

## Assets: Opportunities

### ***Natural & Public Land Assets***

- Vast federal and state public lands — national forests, national parks, BLM lands, state parks, and jointly managed areas — provide a rich foundation for outdoor recreation
- Diverse landscapes (redwood forests, volcanic ranges, desert, alpine peaks, oak grasslands, and mountains) support a wide range of activities within a single day's journey
- World-class trail systems, 10,000+ miles of dirt roads, the Pacific Crest Trail, and fire lookouts offer exceptional backcountry access
- The South Yuba River, Feather River watershed, and coastal kelp/oyster restorations represent high-value natural destinations with ecological and recreational significance
- Land trusts, regional parks, and special park districts add additional layers of managed public access

### ***Recreation & Tourism Offerings***

- Four-season recreation — skiing, mountain biking, rafting, kayaking, horseback riding, hiking, fishing, hunting — attracts diverse visitor segments
- World-class recreation is accessible within minutes of rural town centers, strengthening the link between communities and public lands
- Growing bike tourism with many annual events and strong community participation
- Gravel bike racing and other seasonal events extend tourism activity throughout the year
- Trails function as a force multiplier — connecting towns, generating business, and drawing visitors to previously overlooked communities
- The Pines to Mines regional trail vision and historic downtowns create a coherent, marketable recreation identity
- San Diego's abundant sunshine and coastal geography create a consistent, year-round outdoor recreation draw; beaches stretching from Oceanside to the Mexican border anchor the region's natural identity
- Mission Bay, the Pacific coastline, and trail systems within Balboa Park offer diverse outdoor recreation opportunities within an accessible urban context

### ***Cultural & Community Assets***

- Strong arts and cultural communities — folk art, Americana, Cornish Christmas, Nevada County Fair, Hot Summer Nights, Victorian Christmas — create a distinctive regional identity
- Dense concentration of culinary and agritourism assets: vineyards, breweries, cheese, and music festivals draw global visitors
- Creative partnerships with local businesses (e.g., trail beer releases with breweries) expand organizational reach and funding

## **Assets: Opportunities - continued**

### ***Cultural & Community Assets -- continued***

- Rural Sierra communities offer rare, largely undiscovered cultural experiences with strong authenticity appeal
- Route 66 represents a significant cultural and heritage asset with substantial untapped tourism potential

### ***Micro & Cultural Tourism***

- Four shovel-ready micro tourism pilot projects serving Indigenous and Latino communities in Anaheim/Santa Ana, designed to be self-sustaining through earned income
- Growing millennial market seeking authentic, participatory experiences (cultural cooking classes, influencer-driven destinations, community-based activities)
- Micro tourism is complementary to major attractions like Disneyland, extending visitor stays and broadening the regional tourism economy
- Orange County's cultural diversity represents significant untapped tourism potential
- Three established cultural districts, Oceanside, Barrio Logan, and Balboa Park, plus the newly designated Liberty Station Arts District, provide structured community identity anchors across the region

### ***Economic & Community Development***

- Natural assets are understood as the primary economic equity of the region — economic activity is reverse-engineered from existing landscape value
- Direct economic impact demonstrated (e.g., Everett Memorial Highway generates \$5,000–\$25,000/day)
- Recreation is foundational to rural community health, culture, and economy — not just a consumer amenity
- Trail development and events enable residents to access federal lands without private transportation
- Community-driven trail visions link town centers with public lands, driving both local access and tourism
- Youth engagement has proven highly effective: a logo competition for the collaborative produced strong participation, with the youth sector lead creating the winning design, demonstrating that arts and culture resonate deeply with young people across all sectors

## Assets – Challenges

### *Staffing & Administrative Capacity*

1. Insufficient funding for **project management** and staffing is a critical barrier to success
2. **Administering grants** requires specialized skills that many rural organizations lack
3. **Lack of police presence** leaves vast state and federal lands severely understaffed
4. Rural regions lack the capacity to act on their expertise — **the constraint is implementation, not knowledge**

### *Infrastructure Gaps*

5. **Key recreation sites lack basic infrastructure**: restrooms, water, parking, emergency call boxes, and safety equipment
6. **Overcrowding at high-demand sites** are straining visitor experience and resources
7. **Rural infrastructure constraints** broadly impede project implementation
8. **Infrastructure investment** is needed to fully leverage existing assets

### *Governance & Coordination*

9. Multiple overlapping jurisdictions make **coordinated decision-making difficult**
10. Some park districts are **exploring consolidation** due to financial strain
11. Volunteer orgs are unsustainably carrying the **maintenance burden** across public lands

### *Land Access & Policy*

12. **Private land access is the primary barrier** to connecting communities via trails
13. Policies are needed to **protect landowners from liability** while enabling public access
14. The Tijuana River **sewage crisis** is directly affecting Imperial Beach and Coronado, threatening coastal recreation assets and visitor experience
15. Gentrification illustrates a recurring pattern: artists and cultural investment make neighborhoods attractive, then **rising costs displace the communities** that created the value.

### *Recognition & Resource Allocation*

16. Recreation resources are not broadly recognized as economic drivers or as psychologically essential to rural community health
17. **Funding frameworks** tend to treat recreation as a consumer amenity rather than a community asset

### *Knowledge Preservation*

18. **Historic maps** and agreement documents stored at USFS Region 5 facility in Vallejo are **at risk of disposal following federal office closures**