more of a threat than the original good that was intended. Finally, separating a floodplain from an area may allow for a jurisdictional agreement to build on it, but it still poses a flood hazard and often new owners are not warned of the true dangers (Otto et al. 2004). Mediating these dangers takes coordination amongst engineers, ecologists, government agencies, private investors, and citizen activists.

Returning to the idea of sustainability, social sustainability is one that has been a concern for urban parks since the suburb exodus. Whether it's drug users or homeless, undesirables detract from the perception of safety and can cause a decrease in park usage. With homelessness on the rise, park encampments are becoming an even more common site in urban parks (Burt et al. 2001). The increase in population pushes them deeper into these public spaces. Most park officials discourage homeless users from occupying the park and will sometimes request their removal. Removal usually entails force, police, and increased limitations. If instead park officials approached homelessness with understanding and advocacy there is a greater possibility of permanently relocating these persons. Park officials can use their sway to increase services that aid homelessness and alleviate the actual problem instead of merely chasing homeless people around the city (Marcus and Francis 1998).

Another social issue that arises is cultural representation. With so many other concerns and so many cultural groups it is not uncommon that people get unintentionally, or intentionally, left out. Park managers tend to focus on physical resources and underutilize social ones. Not just contemporary citizen groups, but historic and archaeological assets as well. Community outreach can help create relevant programming for the targeted group (Taplin et al. 2002). Even with active research sometimes cultural groups feel patronized or misrepresented. This is

because, while all the good private partners provide, they do not speak equally for all minority groups (Carr et al. 1992).

One example of this misrepresentation occurred with the creation of Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia. The dominant narrative retold in the park is that of historically European culture, while African-American culture, who are the group members that helped build the inner city to what it is, is almost non-existent in the park's cultural narrative. Most African-Americans who live near the park do not feel like they belong there, and in the original building of the park many black neighborhoods were pushed out due to the effects of gentrification in order to install a park that celebrates historic white colonialism.

Anthropologists Setha Low and Suzanne Scheld along with environmental psychologist Dana Taplin (Low et al. 2005) used ethnographic methods to discover what African-Americans would want to see changed. They also interviewed other minority groups to survey their connections to the park. The overwhelming majority of local neighbors felt little to no connection to the park, while some even felt alienated by it. Discovering ways to shift from the perspective of the powerful to those who have been disenfranchised by the park is only possible by interviewing them personally. These ethnographic techniques not only get usable information for park managers, but it cultivates a relationship between possible park users and park managers (Low et al. 2005; Taplin et al. 2002).

Another fundamental issue that arises with sustainability is coordination between government agencies and the private sector. Often public and private entities have an underdeveloped understanding of one another and their individual processes may be in opposition of each other. The public role of parks is a debated issue in the national narrative and

many feel its extent looms too large. Others feel that regulation is a necessary bi-product of industrialization. One common discord between public and private sectors is that government committees have the tendency to compartmentalize functions, structures, and management. On the other hand, private enterprises see these as interconnected and inseparable. This often means that the private sector is the one responsible to translate these concerns into a language understandable to both sectors (Fosler and Berger 1982).

Alleviating culturally-based problems is necessary for a park in order to gain the benefits discussed. These advantages are achieved only if the park is safe, functioning, and appealing. That's why a private partner becomes indispensable for most parks. They coordinate roles and responsibilities, as well as provide a framework for future development (Garvin 2011). These private partners usually come in the form of a non-profit and their yearly budget can range from less than \$2,000 to in the tens of millions, depending on the size and scope of the park. Small parks usually require help in acquiring resources and non-profits in this category are called "assistance providers." A new park's non-profit is often used as a catalyst to get projects moving along. Larger parks often have non-profits that can co-manage, be sole managers, or even be a city-wide partner for the entire park system (Madden et al. 2000). Whatever the kind of private partner a park has, there are certain expectations that they are supposed to provide.

While activities vary from one non-profit to the next there are typical activities that can be generalized. Fundraising and organizing volunteers are the two most fundamental tasks of a park non-profit. Next in line comes advocacy, maintenance and security. Finally, for the non-profits who have the capacity they will create programming, be expected to do marketing and public outreach, and finally, design and implement capital improvements (Madden et al. 2000).

These tasks help ensure that a park maintains the six dimensions of sustainability (Garvin 2011) and keep the park relevant to the users. Every park is different, has a different constituency, and differing levels of capacity. Those who work for the private partner should be aware of not only what the users want, but what they are capable of providing. Both a strong Board and staff, however, are necessary to have a well-functioning park.

In conclusion, private partners are what ensure the payback of the investment that is the public park. This includes not only financial, but social, political, and security. Those who work in these non-profits come from all areas of expertise, but are most commonly from the social and environmental sciences. The training they get is most often on-the-job, but are usually expected to have some type of formal education when they arrive. They tend to be innovative people who are able to work in multidisciplinary settings that get along with most types of people (Madden et al. 2000).

#### **IV. Theoretical Approach**

Anthropologists had been researching unique and rural cultures for many years before they began to use their skill-set to investigate phenomena within their own cultures. It was sometime even later that anthropologists adapted these investigatory skills into the ability to facilitate social action (Gwynne 2003; Hannerz 1980). An advantage of having means of comparison by using previous literature, anthropologists are able to contextualize their results outside of their immediate circle. This is especially helpful if anthropologists intend to enact change using their research. It can turn a decision into a process of decision-making. Part of the need for an outsider reference is because the researcher brings their personal bias with them and must find ways to triangulate their findings with the participant's feelings that is an outside perspective from both groups. Furthermore, the growing literature of action anthropology, that even includes long-term results, helps to guide practice to even further lengths (Moeran 2005; Mosse 2005; Sunderland and Denny 2007).

This project draws from core research in urban anthropology that focuses on spatial context to understand individual behaviors and community interaction (Gmelch and Zenner 1996; Hannerz 1980; Low and Zúñiga 2003). The approach uses spatial anthropology to describe behavior associated with open spaces and parks as rural settings in an urban context (Foster and Kemper 1996). Using the dichotomy of rural and urban is useful to help understand what different behaviors are considered culturally appropriate in these different contexts. While an urban park might be geographically located in an urban area the culturally constructed norms may resemble rural tendencies.

While in the field, anthropologists contextualize their research by linking behavioral and conceptual patterns to spatial and material correlates. It is only within the last few decades, coinciding with the prevalence of technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), that anthropologists have started to use spatiality as the foreground to frame their research (Low and Zúñiga 2003). Research involving spatial analyses has provided an abundance of new arenas to investigate, revealing how different cultures interact differently with space and place (Hall 2003; Kuper 2003; Pitkin 1993; Rutheiser 1993). Further, spatial anthropology has been used to investigate meaning of space, hegemony, and behavioral changes due to built form (Cooper 1993; Harvey 2006; Rodman 1993; Smith and Low 2006). Spatial approaches are an especially apt framework to use to research how to govern the Guadalupe River Park because the park meanders through many culturally distinct areas of San Jose, while the river itself transitions between more and less managed states of flood control. These interactions offer variable experiences depending on which part of the park you visit and can contribute to shaping the vision the user has for the completion of the park.

One area of spatial anthropology that is particularly appropriate for urban park research is the investigation of public space. When anthropologists investigate public space it tends to be in relation to power dynamics and inquiry into how public is public space (Low 2006; Smith and Low 2006). Major events, such as the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, suggest that cultural perceptions about public space may shift radically as a result of meaningful or traumatic cultural occurrences. Public space after September 11th was viewed as more dangerous than previously thought and people became comfortable with surveillance as their fear rose in public spaces (Harvey 2006; Smith and Low 2006). Even prior to that terrible event, fear was often a

factor in controlling how public space was, and is, managed. The exodus to suburbia has been referred to as a 'fear flight' and that this fear is the same driver in gated communities accompanied with privatized public space (Low 2003). Ultimately, by managing how people view public space, those in power can then control the public space, and often for a profit.

Primary areas of research besides fear and control in public space include how people connect with public spaces through place attachment (Brown and Perkins 1992; Hummon 1992; Low and Altman 1992). Place attachment operates using three main assumptions: 1) place attachment is an integrating and multi-disciplinary concept; 2) origins of place attachment are varied and complex; and 3) place attachment contributes to not only self-definition and integrity, but has group implications as well (Low and Altman 1992). Through research it is now understood that disruptions in place attachment can have extreme detrimental effects.

Disruptions can threaten self-definition as well as overwhelm a person with unprepared change. Because place attachment is multi-faceted, disruptions must be investigated with this same rigor and multi-disciplinarity (Brown and Perkins 1992). A downfall of place attachment's multi-, or interdisciplinary nature, however, is that the literature is fragmented which leads to a fragmented understanding (Hummon 1992). This requires that an anthropologist who decides to research place attachment must be conversant on topics well outside the realm of anthropology.

Working in a multidisciplinary setting usually entails that practitioners from different fields come together to work out a problem, but continue to operate within their respective field's paradigms. This is slightly different than interdisciplinary research which asks practitioners to overlap with other fields and to take on certain assumptions that are not in their own field. Finally, trans-disciplinary is a problem-centered, participatory approach that attempts to erase

those boundaries completely and to focus on finding sustainable solutions (Leavy 2011). A trans-disciplinary approach is an ideal paradigm to use for social research in urban parks for three reasons. First, it prioritizes using knowledge to effect change in lieu of theory generation. Second, instead of being consumed with working out of your specific discipline's boundaries it asks that you forget the boundaries and use whatever tool works best. Finally, it puts community participation as foundational to the solution, which is a tenet of applied anthropology as well.

Spatial anthropology has widely connecting relations with cultural geography, in fact exactly where the two differ is an ongoing debate (Gritzner 2002). The lines similarly are blurred between the arenas of social ecology, sociology, urban studies, environmental studies, and policy research. In this study of urban parks, I will draw upon work from all of these arenas as I consider the cultural meaning imposed on space and place in San Jose parks (Bassett et al. 2002; Feldman et al. 2006; Latour 2005; Schneider and Ingram 2007; Wessells 2007b). While all of these arenas have inter-relating concepts, my primary focus is sustainable and meaningful change to help better service the community that relies on these public resources.

While a graduate student at University of California-Irvine's department of Social Ecology, Anne Taufen Wessells investigated how four watershed parks utilized a collaborative governance model in creation of the park (2007a). Very convenient for me, one of her case studies was the Guadalupe River Park in San Jose. She details the creation of the park and illustrates how collaborative planning aided in creating a park that was user focused. She interprets negotiations between agencies and actors using both Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and a paradigm derived from ANT known as "Ways of Knowing" (Wessells 2007a; 2007b). Bruno Latour (2005) developed ANT as a framework to investigate social behavior

while reconciling common uncertainties, such as how individuals can act seemingly contradictory in groups or how what seems to be a fact can actually be disputed. The issues that arise with using ANT include that it investigates phenomena at a level of abstraction between the subjects and the researcher. Further, it looks at the full-range of possibilities in a slow process that takes minute steps. This means that it is simply not practical for the purposes of applied work (Feldman et al. 2006; Latour 2005; Schneider and Ingram 2007). Applied research seeks time-saving devices that put as little between the researchers and participants as possible. ANT is useful, however, in that it provides a framework to understand how human actors and non-human actants interact in very different ways within their network. It calculates uncertainties in behaviors and networks and attempts to reconcile why this occurs (Latour 2005).

An adaptation from ANT is ways of knowing which provides a framework to understand these same social uncertainties. Ways of knowing was developed as an inclusive and dynamic concept that helps to make sense of why different people arrive at different decisions, or even why the same person, at different times, will arrive at different decisions (Feldman et al. 2006; Schneider and Ingram 2007; Wessells 2007a). Often times understanding why someone has arrived at a certain decision is more valuable than the decision is at face value. Therefore, the advantages of this technique are reconciling disagreements amongst disparate perspectives.

Transcending these differences can help turn a divergent group from a liability into an asset (Schneider and Ingram 2007). Fundamentally, cooperation is about discovering alternate approaches that can be used to overcome barriers that are present when different kinds of people must come together to make decisions (Feldman et al. 2006; Schneider and Ingram 2007). This

work has been applied to policy development, public governance, and park creation (Bassett et al. 2002; Feldman et al. 2006; Schneider and Ingram 2007; Wessells 2007a; 2007b; 2010).

The approach of Anne Taufen Wessells (2007b) creates a framework for unlike people to come together. As mentioned in previous sections, urban parks and specifically watershed parks, are places where disparate groups must come together to make decisions that impact entire communities (Carr et al. 1992; Cranz 1982; Fosler and Berger 1982; Madden et al. 2000; Marcus and Frances 1998; PPS 2000). Ecologists, engineers, architects, environmentalists, residents, policy makers, government officials, and park administrators come together to create a place. It is a beautiful concept in principle, but what must occur is that since everyone's involvement is out of necessity, they must exert power in accordance to their position. If not, their expertise and what they were supposed to bring to the table will be left behind leaving a deficit in the outcome. While exerting they must find a way to be respectful and inclusive. This is the principle of collaborative governance (Bassett et al. 2002; Feldman et al. 2006; Schneider and Ingram 2007; Wessells 2007a; 2007b; 2010).

As an anthropologist it is important to question the fundamental reasoning that one is operating out of in order to ensure your results are not biased by your own beliefs and experiences. This is especially true when you are working with a subject that has relatively little, or fragmented, literature. This is true for social implications of urban park governance, whose literature is fragmented across disciplines, as well as being a relatively new concept. Like most social research this project uses deductive logic. Deductive logic means that one begins with what is known and moves into the unknown, basing research on previously designed theories. Then one can create a hypothesis and use the data you gather to test a hypothesis, moving from

general to specific (Loseke 2013). This works well when working with a well-defined topic that has a rich history of research. One can then able to create a specific hypothesis and gather data to assess a particular expectation. When working with a topic that has lots of gaps and relatively sparse previous research it is important to ensure that research is utilizing sound concepts by using acquired data to produce theory in an inductive approach (Charmaz 2006; Loseke 2013).

This type of inductive approach is called grounded theory. Grounded theory originated in 1967 as an alternative to the rigid formula quantitative research was imposing on qualitative researchers (Charmaz 2006). Rather than gathering data on a specific research hypothesis or question, a researcher will gather data that may seem periphery and later in analysis finds that it informs their research. It also asks that instead of working out of preconceived coding, you let codes emerge for themselves. Finally, instead of adapting data to fit with theory, one reconstructs theory to explain the results (Charmaz 2006). While there are benefits to both inductive and deductive reasoning, they both are equally restricting as well. In order to reconcile this I have found that using an adaptation of both was ultimately the strongest way to construct my research.

At first glance it is a standard deductive process that begins with a literature review and formulates a unique research question. During the data gathering phases is where the two styles emerge differentially. Instead of gathering data that was only pertinent to my hypothesis, I gathered any data that was related to the general concept. Coding meant allowing the ideas to emerge independent from the hypothesis, similar to grounded theory. In order to be thorough, I went back through to look specifically for the concepts I had perceived to be relevant. Afterwards, when I analyzed my findings I found myself doing another literature review on new

concepts that had emerged. In this way I began with a deductive approach, but followed it up using inductive logic in order to ensure my findings were neither cursory nor was I stuck in a paradigm that didn't fully explain the phenomenon I had uncovered. By moving between the two styles of logical reasoning I ensured that my findings were grounded in theory, but also not restricted by it.

In summary, place attachment theory, concepts of collaborative governance, and understanding how different approaches can come together culminate to build the framework of my research. Adhering to all the assumptions that these disparate approaches necessitate influence how I am able to construct my research. The instruments are developed to capture both spatial relations and how the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC) interacts with all the different stakeholders with whom it must collaborate. Combining aspects of spatiality with collaborative governance is guided by knowledge produced by those separate fields. Throughout the process, the goal has been to produce usable social information that GRPC could then directly turn into an action plan. Using previous research helps contextualize observations and results. Other scholars can queue you into nuanced understanding that would otherwise have been unnoticeable.

## **V. Methods**

### **Project Narrative**

The focus of the project had always been how Guadalupe River Park Conservancy acquires resources and how those resources are then allocated throughout the organization, but as the project progressed the scope widened from investigating a single department, the education department, to understanding how the organization runs as a whole. Initially, I wrote a grant intended for a local company that would secure funding to grow the education program and enable them to offer a weekly course aimed at middle school aged children. After having completed the grant and turned it in, little results came from the process. GRPC decided to put this expansion on hold and this insecure funding put the project in jeopardy. Further, this process gave little insight into how the organization operated, and no overview of how they've managed through these issues in the past. It became apparent that my focus had to be expanded to encompass the entire organization.

Ultimately the project expanded to investigate the resources of the entire organization of GRPC, as well as their expectations of how to complete the park. Evaluations are a common approach to understanding organization functioning, particularly traditional ethnographic evaluation, and empowerment evaluation (Butler 2005; Davidson 2005; Fetterman 2001). An ethnographic evaluation was the most suitable in this project because the research focus was investigating how disparate departments work together to identify and effectively allocate resources.

An ethnographic evaluation's main objective is to understand different position's perspectives and reconcile any differences that have been identified (Butler 2005). While

traditional evaluation uses standardized metrics, an ethnographic evaluation utilizes ambiguous concepts such as cultural differences, differing objectives, and how an environment can be shaped by relationship managing (Butler 2005; Davidson 2005). The advantage of this approach in the current project include that it focuses on specifics of GRPC's office environment instead of idealizing office spaces, as well as seeks insider perspectives in lieu of industry standards.

The question that guides this research is: how are the staff members at GRPC interpreting and accomplishing their vague mission statement and how does acquisition and allocation of resources affect their ability to do so? In addition to resources such as funding, volunteers, and strong leadership, what other factors affect the ability of GRPC to carry out their duties as an organization? In order to answer these questions I had to understand how each staff member interprets their very broad mission statement and whether they believe they are succeeding at accomplishing it. If they feel like there is a deficit in some way, what areas do different staff members identify as needing the most attention? Do these areas of deficit tend to be focused on their own department, or does each member identify similar problems? This is significant because this park has been in a state of development since its creation. There are still no clear lines of how this park will be completed and finding avenues of improving resource acquisition and allocation may identify long-term solutions.

### **Project Instruments**

A fortuitous aspect about this project was that GRPC was not only willing to allow me to publish the name of the organization, every member of the staff personally agreed to have me publish their name. This allows the findings to be much richer in details and allows the reader to contextualize the findings as well. This can be beneficial for an organization because they are

then entered into the literature on record and it gets them a bit of publicity. It can also expose them to the public, revealing details about the organization that would normally not be available to public scrutiny. Ultimately, the intention is to help get them more attention to help them better accomplish the goals they have set out to and to reignite the community into supporting their agenda.

Another aspect of an open project is that I was able to ask direct questions without having to worry that it may lead to discovery of individual's identity. This is reflected in my interview outline (Appendix A), in that the questions asked were about specific networks and each staff member places themselves publicly in their network. I asked direct questions about their specific responsibilities as well as how they became qualified to do their work. Additionally, I ask questions concerning GRPC as an organization as well as how and who they are networked with. I also inquired about community responsibilities, how they act as stewards of the park, and how the park and their responsibilities change over the course of a year. Furthermore, I asked questions concerning the flood control system and how politics enter into their procedures. Investigating these disparate dimensions allowed me to understand how resources get utilized across the entire organization as well as to identify ways that GRPC can more efficiently utilize their finite resources.

Besides networking, I was concerned how each staff member interacts with the physical park. I decided it would be beneficial to have each interviewee fill out a masterplan map that I had enlarged and laminated with the areas in the park they interacted with as well as what happens in the different sections. The park is very long and linear and different stakeholders interact with different sections of the park. Each staff member has a different relationship with

the park and some have more to do with the physical areas enclosed in the park. I have included the maps (Appendix B:1-7), but a discussion about them will be in the following chapter on results.

### **Data Collection**

For the data collection phase I interviewed the seven staff members involved with running day to day operations. The education department had three staff members, volunteer coordination had two, as well as the Program Director, and of course the Executive Director. I interviewed all seven staff members in the Summer of 2013 at an office space located at the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC). Having seven staff members puts it at a medium sized park conservancy (Madden et al. 2000). This means that they must accomplish most of their goals through the use of volunteers, interns, and paid education guides. To fully appreciate how they accomplish their duties meant spending a lot of time at GRPC involving myself with the different projects.

Throughout the process I both volunteered and interned at different capacities. I began in the Fall of 2012 as a docent for the visitor center where I learned about the variety of tasks they are expected to carry out. This gave me broad ideas about each staff member, and I would help with individual tasks that they would assign to me that helped with fundraising, special events, or education programs. This is how I began to understand the importance of GRPC's role in showing the community the park, as well as protecting the natural resources that are housed there.

Shortly after beginning as a visitor center docent I began working as an education intern, and helped throughout Spring of 2013. This was hands-on and they place a lot of responsibility

on their interns. I lead field trip stations for K-6 field trips, learned around ten different curriculums within the first few weeks. The curriculum varies greatly from teaching about the river and its inhabitants to horticulture-themed programs that highlight either the rose garden or the historic orchard. There were other field trips that included San Jose's natural and cultural history and geocaching throughout the park. When they began the education program they were servicing around 3,000 kids a year, now the figure is closer to 10,000 kids around Santa Clara County per year.

Besides interning at the visitor center and helping with field trips, I volunteered at two different special events in the Spring of 2013. One was called "Water Wizard Festival," which is a festival for 3rd graders around Santa Clara County. Around 300 students attended this year. They come to learn about the importance of a healthy watershed, and what they and their families can do to be better environmental citizens. It also provides students from different schools an opportunity to meet one another, as well as the teachers.

The other special event I volunteered at was "Spring in Guadalupe" that included a trail opening and a 5K run. Another section of the trail had been paved, making bike commuters able to travel all the way to Alviso on paved bike trail. This was widely supported by the community and there were many bike commuters in attendance. For the event, I ran a booth that offered free bike rentals to the public. This was a great opportunity to hear how the public felt about GRPC and it was quite the experience, witnessing multiple kids riding a bike for the first time to their parent's delight.

Another aspect of my volunteering was photographing roses in the rose garden. There are around 3,500 roses in their Heritage Rose Garden and they are attempting to photograph each

one and put them in a database. I worked with a regular volunteer who heads up the project and I was able to photograph around thirty-five roses for the project. It is very time-consuming because roses bloom at different times and to get beautiful pictures it means being there when they are in full bloom and that it is not too sunny nor overcast, as well as not too windy.

During this period I also utilized the Guadalupe River Park as a citizen park user. To get to the park I had to walk a mile through the park from Diridon Station to Coleman Street. I have biked the park from end to end. I interacted with other park users and spent time in each one of the sections. The time I spent in the park as a park user gave me insight into who comes to the park and at what time of the day. I think this was invaluable to my analysis, although at the time I was merely using the park as a way to get to my destination, like a typically park user.

Secondary research was a paramount method of data collection for this project. I used archival data on both the park and San Jose generally. GRPC allowed me to use their archives to look through and analyze all of their old masterplans. This gave me insight into the intentions that people have placed on the park over time. Different masterplans were written at different times and convey different social meaning. As well as GRPC's internal documents, I also undertook archival research at Martin Luther King Jr. Library. This provided me with reports from agencies that worked with GRPC such as US Army Corps of Engineers and Concur, Inc, a facilitator they hired to help with negotiations.

## **Analysis**

During the analysis phase instead of traditional transcriptions, I listened to the interviews and pulled out important content, employing a type of "quick transcription," a technique that helps save time. Often with applied work speed is a factor and finding ways to speed up the

process without sacrificing integrity is good practice. In addition to the interviews, I included my personal experiences in the analysis. I coded the documents for major themes and was able to identify common concerns that kept arising.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was the software I employed during the spatial analysis process I employed for understanding some of the spatial components. Georeferencing the park's last masterplan map from 2002 to an updated city map of San Jose helped to reveal how the park has grown into the city over the last ten years. Comparison of the seven informant's maps was aided by GIS software that allowed me to combine social information with natural features. This allowed me to distinguish patterns of use, as well as identify possible areas that would be ideal for growth projects. A map is provided in Appendix C that illustrates some of the analysis accomplished using GIS software.

## **VI. Results**

The question that framed this inquiry focused on organizational strengths and weaknesses; specifically how GRPC acquires and allocates resources, as well as how this affects their ability to accomplish their mission statement. Throughout the process I investigated the factors that affected GRPC's ability to carry out duties as an organization, such as financial instability (both governmentally and inner-organizationally), network impacts, and physical elements in the park. Much of this information is presented in the ethnographic evaluation which is available in Appendix D.

In addition to the information presented in the evaluation, there were a variety of other themes that emerged throughout the analysis process. For example, there was a strong reliance and demand for healthy relationships that allowed the ease of collaborative governance. Also, another theme that emerged was how GRPC's role as a private partner is fulfilled by improving the park's potential, which in turn improves the quality of life for San Jose residents. GRPC's presence does this for economic, environmental, and social benefits. GRPC's success relies on user interest and community investment. Further, many spatially bound concepts arose that were specific to place-based needs and affairs. The main themes that developed from the interviews include GRPC's role as a private partner of the park, effects of the economic recession, the mandate of collaborative governance, and formation and disruption of place attachment. In this section I will discuss the findings associated with each theme and the themes' relevance to understanding the workings of the GRPC.

## **GRPC's Role as a Private Partner**

The creation of this park and the importance of the Guadalupe River has been documented in the academic record. Some of this information comes from oral histories or archaeological mitigation projects (Allen and Hylkema 2002; Cartier 1984; 1985; Yu 1991), while other data come from organizational documents such as masterplans, inter-organizational correspondence, and reports of specific developmental phases (City of San Jose Planning Commission 1989; Concur 1998; Department of the Army: Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors 1986; San Jose Redevelopment Agency 1995; 2001; 2002; Tito Patri & Associates 1994; United States Army Corps of Engineers 2001).

In 2002 a masterplan was developed by the Redevelopment Agency of San Jose in collaboration with influential residents of San Jose. This masterplan is still the authoritative document on what the public should be able to expect from the Guadalupe River Park leadership in accordance with changes and development (San Jose Redevelopment Agency 2002). After redevelopment was completed the Redevelopment Agency of San Jose dissolved which resulted in destabilization of leadership for the Guadalupe River Park. This meant that GRPC became the keystone organization advocating in the favor of the park. Leslee Hamilton, Executive Director at GRPC, brought this up during our conversation, when she made these comments:

What's interesting is that this river park was a Redevelopment Agency project and the Parks Department had nothing to do with it until it was handed to them and told to take care of it. So it's sort of an interesting place because when the Redevelopment Agency went away it got a little orphaned. And so we've been working to bring it back to the city leader's attention, saying "You've got this amazing park."

Without GRPC advocating for the park, it would most likely have already fallen to disrepair.

The Guadalupe River Park was created out of multiple redevelopment projects and the

Redevelopment Agency was an ad hoc agency that was never intended to administrate over the park. This means that from even initial redevelopment that the park was always in danger of poor management. GRPC has been paramount in pushing the park's agenda forward and has to realign plans to make sure other agencies are still focused on improving the park, but no other agency has felt the responsibility of championing this park that GRPC experiences.

This is in-line with expectations of what services private partners provide government funded public spaces. GRPC does not yet have the capacity to take over all responsibilities of managing the park, especially in relation to park maintenance, as some conservancies do (Madden et al. 2000). It is, however, fulfilling the typical duties of organizing agencies, being the face for the public to interact with, pushing the park's agenda forward, and ultimately increasing the civic potential of the park (Garvin 2011).

An early example of this type of advocacy happened in 2005 with the Guadalupe River Park's Grand Opening. At this time the park's organization was known as Friends of the Guadalupe Park & Gardens and they organized this event. The *San Jose Mercury News* published five articles, all by different authors, debating the merits of the Grand Opening and what this park means to the city (Cassidy 2005; Hayes 2005; Herhold 2005; Rogers 2005; Weimers 2005). The need for a connecting trail system was the unifying thread throughout the whole dialog, and whether the absence of this meant the park should not have had its Grand Opening. The pressure by sponsors and an underestimated time table for the Highway 87 project resulted in a Grand Opening that included unfinished trails (Cassidy 2005; Herhold 2005; Weimers 2005). The ability to travel through San Jose on an inter-connected network was justifiably the biggest concern for many citizens. Even Phil Cornish, Project Manager, who was

hired in 1999, mentioned the disconnected trail network as his most dominate memory. The trail network has now mostly been completed, but the initial debate of whether they ‘opened’ too soon certainly made the trail network a dominant priority of the organization. Just as recent as Spring of 2013 GRPC, along with the City, celebrated a paving of a trail to Alviso at the Spring in Guadalupe special event.

Another important service GRPC provides is advocating for the park users. User expectation of park facilities is why the literature on successful parks relies heavily on designing for the user. Citizens have expectations out of socially-owned property, such as public parks. One of the most fundamental user expectation of open public space is to have an area to exercise and, in this particular case, commute through San Jose. In addition to having a place to exercise, other expectations are typically: environmental purification, social unification, and even economic prosperity (Bachin 2003; Carr et al. 1992; Garvin 2011; Spirm 1984). In order to have these benefits realized, a park must be functional and the facilities must meet the needs of local residents (Carr et al. 1992; Francis 2003; PPS 2000). This park snakes through some of the most congested areas of San Jose and bike travel is made safer by the trail network’s presence. This was fundamental to local’s needs and this was vocalized throughout the reporting process. Without GRPC there would be little coordination between agencies and the user would not have an organization that articulates their needs and wants.

### **Social Inequality and the Economic Recession**

GRPC was impacted by the economic recession by decreasing resources both financially and aid that partnerships with other agencies provided. One of the staff members, Joe Salvato,

who is now an Education Coordinator, discusses how the City of San Jose cut social programs during these times:

And the way things are going more and more with the city, this becomes a luxury. Parks and neighborhood services, and community services are kind of a luxury thing. They are the first to go when things are hard. So more and more places like this are going to stay relevant.

After working at GRPC through this financially hard time and seeing how the City views the park as expendable, Salvato sees GRPC as even more relevant. While food, clothes, and medicine may be the bottom line and if you are lacking these essentials, then everything becomes a “luxury”. Unfortunately, it is during these same times that the city has less to offer and the need for free activities increases. This means that the functions GRPC serves intensifies with economic stress, but it can be during these same times when it is scrutinized the most rigorously. This recession questioned the value we place on social programs and revealed that cities are prepared to cut out social programs if viewed as a financial extravagance, placing an even larger burden on organizations working to serve the working class demographic.

During the depths of the recession, the City of San Jose felt it must reduce the number of Park Rangers available to patrol the parks in the City of San Jose. For all the agencies that have some type of jurisdiction or duty in the river park, it is the Park Rangers that act as the enforcement. The Park Ranger program was significantly reduced around 2010 and everyone at GRPC predicted the outcome, which was an increase in homeless encampments. Mike Peasland had been a Park Ranger and was one of the rangers cut during this period. He has since returned to being a Park Ranger, but at the time of the interview he was acting as the Volunteer Coordinator at GRPC. He recalls the negotiations taking place when the rangers were removed. Those involved knew homeless encampments were a problem, even with consistent

management. He, and others, believed that removing this management would surely lead to bigger problems still, which Peasland describes:

The rangers told everyone what was going to happen if they take the rangers out of here. The homeless are going to be back within 6 months and you are going to have a big mess on your hands. They took us out and what happened? The homeless moved in and they have a big mess on their hands. So Leslee, so the rangers have been out for two years, but they started threatening before that, so for the past 4 years Leslee and the conservancy have been beating on the city, "You can't do it, it's going to kill the park. How are we suppose to get corporate funding to finish development up here if you are killing us by cutting our legs out?" So the conservancy has been tremendously supportive of the Ranger program.

The homeless encampments in San Jose have been dubbed the largest in the continental U.S. by Business Insider, who highlights the homeless stories from Coyote Creek in an article that highlights the encampments and illustrates individual's struggles (Johnson 2013). The encampments had grown so large one easily notices them when approaching San Jose from an airplane.

These encampments were not a priority of the City and cleaning them up never rose to the agenda of action. Many agencies within the city did not see the encampments as a problem, but as a solution. Peasland notes that while working as a Park Ranger he would notice police officers pushing street problems into the park:

Part of it is also that, especially in San Jose, the mindset is take your problems off the street and put them into the park. As long as I have been a ranger in San Jose I know that cops tell the people that are drinking on the street to go in the park. Don't sleep out here on the sidewalk--go into the park. I was just down here about a year ago with a cop and he turned to me and goes, "They're just hobos, they were here first."...So it's that mindset that you take all of society's problem and dump it into the park and you don't worry about it. We still have that problem of trying to get support from not only police but politicians.

This brings up many questions about public property and who has the right to occupy these spaces. Often times the term “urban park” becomes synonymous with socially undesirable people such as the homeless community. This was seen in People’s Park (Berkeley, California). The caretakers of this park have taken a stand to protect the rights of homeless to occupy this space and even use it as a forum to discuss the underlying issues of homelessness and what actual options exist if you are a homeless person (Compost 2009). This same discussion about public space and what liberties can be expected was at the heart of the Occupy Movement (Juris 2012). Many of these supposedly public spaces are not truly public and actually privately owned. Many cities will provide businesses with tax incentives to provide space, but the business still has the privilege of censoring who is welcome (Garvin 2011). Throughout history there have been dissenters of the dominant paradigm who have challenged the state’s use of force to censor public space’s norms. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 ushered in an era of complacency in respect to surveillance and much of the public opted for the perception of safety over freedom to demonstrate (Smith and Low 2006). In September, 2011 the Occupy Movement questioned this paradigm, putting social inequality in the spotlight (Juris 2012). The answer to these larger questions have not been determined and are still debated on the national stage.

The lack of park enforcement in the Guadalupe River Park meant that the homeless encampments grew to unbelievable sizes. Leslee Hamilton visits other parks and learns about their administration as part of her duties as Executive Director. She notes that in other places this is not the case, “traveling the parks I have never seen a park where they let the encampments grow like San Jose has let them here. So it’s a matter of political will, and again, it’s not my problem to solve.” She wants the City to “stop using parks as holding places for the homeless.”

And while GRPC doesn't necessarily have the resources to solve these problems, it is also not GRPC's responsibility, as Hamilton succinctly puts it: "I don't want to pass the buck, but my job is to be a champion for this park and that involves saying, "no." As an advocate for the park, it is her position to do what is best for the park and cleaning up the homeless encampments was a priority that took over much of their resources and time, none of which would have been necessary if the Park Ranger program would have been funded in order to preform their duties.

While the homeless encampments grew, the problems they caused were mostly to the river and to the physical park, but also impacted GRPC's ability to acquire and allocate resources. Richard Tejada, now an Education Coordinator, explains the physical damage of the homeless encampments. They put trash into the river, caused erosion to the banks, rose phosphate and nitrogen levels (due to bathing and relieving themselves in the river), and poached fish. The serious social damage they inflicted, however, was that they perpetuated perceptions of danger more than they were actually creating danger. Kristjana Eyjólfsson, who at the time was the Education Coordinator, said her one wish for the park would be, "I would love it if it could be super clean and super safe, so that people felt comfortable bringing their families here and that you didn't have to defend it." She acknowledges the homeless have a physical impact, but that there is little danger posed to the education department and their ability to bring elementary students down to the river, which is near the encampments:

There is the impact of encampments on the river, is one thing. But the actual interaction between homeless people and the children in the park is more of a perception thing. Except for the random, crazy one they pretty much stick to themselves.

While homeless individuals may not perpetuate violence against people in the park, they do cause damage to the ability of GRPC to efficiently use resources. Donors do not want to

support open spaces that have this type of reputation. Furthermore, GRPC has had to spend time and resources on alleviating problems caused by the homeless encampment. Finally, users do not feel comfortable being in a park with large, unmanaged homeless encampments.

Homelessness is an issue that certainly cannot be solved by an agency in a single city. Mike Peasland, Park Ranger and previous Volunteer Coordinator, continually brings the conversation back to the need for ongoing management. He recognizes that the majority of homeless do not want the type of aid that is currently available. This has to do with drug restrictions of shelters coupled with their own addictions, no pet policies, sex offender's strict housing regulations, and severe mental issues that many homeless people face. Park Rangers only offer assistance when someone is looking for aid; what Park Rangers do is act as a watchdog for violations and manage the impact of damage the homeless inflict. They also provide a sense of security with their presence. Their absence affected not only GRPC's ability to protect the park, it affected their relationships with other agencies as well.

During the years that the Park Rangers were absent, GRPC found it difficult to get support from other stakeholder agencies as well. Both CalTrans and Santa Clara Valley Water District have jurisdiction over different areas of the river and its banks. Both of these agencies did sweeps to move the homeless off their property, but the homeless would just move to a different area owned by someone else. Eventually, GRPC got involved and asked CalTrans if they would coordinate their efforts with other land owners. Leslee Hamilton explains how this simple solution took years to enact, remembering her conversation with CalTrans:

"It would be really great if you guys talked to the Water District and the City when you were doing your sweeps, cause then we could have a coordinated response." And that has now happened but it wasn't for years and years. It was just mind blowing to me that

agencies wouldn't talk to each other or even initiate it. But we were happy to play that role.

Coordinating agencies is a fundamental service that GRPC provides. The reality that other agencies did not prioritize collaboration or at the very least coordination just reinforces the need for a conservancy to do just that. The negative impacts of these encampments differentially impacted GRPC and its ability to gain support, especially through donations. While the homeless encampments did not actually increase the violence in the park, they did hurt the perception of the Guadalupe River Park and made it an undesirable place for donors to support. This means that the effects of the recession had compounding impacts on GRPC's ability to function effectively. Homelessness was on the rise more generally due to the recession, management of homelessness decreased due to lack of funding, funding for social programs became more precarious while the need for these programs intensified, and GRPC was expected to pick up the loose ends caused by all of these factors; all while the perceived social value of the conservancy decreased. This may be a common position for private partners, but it nonetheless hinders their ability to succeed and use resources effectively.

### **Mission Statement Adherence**

GRPC has a simple, yet nebulous mission statement: The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship. Part of the interview process was understanding how different staff members interpret this mission statement and then use their agency to execute. Much of what was revealed was opportunity and circumstance were the major contributing factors to their motives and abilities. Looking at each

component of their mission provided the framework to understand how these parts come together.

**Stewardship:** One unexpected event that occurred in spite of the river damage, was the discovery of three beavers, one a pregnant female. This only solidified the importance of maintaining a clean and safe river. Early in April of 2013 a small family of beavers settled across from what was then HP Pavilion (now SAP Center), right in downtown San Jose. This was the first sighting of beavers on this river in 150 years. No one was exactly sure where they came from, either north from Martinez or south from Lexington Reservoir, but everyone mobilized in order to protect them from urban dangers (Rogers 2013).

At the time Kristjana Eyjólfsson was the Education Coordinator and had all instructors intertwine the beavers into curriculum whenever possible. Using the park as the natural classroom, it became a feature that was very exciting to teach the kids about. When I asked Leslee Hamilton what role GRPC plays in protecting species such as the beavers, she said:

I think it just underscores the need for and justifies the whole steward thing. This is a living stream, we've got eels and salmon and trout, and a wonderful diversity of bird life. And now to have this keystone mammal species here is just really amazing and shows that if we clean up the river...It's really interesting to see the diversity that can co-exist in this urbanized environment.

This idea that wild beavers in an urban environment are a resource and not a nuisance was not a universal concept. Initially, the primary river stakeholder, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), felt the beavers posed a threat to flood control and sought removal. After conversations with GRPC and other agencies, however, they realized that the beavers were not a danger and any dam efforts by the beaver would be mitigated by the flood control input/output channels. The flood control model took so long to construct because it was built to foster a

healthy ecosystem. At the time the species of concern were Steelhead Trout and Chinook Salmon, but the design has now created favorable habitats for many creatures (United States Army Corps of Engineers 2001). Although this system was built with ecological concerns, and in some ways renovated the paradigm of urban river control, GRPC does not have explicit rights to advocate for the protection of the species within the river. It is implied that GRPC will be stewards to all animals as well as advocates for what the community wants, but it is not in control of the river, only the park that surrounds it. This compartmentalized control that many of the agencies who have stakes in the park confront means that collaboration is necessary whenever a new obstacle arises. Being a steward means GRPC must mobilize their network in order to have a system of support, because alone they have little leverage to protect these species.

**Education:** Maintaining partnerships with agencies that help with river clean-ups helps GRPC focus on other aspects of their mission statement such as providing environmental education to the students of San Jose. When GRPC began their education program they were servicing around 3,000 San Jose students and it has now expanded to around 10,000 students a year. This increase has occurred during an economic recession and GRPC has championed providing education to those who would otherwise not be able to afford it. Executive Director Leslee Hamilton has sustained this need through grant money provided by donors. The grants they are able to provide schools, usually reserved for Title I schools, covers not only the cost of the field trip, but transportation as well. She admits, “We’ve been fortunate to get grant money to underwrite the price of those because they can’t afford the buses, let alone the program fees anymore.” Since she started in her position in 2008, she realizes that things have probably only become more fiscally difficult for schools and that their need to provide this service is greater.

Richard Tejeda explained that, “Title I schools are our focus, we try and get low income families and schools that wouldn’t be able otherwise to afford it.” When asked why this is so important to GRPC, Hamilton reasoned, “My opinion is that you value what you know, so getting kids out here and getting them over any initial fears they might have and for a lot of them this is as close to wilderness that they’ve ever been, down by that river.” Since many of these children are from low-income families and live in the center of San Jose, they often have not been exposed to this level of nature.

A large portion of their students come from Title I schools, but GRPC does work with private groups as well. The Boys and Girls Club is another organization that GRPC works with that also has a large portion of underserved children, as well as providing environmental education to homeless children involved with Envision. When asked why it’s so important to serve this demographic, Richard Tejeda explained,

Because a lot of the children that we work with...are from broken, single, low-income families...So by introducing them to nature, I hope to have an influence to keep them away from drugs, gangs, and negative influences...mainly just to have a positive impact on the children here.

While focused on providing education for all, GRPC is actually accomplishing two of the duties of their mission statement. One is to provide education, but the other is to advocate for the larger community. Having a positive impact on the community and providing an outlet for children has been championed through the education program.

**Advocacy:** An expectation and basic requirement of urban parks is that they will provide the community with social benefits. One of these expected benefits is the ability to erase inequalities based on class and economic standing (Bachin 2003; Garvin 1997; 2011; Lejano 2006; Low et al. 2005). Urban parks are suppose to offer an arena that disparate groups can

come together and share a single, civic identity (Bachin 2003). While often the homeless community becomes villains, these areas are supposedly for all to enjoy, especially children of all backgrounds, even the homeless children (Marcus and Francis 1998). The need to be introduced to these environmental concepts becomes magnified when the capabilities of the parents are hindered due to economic restraints. These children often become marginalized due to diminished economic capabilities and when GRPC is able to provide this service to those who could not otherwise, it is helping to diminish the marginalization of San Jose communities based on economic inequalities.

### **Place Attachment**

A discussion point that was brought up throughout the different interviews was a desire to be more established in the surrounding communities. Kristjana Eyjólfsson identifies this issue in relation to the Guadalupe River Park's reputation,

You talk to a lot of people and they don't even know what the park is and then when you tell them they then think of the homeless encampment or will have encountered a scary dude on the trail. You're never going to get rid of that completely, but I would like for it to be more of an integrated park for more people in San Jose.

What is so powerful about this statement is that the Guadalupe River was the original impetus for the creation of the city that is now San Jose. This river has witnessed many keystone historic events. Ohlone occupancy along the river dates back around 5,000 years, and most of the archaeological evidence points to the Guadalupe River as a major source of subsistence (Allen and Hykema 2002; Cartier 1985). The Ohlone inhabitants were evicted, however, by the Spanish's arrival. The Spanish initially built their mission right on the river, only to be flooded that first season and they moved their permanent settlement away from the banks. The Spanish

continued to utilize the river for irrigation and other resources, but at a distance that was safe (Cartier 1984; 1985).

Continuing through history there has been Mexican, European, and early American occupancy along the river. This river was the origin of the orchard industry, which then allowed a thriving canning industry to spring up as well (Allen and Hylkema 2002; Cartier 1984). Early San Jose Chinatowns were built along the river as well, which faced crippling racism that eventually led to the whole area to be razed due to arson (Yu 1991). Even after high-tech was the dominate industry, a neighborhood along the banks formed, but that too would be razed because of airport expansion.

Throughout history there has been occupancy followed by eviction. Every group that lived along these banks dubiously relied on the river that had the potential to inundate their civilization. One group merely replaced the next, and others were left to make do with what they felt was the only property available to them. Each eviction meant that the group would try to make a new home further away from the Guadalupe River in a more stable environment. It seems that the majority of the descendent groups from these occupations have little interest in rekindling the connection with the river. Outreach by GRPC has been followed up by lack of input. It seems that these communities do not want to relive the process of eviction and have left their attachment to the river in the past.

Place attachment is a complicated process of individual, group, and cultural factors (Brown and Perkins 1992; Hummon 1992; Low and Altman 1992). Disruptions in place attachment can have long-lasting, negative impacts. They can threaten group definition and often disruptions in occupancy lead to disruptions in place attachment (Brown and Perkins

1992). This seems to be what has happened to many Guadalupe River occupiers who no longer want to engage with this place. Throughout the years the Guadalupe River has inundated San Jose and left people without a home due to flooding (Cartier 1985; Concur 1998). These different episodes can alter the perception of the river and many residents may feel that the river is more of a nuisance than resource. This in turn affects the value they place on historic events, cultural representation, and willingness to return to the source of anguish.

GRPC has not investigated the extent that disasters and evictions may have on the communities willingness to participate, but many staff members do acknowledge that many residents have a negative impression of the park. Mike Peasland explains that even contemporary press highlights negative aspects of the park over the positive things it offers. He contributes this to an inherently human bias:

Unfortunately, what people do know about the river park tends to be negative. Humans are like that in general, we tend to remember the negative more than the positive. A lot of times with the press that the two phrases 'homeless' and 'Guadalupe River Park' have become attached to each other recently.

If it is human nature to remember the negative over the positive, then it is unlikely that any of the past tragedies will ever be forgotten completely. Engaging with different groups who have been spurned by this river will mean acknowledging the negative influences it is capable of and providing a resource to discuss these past tragedies. While the river has provided positive impacts and memories, it also has many negative ones that may need to be reconciled before GRPC is able to encourage these communities to reconnect with the Guadalupe River.

## Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance is often cited as a keystone function that a private partner of a public park must organize (PPS 2000). This holds true for GRPC and one of the important services they provide for the park is coordinating efforts of stakeholder groups. There are many agencies that have jurisdiction over different areas of the Guadalupe River Park. The river itself and the majority of its bank are under SCVWD ownership. CalTrans is in control of the bank that is closest to Highway 87, where they have built part of the freeway very near the river. Much of this park, particularly the meadow and gardens on Coleman Street, was a

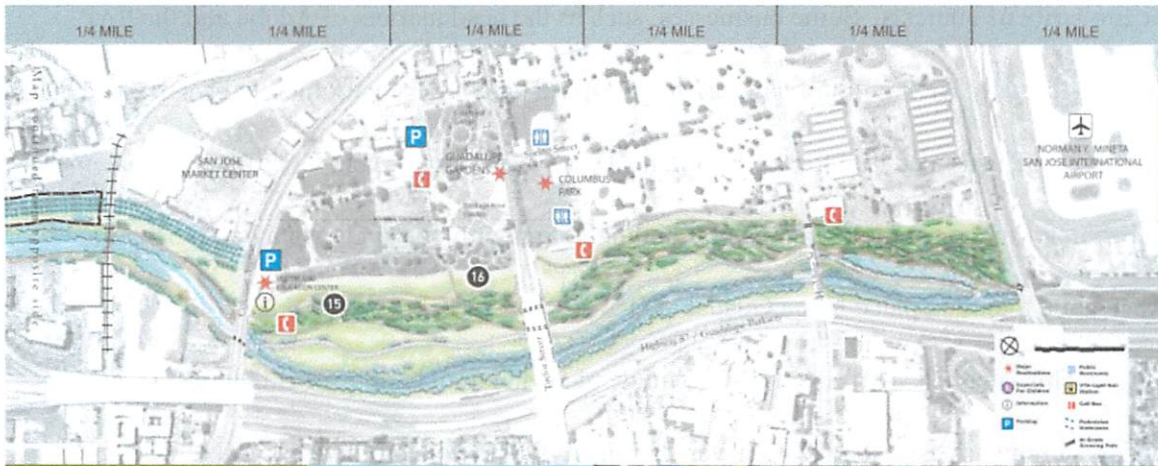


Figure 1: Guadalupe Gardens Section (north section of park)  
(Masterplan 2002: Redevelopment Agency of San Jose)

redevelopment project due to airport expansion. This part of the park is called the Guadalupe Gardens and has a rose garden and an orchard that contains the fruit trees traditionally found in the historic orchards of the Santa Clara Valley. This area of the park has restrictions due to the airplane approach zone and all building or remodeling must be approved by the FAA.

Furthermore, the entire park is under the jurisdiction of the City of San Jose, and different agencies engage with the park and administrators for one project or another. Much of the maintenance comes directly from the City. Some of the city departments that GRPC interacts with regularly include Parks and Recreations, Environmental Services, Cultural Affairs Office, and the Department of Transportation. They also have representatives who act as a type of enforcement such as Park Rangers. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (previously Department of Fish and Game) also serve as a watchdog agency. In addition to jurisdictional agencies, they also have many groups they interact with either because of proximity to the park or similarity of interests. Some businesses, such as the headquarters of Adobe and the SAP Center (formally HP Pavilion), have an interest in revitalizing the park merely because of their proximity. This is also true for the Children's Discovery Museum, but GRPC has also been a collaborator to the creation of an exhibit highlighting mammoths and displaying the mammoth excavation that took place in the Guadalupe River Park.

This is only a short list of the multitude of agencies and non-profits that GRPC interacts with on a regular basis. The reasons vary; from administrative, others have to do with education, wildlife, plant maintenance, or orchard care and harvest. All of these different groups have an interest or reason to be in the park and GRPC is often seen as a gatekeeper or partner to them. Some partners have much more power than others. For example, SCVWD is a partner for all river decisions, but because SCVWD has jurisdiction over the Guadalupe River, not GRPC, SCVWD has the final say on most decisions. Leslee Hamilton explains the importance of relationships in connection to good governance when bringing up a topic that GRPC and SCVWD disagreed on,

It's about building relationships...I think when you see an agency do something like that you create a really adversarial thing...I think sometimes when you're an activist and you really care about something you just want to throw rocks at them. So that's the lesson I've learned over years of activism is that it's about relationships and it's about being respectful.

When discussing SCVWD with the different staff members each one acknowledged the need for a stable and respectful relationship in order to accomplish their day to day activities. Governance and expansion of the park is only accomplished when the different jurisdictional agencies agree. Since most of the park needs clearance from multiple agencies to move forward on any project clear lines of communication become necessary and any adversity can derail a project.

Urban parks, especially watershed parks, have a common arrangement of disparate groups that must come together to make decisions that impact the entire community (Carr et al. 1992; Cranz 1982; Fosler and Berger 1982; Madden et al. 2000; Marcus and Frances 1998; PPS 2000). The common stakeholders are engineers, ecologists, architects, environmentalists, policy makers, government officials, park administrators, and citizens. As the the park conservancy, GRPC must try to coordinate the efforts of all of these stakeholders. Prior to GRPC the Redevelopment Agency of San Jose coordinated a lot of these efforts, but these disagreements can often lead to frustration and disengagement. During the flood control efforts there were many disputes over the vision of the park and eventually a facilitator, Concur Inc, was hired to resolve these conflicts (Concur 1998).

Ways of knowing is a concept developed to reconcile efforts of dissimilar groups, especially in the public policy arena (Feldman et al. 2006; Schneider and Ingram 2007; Wessells 2007a). Ways of knowing provides a framework to help contextualize why it is important to

understand the whole decision-making process and uses understanding and respect to overcome barriers that can divide groups (Feldman et al. 2006). These are the same tactics that GRPC employs in order to help align their networks and bring everyone to a mutual understanding. Getting everyone on the same page and in agreement takes time to coordinate, but this function that GRPC provides is very important and a central priority. Kristjana Eyjólfsson explains that this is at the core of why GRPC exists:

In our vision, which is supposedly a grander vision for the Guadalupe River Park, you are making a place for the people of San Jose, I don't think it would happen if we weren't here, because you need that unifying group to direct.

Without a group directing these interactions each agency would be operating out of what is in their best interests and many elements of what makes a place cohesive would be lost. The reason watershed parks have so many stakeholder groups is because of the diversity that exists in these places. These disparate stakeholder's diversity can become an asset instead of liability when their differences are understood as equally important and valid (Schneider and Ingram 2007). This is what GRPC strives for when they bring these unlike groups together.

These different and demanding relationships can be very hectic when trying to collaborate. When any stakeholder changes their position in these interactions it can affect all agencies in their network. Using the economic recession as an example, many stakeholders were struggling financially and had to decrease the service they were able to provide. This decrease altered their relationship with their network. For example, the Park Rangers were dramatically reduced during this time and subsequently changed the perception of Park Ranger's value. Those who relied on the Park Rangers believed this illustrated how much they were needed due to the encampment increasing which had subsequent damage to the river. The Park Rangers,

however, were demoralized and forced to find employment elsewhere during a struggling economy. GRPC was forced to step in and act on their behalf, both by vocalizing their support, but also by coordinating an effort to remove the encampments. This meant that GRPC's relationship with SCVWD and CalTrans altered because GRPC was now asking more out of them, when this effort could have normally fallen into the realm of Park Ranger duties. This episode illustrates how relationships are fluid and when one actor disappears the entire network can become destabilized. Through realignment the network can often see the importance and necessity of the missing actor. In the case of the Park Rangers they have been refunded in order to provide at least two rangers for the Guadalupe River Park. It was obvious that the Park Rangers were a necessary part of the network and their absence created more fiscal problems than it solved.

The distinct areas within the Guadalupe River Park have different stakeholders and require different governance. Such as the Guadalupe Gardens section has the FAA as a stakeholder, while they have no interest in the rest of the park. This is part of the reason why a unifying group becomes essential. Unification takes understanding and respect in order to maintain healthy relationships. Different areas require different networks and GRPC must continually realign priorities based on who is currently involved with projects.

### **Spatial Analysis**

The Guadalupe River Park has several culturally and ecologically distinct sections. Because the park was the result of a redevelopment effort due to separate causes (airport expansion and flood control management) the areas have developed under different types of jurisdiction which has manifested into very different physical characteristics. There are three

main park areas that have varying degrees of facilities. Discovery Meadow, Arena Green and Guadalupe Gardens provide different atmospheres if what you seek is an open meadow, an urban park furnishing play facilities, or an open area that has both managed and natural plant life on display. These three areas are furthermore surrounded by culturally distinct areas of San Jose. Each of these parklands has the Guadalupe River running through it, but the river transitions between more and less managed sections of flood control, creating different opportunities for enjoyment. This array of micro-habitats provides insight into culturally constructed norms and differing patterns of use.

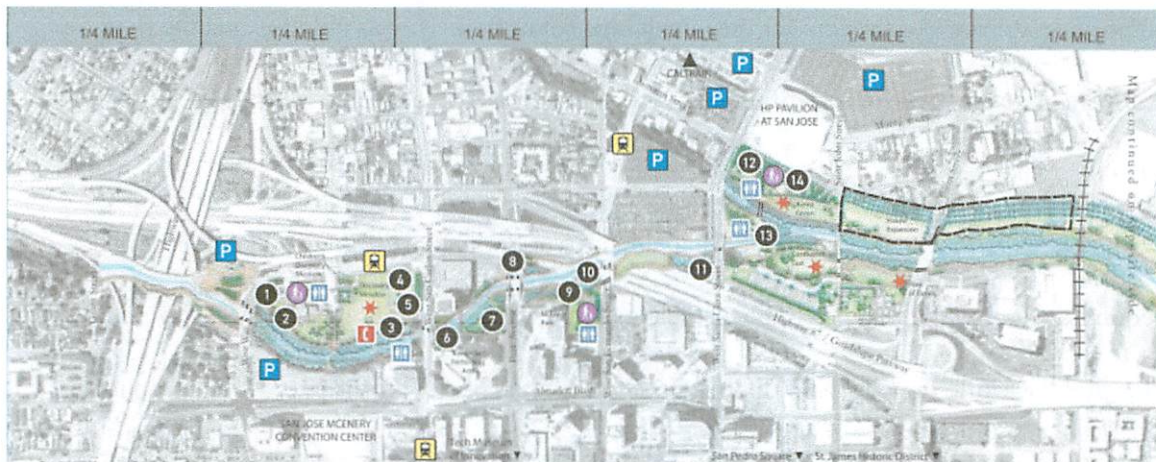


Figure 2: Discovery Meadow and Arena Green (south section of park)  
(Masterplan 2002: Redevelopment Agency of San Jose)

In addition to these larger open areas, the Guadalupe River Park has an interconnecting system of trails that travel along the channel of the river. The opportunity this linear park provides is that it allows for high-speed biking that bypasses the traffic associated with urban areas. This is because it transects San Jose north to south in much the same way that the highways do. Altogether the park has elements of open space, trail networks, river components, and varying degrees of plant and animal life. It provides a variety of opportunities to San Jose

residents that want to engage with different activities. Mike Peasland explains the wealth of unique experiences this large park offers:

You've got bicycle commuters that come through here everyday, you've got families that on Saturday and Sunday they go to Panera Bread for breakfast and then come over here and walk, you've got runners; you've got so many people experiencing the river park in different ways. People coming out for education programs that we offer, going to the rose garden to look at the roses on their own. There's many, many different reasons that people come here and get very different experiences and never even experience the same thing.

There are some areas in the park that offer more rural of an experience than other areas; it is in those areas that the constructed norms resemble rural tendencies. Citizen scientists go to look for artifacts, ecological happenings and consider it a link with the natural world. While the urbanized areas have traditional facilities that offer play, historic and cultural representation, and artistic sculptures.

The built environment shapes individual behavior and the ability for community interactions (Gmelch and Zenner 1996; Hannerz 1980; Low and Zúñiga 2003). Areas where flood control dominates the landscape tend to show little human interaction other than homeless community members exploiting the engineered resource. Other areas, such as the trail system, can appear to be a busy bike network if you happen to be near them during the hours most people commute. There never seems to be a time, however, when you are unable to find an area that is absent of people that you can sit next to the river and enjoy it for its seemingly natural wonder. This dichotomy of urban and rural elements is useful to understand different expectations and behaviors that are considered appropriate in these different contexts.

During data collection each study participant filled in a masterplan map with information relating to their job and interests (Appendix B:1-7). Each map creates an image of a different

person interacting with the park. Analyzing them into one unified whole reveals the complexity of managing a resource with such diverse possibilities. The analysis does reveal different management strategies. For example, the Guadalupe Gardens section is closest to the Visitor Center where GRPC is headquartered and this is the area that each staff member engages with most frequently. A reason for this is obviously proximity, but it also provides the platform to allow the different staff members to be involved in projects in an area that still has open space and facility potential. The Guadalupe Gardens section has the historic orchards and heritage rose garden which are maintained by GRPC, but also used as learning tools for GRPC's education programs. This proximity and focus on the Coleman Street section of the park means that the other areas become neglected in relation to park administration use and receives less resources that GRPC provides.

Compiling this information was aided by a Geographic Information System (GIS) framework from which I have included an image of the spatial layout of activities described in interviews (see Appendix C). By referencing the masterplan map onto a USGS map of San Jose I was able to understand inner-city connectedness. For example, the relationship to the airport and why height restrictions are placed so rigidly on the Guadalupe Gardens is revealed. Furthermore, it shows how the freeways have reinforced the linear transect the river has created through San Jose. It also gives insight into how different areas could be better utilized in the future. In particular, the area of Discovery Meadow has a new convention center built near it and San Jose is trying to redevelop this area to be more conducive to foot traffic. Moreover, Discovery Meadow itself has little facilities on it and could be built up in a way that reinforces the desire of the City to develop this area.

Situatedness gives insight into possibilities and relationships. Looking into the different areas in the park identifies how resources are being allocated by GRPC. Since the headquarters is closer to the northern section of the park, and the furthest south section is two and a half miles away, means the staff members differentially focus their resources on the Guadalupe Gardens section. Moving resources into Discovery Meadow (the southern most section) will mean advancement in mobility throughout the park either with bicycles or motorized carts. Doing field trips in these further away sections may lead to great results, but will also utilize more resources per excursion. Also, by understanding where different stakeholders are located reveals their spatial preference. Corporate donors will want their funds to go to sections that differentially impact the park closest to them. Since GRPC is a place-based organization, understanding the place is paramount to understanding how they are able to govern. For example, resources get allocated often due to the perception of necessity. Areas that are more visible to the staff become prioritized. Visibility can be in relation to proximity or because of personal interest. This came into consideration during the evaluation due the highly visible area of the homeless encampment. This visibility led to direct action and the encampment was moved into another area of the park that did not directly impact the river. Spatial considerations were also was a factor for understanding the education department's growth and possibilities for new program sites.

The information gained from the staff members at GRPC reveal that there is a bias towards proximity both by GRPC and other stakeholders. Everyone focuses on the parts of the park they have more control over and are able to monitor more closely. Knowing stakeholder's proximity, therefore, has implications on not just spatiality, but also how networks are formed

and maintained and how to focus future resources to tend to areas that have been overlooked.

When managing a park this large with a limited staff and finite resources it is important to use assets appropriately and effectively. For GRPC, these limitations have often meant focusing on the nearest and most feasible problems. Now with the recession loosened and resources more available, GRPC is able to extend its reaches to areas further away that need their attention.

In summation, GRPC has been successful in leveraging organizational strengths in order to make themselves internally sustainable. This has enabled them to grow even during fiscally hard times. GRPC, with the aid of their network, has provided community resources in the forms of environmental education, coordination amongst agencies and provided leadership for the park's interest. They have also extended themselves to being stewards for the inhabitants when those animals are in danger. Balancing all their requirements has meant that they must focus on sustainable solutions and use their resources wisely. This often leads to a spatial bias to the parkland most closely to the headquarters. While they have not been able to harness the community to the extent they would like to, this does not mean that they will not be able to reconcile this divergence with outreach and understanding. Managing relationships is an ongoing requirement and one that will always be a priority for those at GRPC.

## **Reflections**

Investigating GRPC's use of resources and identifying ways to improve civic and cultural potential from an anthropological perspective could have taken on many different forms. The reason I chose to undertake an evaluation had part to do with expertise of my advisors in my academic department, which provided me a mentor to aid in the framework of this research. It also had part to do with circumstances surrounding GRPC. Initially, I had been interested in the

education department. This was because of my contact with the staff members in the education department, but education is also a dominant force in the organization. After completing preliminary grant writing to expand curriculum, advance technology, and target a new demographic it became obvious this was inappropriate to complete my M.A. project.

The rationale behind my decision to switch projects had to do with the process of grant writing and curriculum formation. To begin, the process was beyond my control as a researcher. It was donor dependent, in-house curriculum formation was elusive, and the project would have been built on something that could fall through at any time. Furthermore, the process of grant writing and curriculum formation did not correspond with the time table of a M.A. project, where it could have taken over a year to complete. Finally, receiving feedback on the grant writing was time consuming and the answers were vague and indefinite. Ultimately, the process did not provide the stability to build a project around.

Starting this initial process, however, gave me valuable insight into how GRPC functions as an organization. It also aided in building rapport with the staff members. This whole process provided pre-fieldwork understanding that helped me reference my research into a bigger, more holistic context. This is also what led to the decision to undertake an ethnographic evaluation. The ethnographic evaluation arose because of my desire to employ the applied methods I was learning in my coursework. Of all the tools I was studying it was the most appropriate to understand GRPC's abilities.

After proposing the idea to the Executive Director at GRPC, all the staff members quickly agreed to participate, and each one agreed to have their name published with their data. This was a crucial step because in order to make this project locally relevant and organizationally

meaningful, it would be important to publish the name of the organization which would subsequently reveal all of the participants. By agreeing to this publication, GRPC may gain publicity, but they also exposed some of their weaknesses. Throughout the project I remained mindful of their disclosures and took care to be respectful of their position.

The process of ethnography was new to me, as a practitioner, and many of the steps I took I would have completed in a different order knowing what I do now. To begin, I would have minimized my literature review on parks generally and prioritized literature on park management. Additionally, I would have undertaken my analysis of masterplans, inter-organizational documents, and reports of redevelopment prior to entering the field. I did not realize how important this information was, but after reviewing the interviews I would have asked slightly different questions which would have directed the conversation in a more relevant direction.

Since this was my first solo project, I was not nuanced in my interview skills. My questions were too generic and lacked depth. Often times my probing went in the wrong direction and I lost pertinent information due to inexperience. Couple this with the fact that many GRPC staff members are frequently interviewed, it created a situation where the interviewees were able to unintentionally control aspects of the conversation. This also produced data that was not precise as it should have been. Through this process, however, I was able to hone my interview skills. Data analysis also taught me how to ask better questions initially.

One very advantageous event was my advisor had me use a map to collect spatial data during the interviews. While I was unsure how all this would fit into the analysis phases, I would soon see the importance of this tool. Since park administration is inherently place-based

this data helped to understand nuanced details of resource distribution. Events discussed in the interviews were often in relation to location, therefore having a map and markers available eased transmission of information. Furthermore, my academic career began in the cultural geography department and I have a predilection towards spatial information, so this step helped me to understand data in a way that was very comfortable for me.

The spatial data was originally intended as merely another line of reasoning to understand how the staff members interact with the park. Throughout the process, however, there was more to be inferred from the spatial information than I originally imagined. In future projects I would integrate the spatial data into the evaluation in a more holistic manner. Throughout the creation of the evaluation document I referenced spatial information that impacted GRPC's ability to use resources efficiently. Much of this information solely framed my personal understanding, but if I had the foresight to understand the potency of spatial-based concepts I could have synthesized the results into the evaluation through better use in the initial data collection.

Analyzing the data revealed many of these initial obstacles, especially the lack of layered data due to generic questions. While analyzing the data into a form that could be compiled into an evaluation I came to understand the way I asked questions forced the participants to answer in a way that concealed differences instead of disclosed them. While much of the information was textured, there were topics which information was lacking. After the evaluation was compiled I sent it to the Executive Director, Leslee Hamilton, at GRPC and we followed that up with a debriefing. She gives formal comments available in Appendix E.

During the meeting she reiterated many of the same sentiments she included in her memo. Three of the issues identified in the evaluation (documentation of procedures, marketing,

and community engagement) she felt captured the essence appropriately. Other issues (homelessness, conservancy's role, and compartmentalized) missed the mark in some way. In the meeting she mentions that my section on homelessness reiterates many things that are already known by GRPC, but didn't identify anything that would help them move forward. In addition, the discussion on the compartmentalized nature of the conservancy and exactly what the conservancy's role is were both too narrow of a discussion and did not explore the role the Board of Directors plays. While I explored the Board's role during the interviews, the data was cursory and didn't reveal any nuanced information that warranted discussion. This was one area that I see my inexperience having the greatest effect. In the future I would explore this topic very differently, contextualizing the role of the Board more thoroughly from the beginning.

Hamilton also pointed out that some departments consist of single staff members who work with volunteers to undertake projects. This is a unique aspect of nonprofits that small staff sizes can accomplish enormous workloads because they can somewhat supplement the lack of staff with volunteers and interns. Volunteers and interns can be necessary to accomplish all that needs to be done at a nonprofit, but they are not as reliable as an employee. Some of the rationale in framing it this way is that each full-time staff member accomplishes an entire department's worth of work using volunteers and interns, which increases their ability to accomplish all that needs to be done. The conversation could have been expanded to include this, however. Furthermore, this document was meant for inner-organizational conversation, but knowing the potential existed that it could reach a much wider audience I should have included much more contextualizing data. This would have made it more durable for outsider consumption.

In conclusion, I would approach this project only slightly differently. Pre-fieldwork would have been more extensive, covering specific Guadalupe River Park literature and less general knowledge. Also, my literature review would have been stream-lined and limited to be more specific of this topic. Next, my interview questions would cover many of the same topics they did, but the specific questions would cover more ground individually. I also have a better understanding of proper probing questions and what kind of data makes for better analysis. Through this research I understand how to move through research steps more quickly and how to better manage time. Especially, in the analysis and synthesize of unique data. Fundamentally, this process enlightened me to know what steps should be lengthened and what steps should be truncated.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide GRPC with advice and information that could be used to help strengthen their organization and utilize resources more effectively. Using ethnographic techniques was powerful because much of what the staff members experience is qualitative in nature and this was the most successful way to frame this information. It was also pertinent to understand the historic position, both in relation to the river itself and the conservancy's history of creation and transformation. Applied anthropology was an appropriate framework for this research because understanding positionality and group dynamics was key to contextualizing the information available. Understanding positionality was not simply about understanding the individual's job description, but also about previous work and how their experiences shape their current expertise. Furthermore, anthropology's long history of case studies provided a way to understand this data in relation to other research.

The theoretical underpinnings of this project very appropriately situated the findings discovered through data collection. Elements of place attachment, collaborative governance, and how networks function were all dominant concepts that were intertwined to understanding how GRPC accomplishes their goals and mandates. One theme, the effects of the economic recession, took a surprisingly dominant place in analysis, while questions posed did not mention this concept.

It is important as a researcher to be aware of bias and when themes are exposed that were not intended, to be able to be reflective and discuss them in a meaningful way. While much of this work could have been completed by many academic disciplines, the way it is situated in culture and draws on civic concepts is dominantly anthropological. Holistically understanding

how agencies interact and importance of allowing differences to thrive is fundamental to anthropological theory.

Since the creation of this evaluation, more than half the participants have changed positions by either leaving the organization altogether or moving into a different position within GRPC. This means the evaluation has a unique perspective of revealing an office that is in the process of transformation. Capturing the data when I did provides an almost historic account of needs of an evolving non-profit organization. Understanding this can help inform resource allocation, not only during times of great need, but also when funds do become available to support new projects. In addition to what the evaluation offers GRPC, it can provide a framework for other organizations that must consider resources cautiously, or who want to better understand how office dynamics affect their ability to deliver services. Furthermore, it is a way to explain office culture to improve relationships inside the office as well as throughout their network.

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## **IX. Appendix A: Interview Instrument**

### **Guadalupe River Park Conservancy-the Organization & People**

- What got you interested in this type of work?
- What are the most important skills that your position demands?
- What knowledge base do you have?
- Duties/Responsibilities?
- What kind of training did you undergo to prepare yourself?
- What other 'departments' do you interact with most often?
- What shared responsibilities does the office have?
- If you could redesign your position: what would you change?
- Total # of people that are on the 'payroll'?
- What do you think of open-floor models? (no cubicles?)

### **Guadalupe River Park Conservancy-Goals & History**

- What do you consider the primary function of GRPC?
- Areas of excellence?
- Areas that need some attention?
- If GRPC were to expand-what approach would be most appropriate?
- What makes GRPC different from other park organizations that have a similar function?
- What makes GRPG different than other parks?
- Do you think that the park or the organization is the bigger priority? Which one contributes more to sustainability of the park? Where should the energy be focused?
- How much time/energy is spent on fundraising?

### **Networks with Other Organizations**

- How does the Board of Directors affect the day to day operations?
- Who is the 'Task Force'?
- Do you think a collaboration with the Ohlone's would benefit GRPC? Why/not?
- Questions concerning:
  - FAA
  - Park Rangers
  - City of San Jose
  - Parks & Recreation
  - Fish & Wildlife
  - Water District
  - San Jose Water Company
  - Ohlone
- How does other organizations interacting with each other affect you?
- Who would you like to be networked with that you are not?

### **Community Responsibilities**

- How many special programs do you undertake a year?

- How many volunteers for each program?
- What is the function of these programs (social function or advertising?)
- What is the largest program? How long have they been running for?
- How many field trips do you undertake a year?
- Does most of your help come from paid employees or volunteers?
- How do you advertise yourself in the community?
- How do you share information with the community?
- What are your goals versus the current level of engagement?
- As far as the homeless is concerned- what would the ideal situation be, and what would be an okay compromise?

### **Nature Protection/Stewards of the River**

- Do you have a baseline level of the health of the river/park?
- What protection do you provide animals in the park and how would you like to expand this? (fish, feral cats, skunks, raccoons, birds)
- What environmental monitoring do you partake in? (river quality, etc)
- Do you ever survey the animals and plant species in the park?
- Do you think allowing archaeologists to set up a dig in the park would be a good idea? Why/Not?
- Gravel-why do you need, where does it come from, and how would you change the current gravel conditions for the river?

### **Yearly Cycles of the Park**

- Is there anytime of the year that you feel that you can't 'take off'?
- The cycles of the river and its health?
- plant/tree maintenance schedule
- For this topic I want to create a yearly timeline and have you fill it in with your responsibilities. After I get one from each of you I want to synthesis it into a GRPC yearly calendar that captures the seasons and the different work each of you have to undertake.

### **Flood Control**

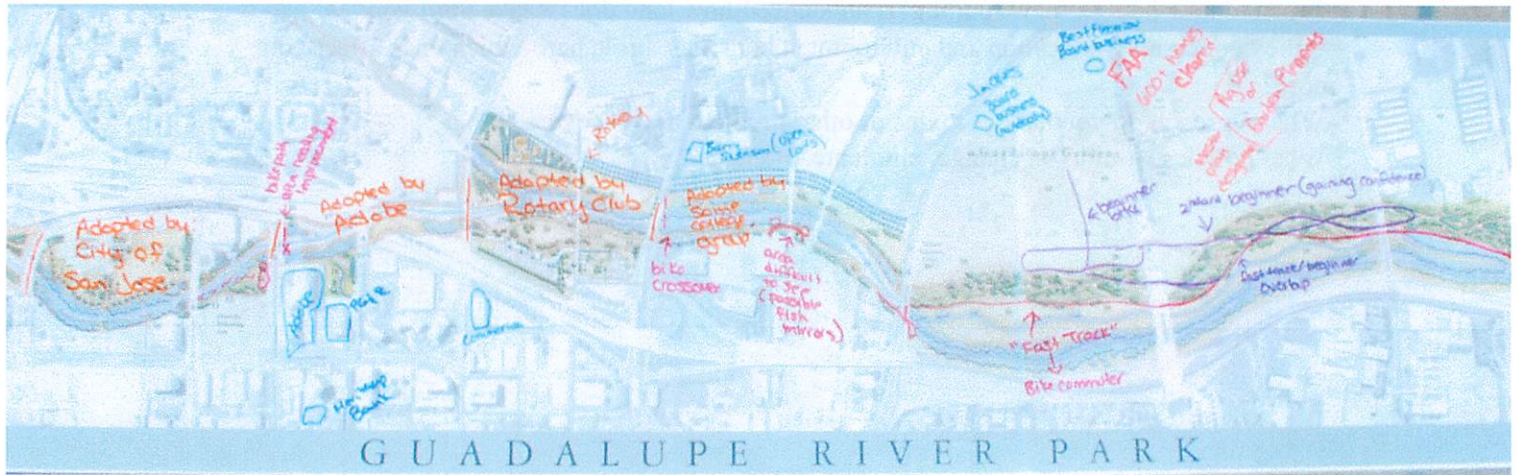
- who is in charge of the control system?
- As far as I'm aware the Army Corps of Engineer installed it, but who does the continued monitoring?
- Is there a continuing relationship with them?
- 1995 a flood was the impetus for the project, since they've been installed has there been any flood conditions?
- Any flood been adverted?
- How is this unique from other cities planning?
- As far as you are aware was habitat protection considered in the construction?

### **Policy & Politics**

- How does policies affect procedures?

- local, state, federal?
- elected officials, citizen advisory groups, Non-Profits
- How do election cycles affect GRPC?
- When a 'new law' or 'new funding' is announced-how long does it take until you feel it?
- Policy concerning education and environment both play a role here-which ones affect you more?
- What reproach do you have if toxins or other problem are discovered?
- What policies would you change, eliminate, or create?

Appendix B.1  
Leslee Hamilton (Executive Director)



Includes Information Regarding:

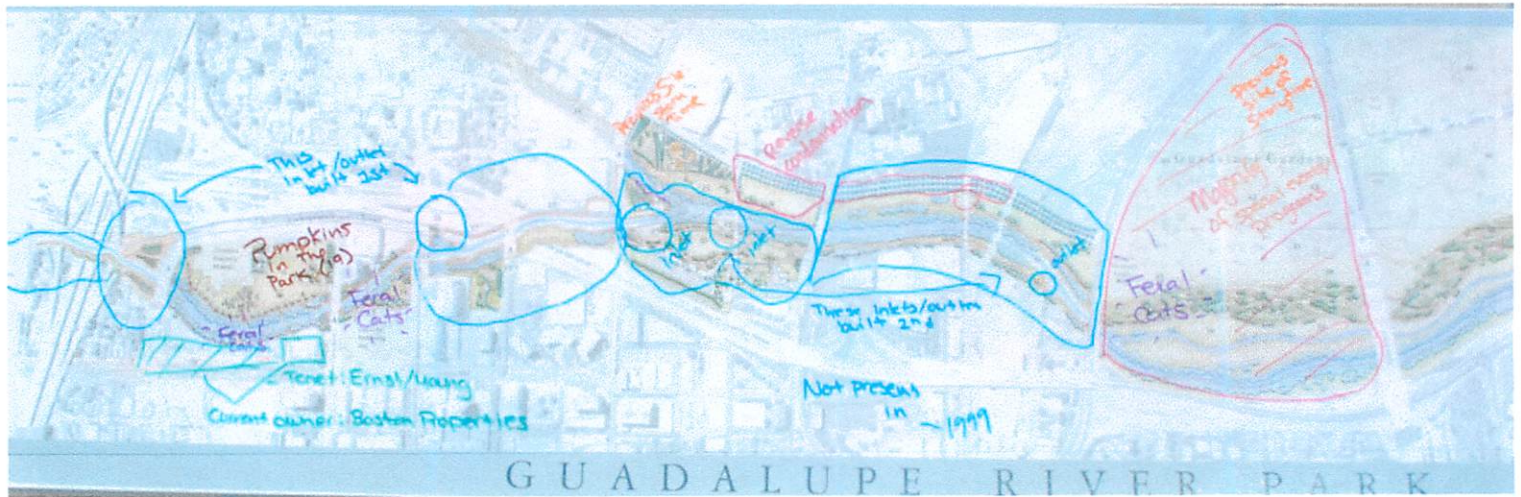
As an avid bicyclist, Leslee provided information on bike trail behaviors. The dark pink along the bike trails indicates the common route of bicycle commuters. There are parts of the trail that are not extremely efficient for bike commuting such as rough pavement, a cumbersome crossover, and areas that are difficult to see (and have resulted in bike accidents). The purple lines along trails are areas that would be appropriate for beginner bikers; either completely inexperienced or a secondary beginner who wants to try their skill at a faster trail, but is not yet ready for commuter speed trails.

The orange denotes the area along the river that some organization has adopted in the Adopt-a-Creek program. Starting at the left hand side (south end) it is: City of San Jose; Adobe; Rotary Club; Chi-Epsilon (San Jose Civil Engineering Honor Society); GRPC.

The blue represents businesses that have somehow supported GRPC. This can mean that they belong to the Board or Advisory Council, have donated funds or resources, or in some other way showed support for GRPC and the park.

The red on the right (north end) just indicates that is where 600+ houses were cleared for the airport expansion. This area of the park has restrictions imposed by the FAA, specifically regarding height, since this is the approach zone for the airport. This area is restricted to agriculture use or garden elements.

Appendix B.2  
Phil Cornish (Program Manager)



Includes Information Regarding:

Phil has been an employee at GRPC since 1999 and has seen a lot of the flood control management be installed, as well as trail connections expand and become coherently connected. The blue along the trails symbolizes these changes. Some are inlet and outlet channels that are part of the flood control system, while the large circles just mean that the trail has either been installed completely or has been altered to connect with other sections of the trail.

The light green on the bottom right is highlighting a business that could become more active with that area of the park in the future. Either with installing cafe facilities or helping the park to provide amenities.

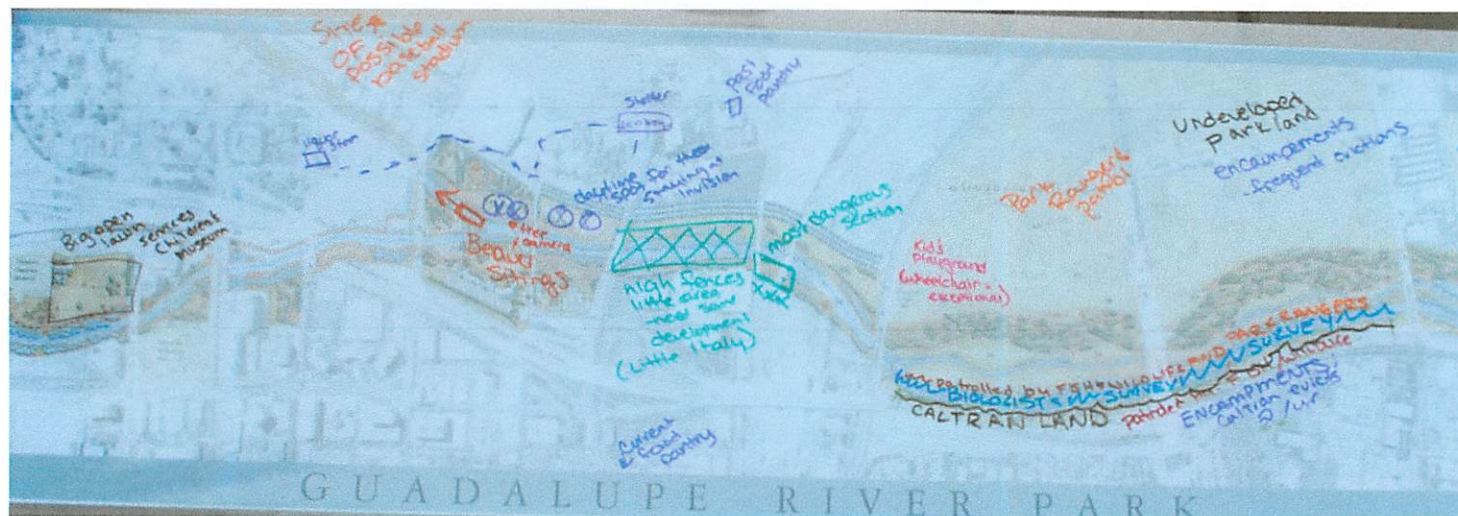
The purple is showing the ubiquitous nature of feral cats in the park.

He denotes the areas where special events occur in the park. The brown shows where the Pumpkins in the Park event occurs, which has been happening for 19 years now. The orange is a previous site of story time, which occurred in two locations. The red shows where the majority of special events and programs occur.

The red shows an area labelled 'reverse condemnation' which is an area that was put into the masterplan as parkland, but was not owned by the park and still is not.

### Appendix B.3

Mike Peasland (previous Volunteer Coordinator & current Park Ranger)



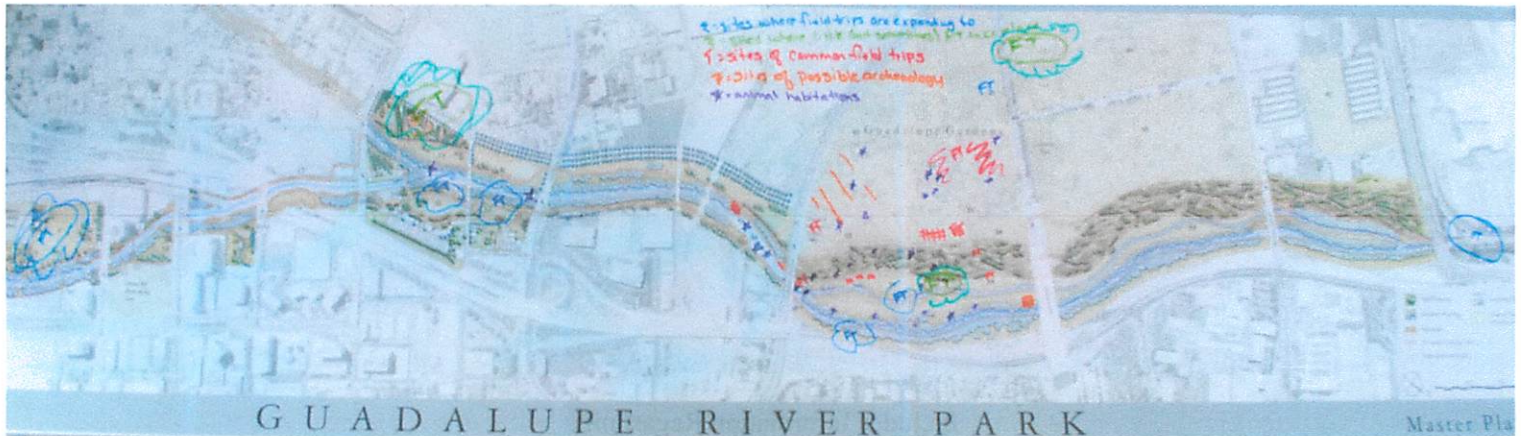
Includes Information Regarding:

Mike describes the land in relation to jurisdiction and homeless community patterns. The purple symbolizes homeless patterns. For example, he marks where the shelter is, where the liquor store is located, and where the food pantry was and where it moved to. This particular shelter is only open to them at night and they must find something to do during the day. This means they are often seen lounging around Arena Green or somewhere between the liquor store or food pantry, which are all on different sides of Arena Green. As where the homeless encampments, where the homeless actually sleep in the park, are found mostly in the northern most section between Highway 87 and the river. This area is most active at night as opposed to Arena Green which has mostly daytime activity.

This same area where the homeless encampments are located is under CalTrans (black) jurisdiction and they evict the campers twice a year. This area is patrolled by Fish and Wildlife (brown). Fish and Wildlife patrol the other bank as well, but the Park Rangers (orange) only patrol the park side of the bank which is under Santa Clara Valley Water District jurisdiction. The Park Rangers also patrol the rest of the park including the undeveloped parkland that has encampments which are subjected to frequent evictions.

On the south side of the park, which is the lefthand side of the map, he highlights that there is a big open field that services the Children's Discovery Museum. He also illustrates, in brown, where there have been beaver sitings and where the camera is located. Furthermore, the green on the map shows areas that are somewhat dangerous and could use some renovations. The red shows the area where a child's play area is being installed. This play area is designed for wheelchair accessibility.

Appendix B.4  
Kristjana Eyjólfsson (previous Education Coordinator)



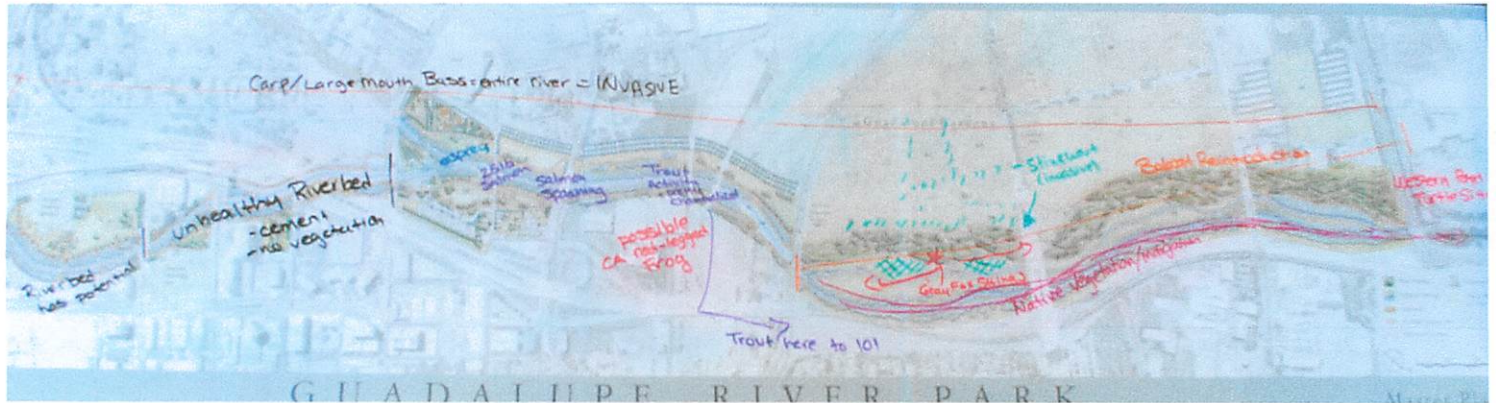
Includes Information Regarding:

This map includes information mostly regarding field trips in the park. The blue denotes sites where field trips are expanding to. The light green where field trips sometimes occur. The red is sites of common field trips. You will notice that most of the common field trips are a short distance away from the visitor center located on Coleman Street. As where the expansion is occurring to the two ends of the park. This means that transportation or park mobility will have to alter to be able to use these sites.

Kristjana has a Master's degree in medieval archaeology, so I asked her what she thought would be ideal sites for an excavation. The orange signifies sites where archaeological excavations might produce human occupancy findings. These are areas that are large enough for an excavation and have known human occupancy to have occurred on them.

Finally, the purple denotes sites of animal habitations. This could be where the beavers where located, where trout and salmon spawn, or where a jack rabbit is seen. She did not label the individual animals, but just where animals of interest have been seen.

Appendix B.5  
Richard Tejada (Education Coordinator)



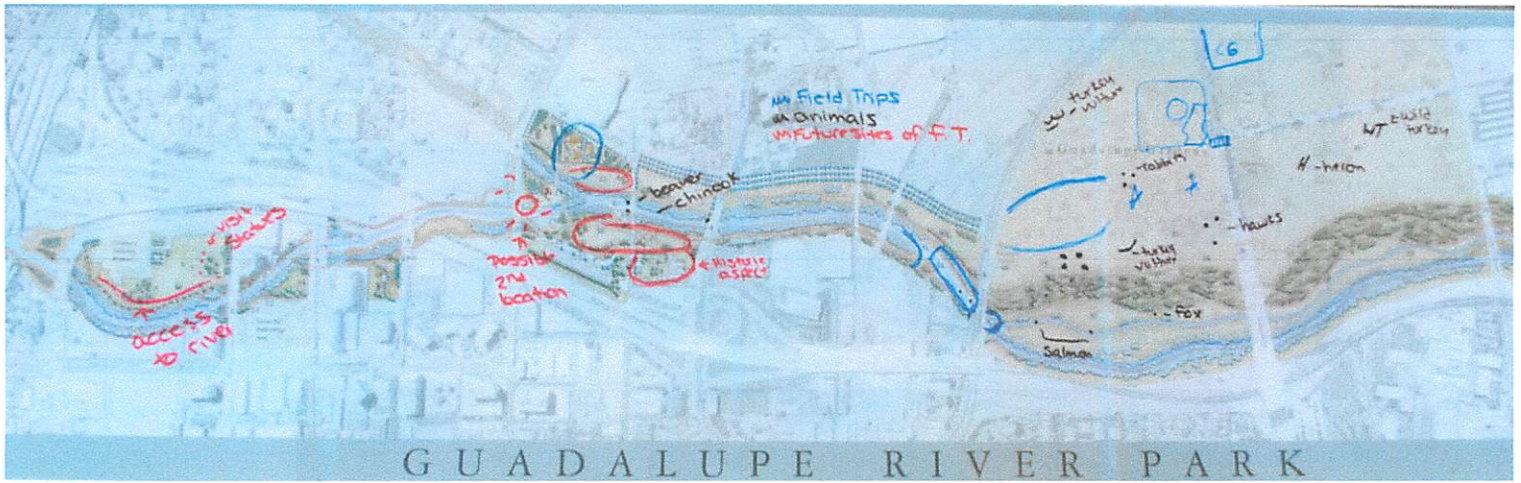
Includes Information Regarding:

Richard is trained in the Salmon and Trout Education program and was able to inform me a lot about animal sitings as well as river health in the park. The black shows where the riverbed has potential and where there is unhealthy riverbed that is cement with no vegetation. Throughout the entire river there are invasive species: Carp and Large Mouth Bass. As where Salmon and Trout (species of special interest) are seen only in the areas that are healthy. The purple shows sitings of trout/salmon. The blue was an osprey siting; red is possible California Red-Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle (both species of special interest).

He uses red to show native animals and vegetation, which is along the north side of the riverbanks. The orange star indicates Gray Fox sitings and light orange shows the area where bobcat reintroduction could take place.

Finally, the green illustrates where invasive Stinkwart is present. This plant is dangerous to animals who consume it and an eradication program could improve conditions for animals in this area.

Appendix B.6  
Joe Salvato (Education Coordinator)

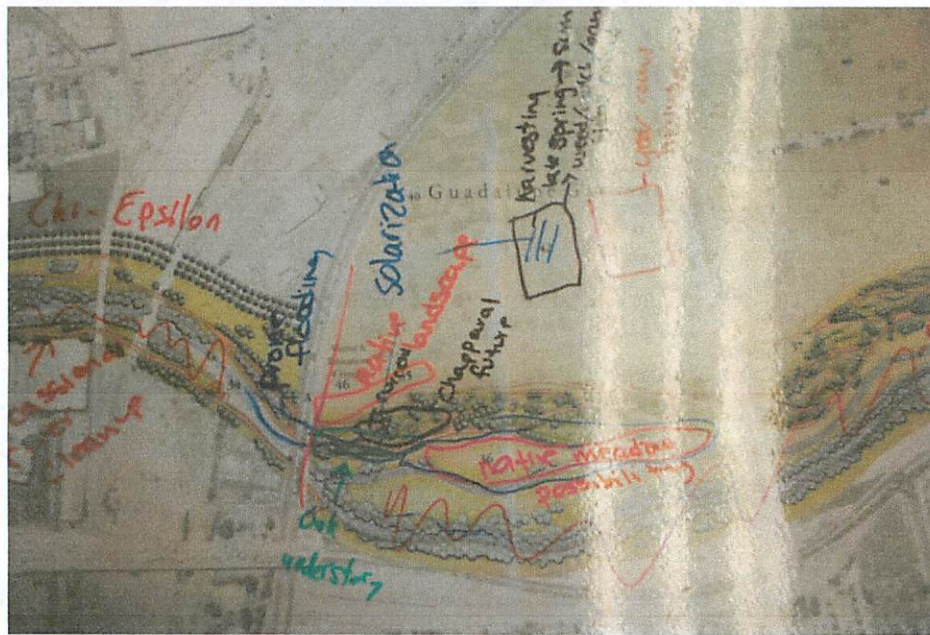
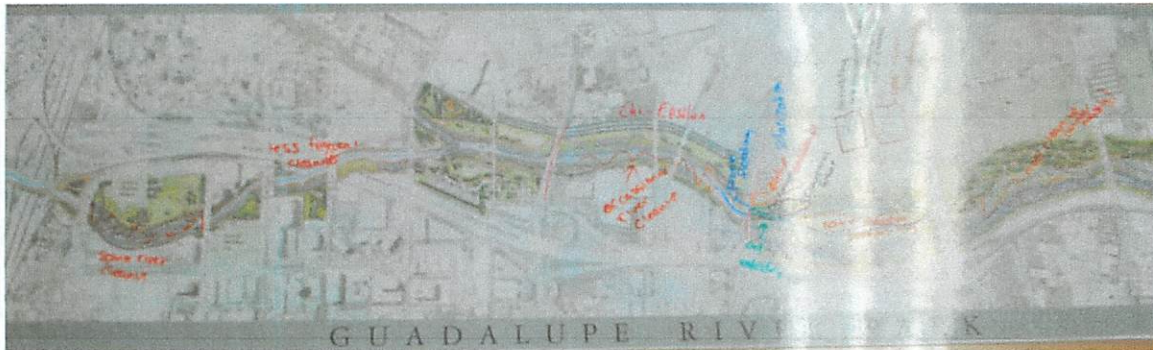


Includes Information Regarding:

Joe represents current field trips in blue and sites of future field trips in red. He explains his rationale for different future field trips. On the south side (left-hand side) there is access to the river which is upstream as well as statues that could be visited. Near Arena Green there are historic monuments, as well as access to the river. There is also a building that could be possibly reclaimed as a headquarters for that site.

The brown indicates where animals have been seen and he does label each point with the animal species: beaver; Chinook Salmon; Turkey Vulture; rabbits; salmon; fox; hawks; heron; Wild Turkeys.

Appendix B.7  
Jeremy Dalton (previous Volunteer Coordinator)

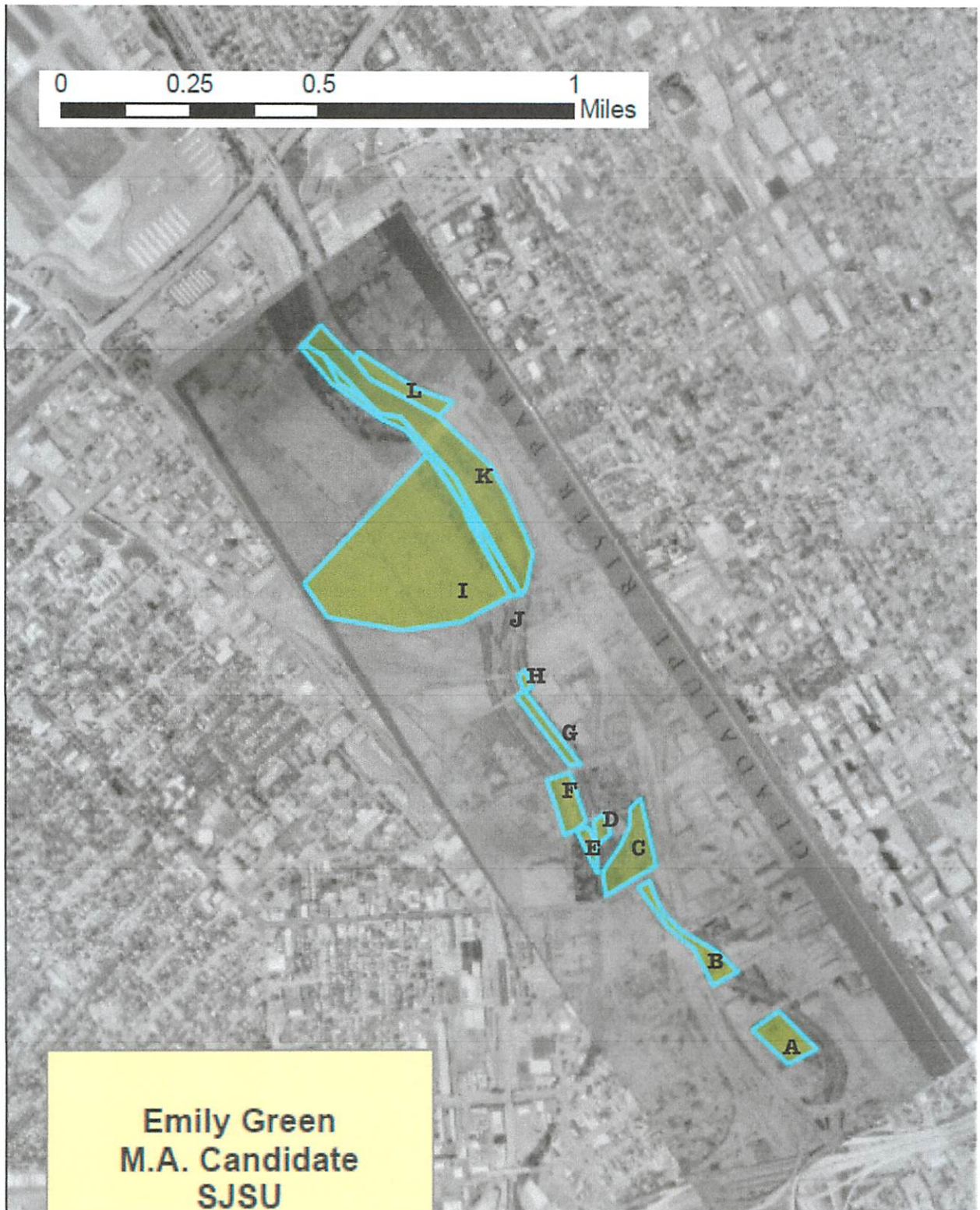


Includes Information Regarding:

Jeremy illustrates the different projects taking place around the park, including river clean-up patterns (orange). Near the visitor center on Coleman Street there are many projects being undertaken: a solarization project, future site of chaparral, and where natives replanting could occur. He also shows where seasonal and year-long maintenance occur.

The blue indicates areas that are most likely to flood in a large storm surge.

Appendix C.1: GIS Printout of Analysis Map of Guadalupe River Park Masterplan map  
Georeferenced onto USGS map of San Jose



## **Appendix C.2: Explanation of Park Features**

**A: Discovery Meadow.** Mostly empty field that does contain monuments and statues. This is also the site of Pumpkins in the Park. This area has potential future development and since it has access to the river there will likely be future river monitoring and/or field trips that take place down here.

**B: Unhealthy Riverbed.** This area does not have much wildlife neither animals nor plants. It is mostly cement and there is little interest to expand or develop here without riverbed mitigation.

**C: Arena Green.** This area has child play facilities, including a carousel that is no longer operated. This site is across the street from the SAP Center and has a lot of foot traffic during Sharks games or concerts. During the day there are a lot of homeless that spend time in this area because of its proximity to the shelter and food pantry.

**D: Previous GRPC headquarters.** This has an old building facility and access to the river, including the confluence the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek. There are art installations honoring the Ohlone in this location. This site has potential for future field trips, as well as river monitoring.

**E: This is the site where the three beaver were spotted.** It is an area that is easy to access by foot.

**F: This is the site on the map that does not belong to the park, but is private property.**

**G: This is the site of Salmon/Trout activity.** This is where a 25 pound salmon was spotted as well as yearly spawning behaviors take place.

**H: This is the site where it is difficult to see along the path.** A bike accident occurred here during the data collection phase.

**I: Guadalupe Gardens.** This is the area where most of GRPC's activities occur. This includes field trips, animal sightings, restoration efforts, and special events/programs. As well as a new play facility that is wheelchair accessible.

**J: Invasive Stinkweed.** This is a site of possible restoration.

**K: This is the where native vegetation has been replanted and healthy riverbed exists.** This is also where most of the biologists from SCVWD survey.

**L: CalTrans property.** This is where the large homeless encampment was located. This area is not open to the public.

# Guadalupe River Park Conservancy

Emboldening the Civic Potential of an Urban Par



## The Directive

This document was prepared to explore the staff members perspectives at Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC). Using an anthropological framework I have conducted this ethnographic evaluation that is qualitative in nature: it does not present quantitative data. While there are metrics that could be used to put a numeric value on 'effectiveness', that's a more appropriate approach when handling data that is fundamentally quantitative. Understanding the different approaches and their consequences is fundamental to further developing the conservancy.

This report was not mandated, but grew out of conversations with the Executive Director and staff, and there was no overt problem that was the impetus for inquiry. The goal was to provide GRPC with usable information to help utilize their resources more effectively in order to move the Conservancy forward. The park is still considered 'unfinished', and while it is a used park, there remains untapped potential. Achieving this potential means using the finite resources of the Conservancy in a more effective way.

Since there was not an overt problem that drove this project, but instead an opportunity, I found myself seeking to identify issues that reveal how GRPC functions as an organization. I thank all who participated, allowing me to investigate areas that are normally more private. For all the staff's hard work and conviction it has been a pleasure working with everyone. I will forever be grateful to GRPC's staff for helping me down my own path and I hope this document can provide GRPC with honest and useful suggestions.

Emily Green  
M.A. Candidate  
San Jose State University  
Applied Anthropology

## The Road Map:

### 1. Issues Currently Being Redefined

- Education Department
- Masterplan

### 2. Issues With Passive Involvement

- Homeless
- Community Involvement

### 3. Issues That Are On-going

- Capacity
- Continuity

### 4. Issues That Will Always Be Elusive

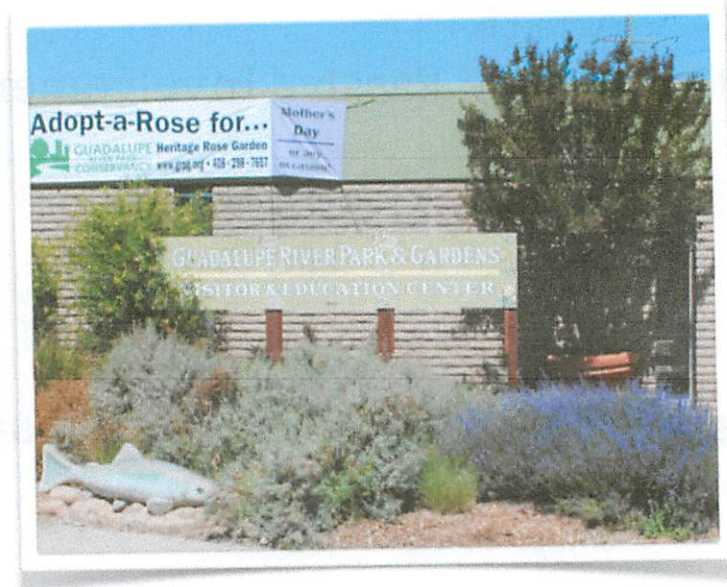
- Conservancy's Role
- Compartmentalization



photo: UWRP

## Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's Mission:

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship.



Throughout the history of this organization those involved have upheld these three principles of education, advocacy and stewardship. This required the patience to wait when negotiations would have compromised the integrity of the park.

They have been a **steward** to the park and its inhabitants, whether it may be for endangered species such as Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Trout, it could be rehabilitating an abandoned juvenile Red-Shouldered Hawk, or even getting attention and care for a pregnant beaver.

They have worked at **educating** much of Santa Clara County. They provide scholarships for Title I schools and offer Special Needs field trips, overall reaching around 10,000 students a year with environmental education programming.

They have helped to **advocate** for a safe open space for the whole community. This includes reducing the use of toxic pesticides and herbicides, helping improve the health to both the river and the park. They have also overseen the trail connection system which has turned bike commuting into a viable option for local residents.

# The Process

Since this document is an ethnographic evaluation, it is framed by the specifics of the organization. It also puts value to everyone's opinion and their differing perspectives. Ethnographies seek to understand the insider perspective, which is exactly what I have sought to do here. In order to achieve this, however, I undertook a variety of activities.

I volunteered as a visitor center docent in the fall of 2012. This quickly turned into interning with the education department. I volunteered at both Water Wizards Festival and Spring in Guadalupe special events in spring 2013. These experiences helped me to understand how GRPC functions as an organization, as well as how the community interacts with GRPC. Following all of these experiences, I began the more formal data collection phase in summer 2013. I interviewed seven staff members: Leslee Hamilton, Phil Cornish, Mike Peasland, Kristjana Eyjólfsson, Joe Salvato, Richard Tejeda, and Jeremy Dalton. Some have since moved into new positions within the organization, while some have taken on entirely different careers.

These data collection activities provide the basis for the evaluation findings. The seven interviews, in particular, enabled me to identify the different issues facing GRPC. Each issue included in this report was identified by multiple staff members. It was through further investigating and analysis that I “unpacked” each idea and was able to categorize them by how they affect the organization.

After identifying issues that were currently being addressed, I felt categorizing them according to their immediacy was more meaningful than by their specific character. Throughout my different discussions, the staff members acknowledged some issues as irreconcilable, while others were just being put on the back burner for a while.

The Guadalupe River Park is not yet completed, but GRPC's primary focus is to advocate for maintaining the park and the Conservancy's current programs and to only move forward when the resources are available for them to do so. With the effects of the economic recession beginning to lighten, growth is now becoming a reality. But the work environment at GRPC has a very dynamic nature and adjusting to changing conditions can often take up more time than expected. Since beginning this evaluation there have been three different

Volunteer Coordinators and the position of Education Coordinator has been reconceptualized. GRPC must prioritize the day to day operations to ensure a stable work environment.

This evaluation is an attempt to help accomplish the goal of expansion of park facilities and Conservancy responsibilities. It is not asking more out of those who already work so hard, but an attempt to find more efficient ways of doing tasks that in the end will produce desired outcomes. This evaluation aims to reconcile the distinctive skill-sets of the staff into a comprehensive assessment.

The following evaluation is arranged as a series of either recommendations or simply an acknowledgement of a specific issue in order to better address it. These come directly from staff comments or concerns. Many of the issues were brought up as constraints, but by understanding different position's perspectives, it revealed that there are actually opportunities to address them.



## Issues Currently Being Redefined

The following are issues that are currently in a state of flux. The two most dominant changes that are occurring is the education department's shift towards weekly curriculum that would be focused towards older, more capable students. The other area of change is the need for an updated masterplan. While these areas have already been identified within GRPC and are currently being redeveloped, I am bringing them up for further discussion. This is in order to fully consider all the options available, as well to consider the implications that change means on the entire organization.

### Renovating the Education Department:

The education department is a dominant force in the organization, often requiring a majority of the resources. When asked what the most successful aspect of GRPC was, everyone answered "education". This may detract from the other successful aspects of the Conservancy, but the education department's success is undeniable. A consequence of this success, however, is that it limits the perception of the broader range of services that the Conservancy can provide. Success from this department comes from many arenas; one being that nearly every stakeholder is happy with it and that donors gladly give to furthering the availability of GRPC's education. It contributes to GRPC's sustainability in a very meaningful way, both by reaching new families in San Jose every year, as well as being a tool to show the importance of protecting this resource.

Staff members did agree that while education was not the sole mission, "...that's the one that's easiest to wrap our arms around." The success of the education department has come from years of adapting the curriculum to be more place-based. This has allowed them to enhance the use of the natural classroom through trial and error. All of this experience has ended up being a culmination of "...quality, consistency, and Leslee." This means that the education department has increased the quality of every program and are able to consistently deliver this high quality. This quality and consistency has been able to be transformed so that GRPC can "...utilize the resources in the park well to get kids actually connecting to science concepts of the natural world." Furthermore, they have Leslee as the Executive Director who provides strong leadership and is able to leverage relationships to strengthen the education department's network.

The education department does not want to continue expanding to do more of the same one-time field trips. Instead, there has been desire expressed to focus education department resources on developing curriculum for weekly courses aimed at older, more capable students. This begins a paradigm shift for GRPC that could lead to increased sustainability. Having weekly groups come in takes

less administration, and the rapport built with the students and their guardians helps strengthen other areas of the organization as well. One area that would benefit from these students is having curriculum that includes longer-term monitoring. Monitoring was seen by everyone as something that should be undertaken, but that resources would have to be freed up to do so. These students would be signing up for this because of a predilection towards environmental education and would be coming to GRPC outside of classroom hours. They will also be older and more competent data collectors and available on a weekly basis which means they could be helping to contribute to the sustainability of the park through their research.

### An Updated Masterplan:

The current masterplan for the Guadalupe River Park was developed by the San Jose Redevelopment Agency in the early 2000s, guiding GRPC's decisions for over ten years now. It is a document that captures the community's involvement with quotes, pictures and heartfelt sentiment. It is also fairly comprehensive about the different park monuments, areas and features. While the masterplan has been adequate, the Conservancy has never produced its own masterplan, but the Conservancy believes its time to produce its own masterplan sensitive its own needs.

The importance of having a masterplan was brought up by multiple staff members. They consider it the contract that GRPC makes with the community and other agencies. This document guides GRPC's actions and the agreement of land use between many disparate stakeholders. It is also what community members use to guide their expectations of what the park can provide them with. After all the negotiations that go into creating this document, the masterplan is the arrangement that all the park's stakeholders are responsible to uphold.

As one staff member put it GRPC is the "...voice of the park", so the masterplan is the medium they use to articulate the park's needs and the organization's goals. These different needs and goals were expressed at different points by staff members throughout the entire research process. One staff member brought up the need for a new facility, but acknowledges that will only happen with the support of the masterplan. In addition, most staff members wanted maintenance or restoration coming directly from GRPC, although the avenues to organize this are unclear. One staff member mentioned that the City has chosen to use its resources to maintain the park in lieu of passing those resources and responsibilities onto GRPC. Another common notion was how to better leverage volunteer numbers.

These are only a few of the many goals that members communicated, and goals and needs change over time as well. This situation is not unusual.

Alexander Garvin, an urban planner and adjunct professor for architect and urban design at Yale, has focused research pursuits on public spaces that is presented in a concise volume, *Public Parks: The Key to Livable Communities*. He lists stewardship requirements in this volume, and many of these are the same concerns that were brought up by staff members. Garvin considers responsiveness to changing demands a necessity. This is because with any park constituency there are competing agendas, and it is the partners of the park that are responsible for finding a balance between all of these agendas. For the Guadalupe River Park it is GRPC that serves this function.

A rigid masterplan is probably neither the most suitable, nor necessary option for accomplishing this tenuous balance. For example, one of the benefits of protecting the Guadalupe River has been that the riparian habitat and associated wildlife are starting to make a comeback. Patience, protection, and conservation have been the primary drivers of this success. But sometimes, when an invasive species is taking over or when a native species is in danger, GRPC mobilizes to act in the best interest of the river and surrounding community. For instance, when a beaver that took up temporary residence and needed attention, GRPC was able to get the proper biologists together to care for it. They also brought in news reporters to keep the public informed. This should illustrate the need for both patience and action, but action is often reserved for crisis. Fortunately, the flexibility to decide what to do has been left primarily up to GRPC. This is something to consider when creating the masterplan.

Ultimately, what is needed is a masterplan that allows for multiple options that are available in case of unknown eventualities. Instead of a rigid masterplan, a different option could be creating an “idealized” park captured in the masterplan. Garvin discusses multiyear planning as another stewardship requirement. He acknowledges that these plans are rarely ever strictly adhered to, but that they help to keep money coming in and help to maintain things in the park. An idealized plan could keep the park’s progress moving forward by granting GRPC the freedom to make necessary decisions when unforeseen events occur. Fundamentally, a masterplan can be seen as an opportunity to renew GRPC’s commitment to the park.

## Issues With Passive Involvement

There are some issues that force themselves upon the staff members at GRPC. When some issues arise GRPC is reactive to the situation at hand, instead of being proactive. One issue, homelessness, is an issue GRPC does not necessarily have the resources nor the jurisdiction to tackle, but it gets forced upon them because lack of involvement by the agencies that should be leading the way. Regarding the second issue, community involvement, GRPC could probably be taking on a more assertive role. Although, it's not their responsibility to build those relationships, it is in their best interest to support and nurture community involvement. Both of these issues arise time to time with GRPC doing what is necessary to solve the current problems, but currently do not have the resources it would take to address long-term solutions.

### Homelessness:

Everyone at GRPC assigns the problem of homelessness in the park to a larger societal issue. Unfortunately, this issue often gets tabled by other agencies to the point that GRPC is forced to take the leading role in mediating the mess that forms on the river. Strapped government agencies just want to stash homeless in parks, and many who work with these agencies believe that the homeless have some type of 'right' to this area. Many people who have little contact with homeless people fear them and therefore stay out of the park because of its homeless encampment. People who work for the Conservancy are quiet about the issue because it downgrades the image of the park. Unfortunately, this is effectively perpetuating the perception of the homeless as dangerous, keeping the status quo of stashing homeless people in parks intact, and withholding necessary aid to actually help these people.

The river had once had a homeless encampment so large it could be viewed from airplanes as they flew into San Jose's airport. GRPC helped spearhead the collaborative removal of this encampment. After this removal occurred, how was the larger public supposed to know that anything had changed? How are regular citizens supposed to know that what these people needed was help? Business Insider did an inside look into the lives of the Coyote Creek encampment that praised them as survivors. It showed the families that are forced to live on the streets due to rising housing costs and very few viable options. It put a humane face to those that society has forgotten. They showed their homes and how they used the creek for its resources. It did not mention the damage they are doing to the stream both through erosion and rising phosphate and nitrogen levels due to bathing and relieving themselves in the river.

It seems that GRPC would benefit from some transparency on this issue. Allowing the public a glimpse into the kind of environmental damage homeless

encampments do and their lack of violence would help clarify the nature of appropriate help. Currently the public has very mixed views on the subject, and this is hurting GRPC because potential users and supporters are scared off by the homeless presence. If GRPC were to educate the public on the realities of the homeless's impact, those who are actively helping the homeless may have better alternatives to the approach they are taking and stop trying to aid the homeless community to further establish themselves on the river. It will also help those who do not understand the homeless and GRPC can illustrate that there has been a lack of violence over the years, even with a large homeless population, which will help to dispel the perception of danger in the park. Leaving it alone allows everyone to draw their own conclusions and GRPC is neither credited for the help they have brought to the homeless, nor the issues that homelessness actually perpetuates.

Business Insider article: <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-jungle-largest-homeless-camp-in-us-2013-8?op=1>

### Community Involvement:

A question that I asked everyone was what they felt the most important informal function of GRPC was. One member answered, "...provide community opportunities to learn more about the environment and ways that they can help the environment." Another felt that GRPC's biggest weakness was needing to be more established in the surrounding community. While most staff members brought up the need and importance of community involvement, no one really offered any solutions on how to accomplish this.

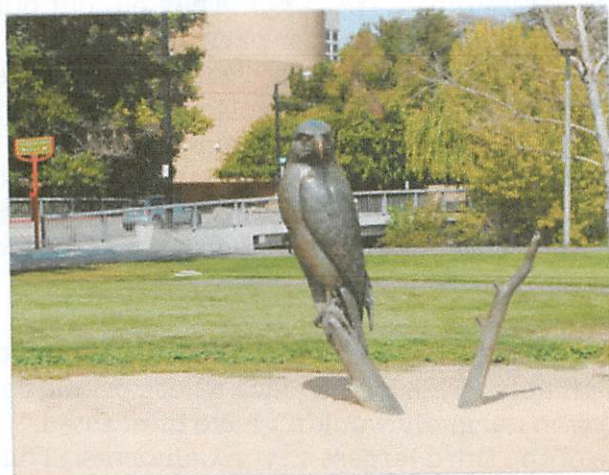
Community involvement is indeed essential. Project for Public Spaces is a New York-based nonprofit organization that is dedicated to helping communities and park organizations create and sustain public spaces because they believe that it builds stronger communities (pps.org). They put out publications intended for park administrators and other park stakeholders. In How to Turn a Place Around: A Handbook for Creating Successful Public Spaces, they highlight the principles of creating a successful public place. The number one principle is that the community is the expert. It is the community that makes it relevant by using it. They often have the most experience in the park and they are usually an underutilized resource by park administrators. This same sentiment was echoed throughout GRPC, with one staff member putting it succinctly when they said, "...people vote with their feet."

One discussion that kept coming around was how invaluable the Guadalupe River Park was for San Jose. This is "...a place where people can come together, the diversity, people who normally wouldn't have interacted." It's a fairly natural habitat in the middle of the third largest city in California. This is incredible for those who love nature but live in the city. This resource is also for urbanites that often do not appreciate it for its natural resources, but only for its civic potential.

As one staff member articulated when comparing what GRPC does to federal and state park affiliates, “You have to approach things differently here because its an urban area...they are not avid fisherman or hikers...they’re more city people who come in. We serve a different purpose in that we lay the foundation and plant the seed for city folks to want to get out and get more.”

While it is understood that community involvement is important, it is still unresolved how to increase community interactions. There are many platforms that involving community can take on, but the first is to question what avenues already exist. What mechanisms does GRPC already have in place that allow for public input? There are face to face interactions, which mostly take place informally. Formalizing a discussion panel to include community input is another way to approach it, if there are the resources to put one together. Besides face to face interactions there are a lot of web-based alternatives that can have less of an organizational impact. Already having an established website allows options such as a discussion board or the ability to send in suggestions.

Another discussion that was mentioned repeatedly was trying to capture the history of the park in some interactive form. This may be used on park signage, added to curriculum, or even put into a publication. There are still many people who remember the old neighborhood and have memories of the homes and what happened there. Somehow capturing these stories would be a meaningful way to involve the community. There are many options for how to capture this information, but I would like to suggest that compiling all of this into an App that is available for all San Jose residents might accomplish not only involving community, but other concerns such as signage and making the Guadalupe River Park more visible. The App could include historic relevance, insight into the contemporary park, and even have scavenger hunts that educate users about the location of park resources. This is also an interactive forum that would capture the Silicon Valley’s technological strength.



## Issues That Are On-going

These next issues are ones that are long-term and tedious. They may not be a part of work every single day, but they can affect aspects of nearly everything at GRPC. One issue I noticed was how the idea of capacity is often abstract and not connected to whether it is something that can actually be done. Another was how continuity can be severed by the absence of a single staff member. This can greatly impact the integrity of a department or program.

### Capacity:

Nearly every staff member brought up the idea of working within the capacity of what GRPC or themselves is capable of. One staff member concisely admitted the hardest task was, “finding reasonable goals.” It is quite the accomplishment that everyone realizes the imperative of accomplishing projects and not making promises that will compromise the integrity of either GRPC or the park itself. This, at face value, can only be a strength. But when you start to look at some of the usage of the idea of ‘capacity’, it is sometimes being used to describe other concepts. Sometimes its been used to describe things that have never been done before, things that will be extraordinarily difficult to accomplish, or things that they just don’t want to focus their energy on. These are all valid reasons not to do something, but not necessarily related to actual capacity.

Capacity may have become a buzz word, but it is important to keep it mind when taking on new projects. In order to accomplish all of the endeavors that people want to take on, it is capacity that needs to expand. I think everyone would agree that there is plenty of room to grow and the park is far from completed, but the only way to get there is to push yourself into new arenas. Sometimes these arenas are undesirable, one staff member warned, “We have to make sure we don’t get pulled aside...we are constantly fighting for the integrity of the park.”

One approach to increasing capacity is building a more durable network of stakeholders. A stronger network can be developed in many ways. It can be done through incentives programs, volunteer appreciation days, and having more channels for input. One avenue that could be explored is using university collaboration for more than just environmental education. The courtyard needs to be renovated and there is the possibility of resource management education. There is also avenues for collaboration with arts and design to help with signage in the park. Often times universities are seeking to offer their students hands-on, community experience and GRPC could form these bonds between departments.

Enhancing capacity could never be achieved by having the core group of staff members work harder than since they are already working full-time doing a necessary task. What it will have to mean is that the network that GRPC relies

on will be more receptive and responsive to the park. It will also mean bringing in more people, talent, and resources, in general. Another reason I bring up capacity is to warn against generalizing the meaning of this important topic.

### Creating Continuity:

It's easy to get lost down a rabbit's hole when considering this concept. What things should be kept documented and what is better left lost to time? When talking with one staff member, they brought up the segmented nature of the departments within GRPC. I experienced this firsthand when I interned with the education department. There were days when it felt like there wasn't enough time to go over the basics before the kids arrived. This was especially true with large events like Water Wizards Festival. When this, and other, yearly events came up, I would hear, "How was this handled last year?" or "How did so-and-so do it?"

Some events have been happening for years. For example, Pumpkins in the Park will be celebrating its 19th year. Different events are hosted by different departments and have changed hands over the years. Capturing all these different opinions and how they felt about the results could guide the future. There are many ways to do this, but having people commit time to recording events could save time in the future. When a person leaves GRPC, whether they are staff, volunteer or intern, often times much of their investment leaves with them. Creating a system to capture opinions, information, or insight could help create a narrative for GRPC. It could provide information for education interns looking to try a 'new' way that has already been done, or volunteers who wonder whether the orchard blooms are similar to last years.

Furthermore, there has been a lot of interest expressed in capturing quantifiable data on different phenomena throughout the park. Some of this has to do with user data, while the majority of staff members would like to see biological monitoring take place throughout the park, especially in the river. One staff member brought up the benefits that river monitoring would have for other nonprofit organizations as well. Organizations like Save the Bay benefit from knowledge about the rivers that feed into the bay. By providing this information to them and other organizations, GRPC would be extending and strengthening their network. It could also help to guide restoration efforts. The Guadalupe River is currently classified as an impaired river, which means there is significant trash that is being brought into the bay by it. GRPC may be able to identify problem areas and with the aid of these networks improve the river quality.

## Issues That Will Always Be Elusive

Some issues are part of the organizational landscape. They may not ever be completely reconciled, but they must be balanced somehow. These issues sometimes appear to be assets, other times they come across as liabilities, depending on how they are leveraged and the individual situation. For example, asking, “What is the Conservancy’s role?” can bring about answers that are vague, philosophical, or a break-down of specific requirements. Another issue, the compartmentalized nature of departments and projects, harbors an atmosphere of separation of skill-sets. This allows for individual growth and expression but can also limit the ability to coordinate efforts.

### The Conservancy’s Role:

“We hope that we are useful and relevant, but it is really in the service of the park.”

“...voice of the park.”

“The conservancy has created a unique model for community work and volunteering project that’s very unique for this area.”

“...I get the feeling that the city and the conservancy are going head-to-head as opposed to in the same direction...we need to finish the park. We need to work together.”

“...within the city there is not a real sense of ownership, so we’ve stepped into that void and said this is what we are doing.”

“We’re a conservancy and it’s hard to understand our goals and missions.”

This is the abridged version of all the disparate functions that GRPC preforms, and as one staff member said, admittedly hard to be comprehensive. These quotes illustrate that protection of the physical park, the community services GRPC provides, and the ability to coordinate agencies are all fundamental functions of GRPC. The existence of such a spectrum reveals the significant role GRPC has in enriching San Jose through all these avenues.

The Guadalupe River Park has many agencies that lay claim to areas of the park. The park was developed, in part, due to San Jose’s airport expansion which included removal of homes in the flight path. This means the FAA is directly involved with any type of development. Santa Clara Valley Water District has jurisdiction over the river and its banks. They make the majority of decisions concerning the water areas. CalTrans also owns a section of the riverbank, and was responsible for the expansion of the highway. The City of San Jose, and its subsequent agencies, are involved with many of these interactions as well. Some agencies, like the Park Rangers and Department of Fish and

Wildlife, have major stakes in this park as well. Most of these agencies are only concerned with a small slit of land that they have some type of title to. GRPC is the organization that is supposed to encompass the entire park. This means meeting with all these agencies and getting them to work in a coordinated effort. When GRPC is able to accomplish this the result is much greater than the sum of its parts. This was illustrated with the coordination of agencies to move the homeless encampment from the banks of the river.

Being an advocate for wildlife and the natural habitat is something that every staff member takes extremely serious. There are many species within this park that are of special concern. Chinook Salmon, Steelhead Trout, Burrowing Owls, the list goes on. Many of these animals are struggling to maintain the habitats they once had and human intervention is necessary to help them survive. In addition to aiding native species, GRPC also helps to eliminate dangerous invasive species. Not all non-natives are dangerous, and they are able to monitor the plant and animal life and act when necessary. This ecosystem stills needs human management to thrive, and GRPC is the ones trying to find the balance.

This park is surrounded by a major metropolitan area, and while GRPC faces natural preserve problems, it is supported by an urban constituency. This means GRPC must champion environmental citizenship and help to teach urbanites how to fully appreciate this foreign resource. This means that some of GRPC's role is about connecting with community and guiding people in being wiser environmentalists. It also must provide a place where diverse groups of people can come together and comfortably interact.

### Compartmentalized:

Throughout this report there has been mention of the disparate nature of requirements that GRPC faces. Specifically, sometimes that continuity between departments can be conceived as a strength or a weakness, depending on the instance. This is what contributes to a compartmentalized organization. One good thing about this is that it protects strong programs from the weak ones. It also means that individual projects can push ahead without being bungled down by the rest of the organization, but it can lead to fragmented park design and maintenance or a lack of staff cohesion.

Compartmentalized progress means compartmentalized success. When every person is doing their own thing, it means that the success is also only celebrated by that individual. It can be hard to conceptualize all the progress that GRPC has made when it can't be unified. This freedom has created a platform for individual expression which has allowed staff members to bring their passion with them and utilize their networks. But it has created an atmosphere where there is no incentive to mobilize labor to help each other with their various projects.

Everyone who works in this office has unique interests and a very different path that brought them here. This is not the case in many offices. Often times everyone comes with a similar background in order to do a similar or complementary task. Here everyone has something that makes them distinct and invaluable. This also means that everyone is embedded in their own network which provides them with a safety net. Helping to leverage these networks and bring them into the fold will make GRPC stronger and make some of the diversity sustainable. It may also substantiate some larger projects that would require volunteers have knowledge in specific areas.

Sometimes piecemeal work is necessary, but trying to recapture those ideas into a whole afterwards can contribute to organizational sustainability. Throughout this evaluation process, I had a hard time conceptualizing all of the successes because many of them are hidden. For example, donating food from the orchard to the needy or work you have done on the plastic bag ban. After compiling a list of all GRPC has accomplished in the short time I was there, I was astounded. Part of marketing is just revealing all the things the organization already does. If it was shown what GRPC has done for marginalized groups such as Title I schools, special needs, and the homeless it could be used as a marketing tool. Many of GRPC's successes are compartmentalized so it is hard to comprehend that the organization is accomplishing as much as it is.



## Final Thoughts...

The diversity of skill-sets that exists in this one organization is astounding. This should be seen as an advantage, but sometimes people are downplaying their individual skills and networks. This may be because it is hard to share unlike experiences in work settings. Everyone in the organization shares one trait, however, they are passionate people who care about the natural world and want to share that passion with others. Using this passion will be how this park's agenda moves forward.

Having been a part of this community for a short time, it's hard not to get caught up in the energy and passion of the park. This is an amazing resource that is being underutilized and under-appreciated by much of the city. This area has been many things to many people throughout history and now it is a public park that allows a corridor for animals to meander through the city, humans included. Throughout history it has changed faces many times, going from one type of occupation to the next. Now, the next step is pushing its potential even further.

This park has increased environmental education available to schools that were hit hard by the recession. Furthermore, the bike path has provided an alternative to driving or riding your bike through a congested city. By offering a safe alternative, GRPC has effectively increased the number of people willing to bike to work and the number counts on "Bike to Work Day" have shown this. This also means that these people have a safe way to exercise in the city. Maybe one day there will be exercise fitness areas for adults in the park alongside the children's play areas that offer even more alternatives to exercise.

But for all the potential that this park has, there has already been so much accomplished. Remembering where GRPC has come from will help to keep it moving. GRPC has faced difficulties during the times since the recession began in 2008, and has not only survived, but managed to improve programs as well. The future holds promise for progress. But for all the things that may change, it is because of the hard work that everyone has already invested into this park. This park is bigger than any one person, and a single organization can't capture all of its potential.

Many people wish they could say they love their job or they feel like they make a difference. Those at GRPC are making a difference. They are working to provide a space for the community to be in and are being an advocate for the wildlife in the park who can't speak for themselves. This is no easy task and while the suggestions throughout this report are meant to help GRPC, they are offered with respect and admiration because I realize you are all working extraordinarily hard for a project that many have forgotten.

## Appendix E: GRPC's Response



May 16, 2014

Re: Comments on Emily Green's Applied Anthropology paper, "*Guadalupe River Park Conservancy: Emboldening the Civic Potential of an Urban Park*"

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Vice President  
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Doug McLendon  
Bob Rhodes  
Dave Sandretto  
Phil Sims  
Jodi Starbird  
Jim Towery  
Ken Yeager

**Executive Director**  
Leslee Hamilton

To Whom it May Concern:

I enjoyed reading Ms. Green's thoughtful assessment of Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC). Ms. Green rightfully points out a number of shortcomings that relate to our documentation of procedures, marketing, and community engagement. The master plan work mentioned is a City of San Jose function, though we are currently collaborating with city staff on a design study for the Santa Clara to Julian area of the park.

A factor missing from Ms. Green's assessment is the role of the board of directors in governing a 501c3 organization such as ours. Staff implements board policy and direction so, though staff members might have "unique interests" and experience, they ultimately need to conform to the board's direction.

The reference to departments makes the organization seem larger than the five full-time employees that work on programs related to the education, advocacy and stewardship mission. Only 10% of our budget comes from the City of San Jose so efforts to raise the other 90% influence what we do and how. Employees tend to focus on one area – education, advocacy or stewardship –, so that we can demonstrate results to our individual, corporate and foundation donors.

It was refreshing to get an unbiased assessment and to see the organization through the eyes of another. I appreciate the effort Ms. Green put into this paper and the opportunity to comment on it.

Sincerely,

Leslee Hamilton  
Executive Director



438 Coleman Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95110  
408-298-7657  
guadalupeconservancy.org  
EIN: 77-0166797

## Appendix F: IRB Approval Form



**SAN JOSÉ STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

To: Emily Green

From: Pamela Stacks, Ph.D. *Pamela C Stacks*  
Associate Vice President  
Graduate Studies and Research

Date: June 5, 2013

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

“Evaluation of Urban River Park Organization”

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the confidentiality of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to all data that may be collected from the subjects. The approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Dr. Pamela Stacks, Ph.D. immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and release of potentially damaging personal information. This approval for the human subject's portion of your project is in effect for one year, and data collection beyond June 5, 2014 requires an extension request.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services that the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2427.

Protocol # S1302117

cc. Charlotte Sunseri 0113

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One Washington Square  
San José, California 95192-0025  
Voice: 408-924-2427  
Fax: 408-924-2612

[www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu)