

News Obits Sports Business Opinion Feast & Wine Lifestyle A&E Events Guide
Classified ▼ Jobs Real Estate

ER Doctor Has Urgent Warning for Humanity [↗](#)

By wellnessguide101.com

Wednesday's Letters to the Editor

Skelton: Long-shot challenger offers GOP a path forward

Chemerinsky: Supreme Court is pushing U.S. law further to the right

Sonoma Index-Tribune Editorial: A path forward for Sonoma Developmental Center



A debate continues over the future of the Sonoma Development Center site near Glen Ellen (The Press Democrat, 2014)

December 5, 2021



This editorial is from the Sonoma Index-Tribune:

Editorials represent the views of The Press Democrat editorial board and The Press Democrat as an institution. The editorial board and the newsroom operate separately and independently of one another.

One thing became clear in a meeting with stakeholders on the future of the Sonoma

Developmental Center: More time is needed to find the appropriate solution for the 930-acre property, which includes crumbling infrastructure, open space and an ecologically sensitive wildlife corridor. The state's January deadline for a decision is simply unrealistic.

"No one has had the bandwidth to really give this the attention it needs," said Eamon O'Byrne, executive director of Sonoma Land Trust. Between disruptions caused by the pandemic and the newness of the process — the state has never before handed over planning of such an asset to a county — he suggested another two years would be reasonable.

"The state has made it very clear the state is not interested in extending the timeline," Supervisor Gorin responded, adding that a few more months may be feasible, but decisions need to be made soon.

But no one can seem to agree on anything other than the fact that they don't like the three options presented by county consultants, which each include a hotel, at least 900 units of housing (25% affordable) and open space. The high cost of deferred maintenance adds complication, as it makes popular ideas, like a large amount of affordable housing, less financially realistic.

"How do we go back to the drawing board?" O'Byrne asked.

MOST POPULAR

'Awesome!': Local woman makes history as 1st Native American



Sheriff: Santa Rosa man arrested after fleeing traffic stop, crash



Americana Music Festival brings down-home music to downtown Santa Rosa



96-cent hike in 2 weeks: California gas prices shrouded in secrecy amid historic cost spike



'Remarkable woman': Sonoma County's Nicole Mann on top of the world



What's Happening

- SAT 8** **Nostalgia Days Novato Classic Car...**
Downtown Novato | Novato, CA
- OCT 5** **BINGO at Victory House**
Victory House | Santa Rosa, CA
- OCT 5** **Free Storytelling for Kids - All Day ...**
Online | Santa Rosa, CA
- OCT 5** **Creative Writing with Prompts**
Santa Rosa Junior ... | Santa Rosa, CA
- THU 6** **McEvoy Ranch Outlet Open in Dow...**
McEvoy Ranch Wareh... | Petaluma, CA

	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
	5	6	7	8	9	10

🔍 See all events | + Add your event

SPONSORED CONTENT

If recent history has taught us anything, it's that Sonoma Valley does well when the state and county take a back seat and allow time and space for local voices to find a path forward. Need proof? Just look to Jack London State Historic Park.

BREAKING NEWS ALERTS

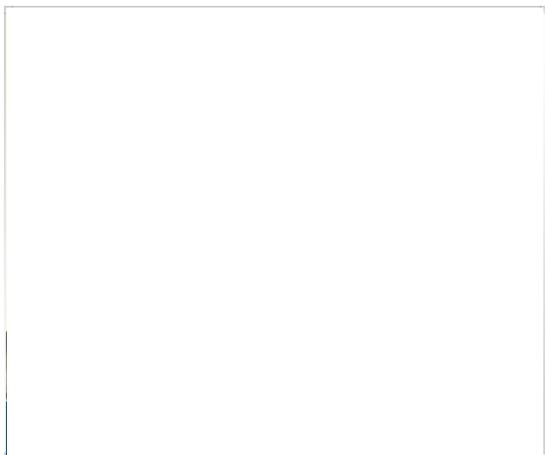
Receive immediate notice of breaking news events.

[Read our Privacy Policy](#)

In 2012, the state ran short of money to keep all of its majestic parks open. It announced plans to close Jack London park. That was not an option for the Glen Ellen community, so they got to work.

Within a few months, the nonprofit Jack London Park Partners drafted a plan that would allow locals to take over management of the park.

Today, the park is thriving, with more visitors than ever, thanks to a savvy and creative board of directors, nearly 300 volunteers and a slew of moneymaking events, including Transcendence



Theatre Company's seasonal "Broadway Under the Stars." By the end of the first contract in 2018, the park was back in the black, with money invested in restoration and preservation.

With Jack London, there is a proven track record of succeeding where the state has failed, because the Sonoma Valley community understands local needs.



Here Are 50 of the Coolest Gifts for This 2022

By SmartLifestyleTrends

There's another lesson to be learned from the park's relationship with the state. When negotiating the original contract, the state attempted to push deferred maintenance onto the park partners organization. They pushed back, knowing if the dam the state long neglected broke, it should be on the state to fix it.

Once again, it seems, the state is attempting to pass the buck on years of its deferred maintenance, this time at the Sonoma Developmental Center. With more than \$100 million of maintenance and remediation required, the financial feasibility of any plan for the site is already in peril. That is why all three alternatives include a hotel, something that seems universally unpopular with the community, but would generate revenue to help cover the cost of restoring the property to meet health and safety standards.

It's not an apples-to-apples comparison, as the state still owns Jack London State Historic Park while it's looking to sell the developmental center. But the underlying point remains the same: If it broke on the state's watch, the state should pay to fix it. After all, it's sitting on a \$30 billion surplus.

Can you imagine what might be possible without that financial albatross weighing down potential options for one of the most noteworthy properties in Sonoma County?

You can send letters to the editor to
letters@pressdemocrat.com.

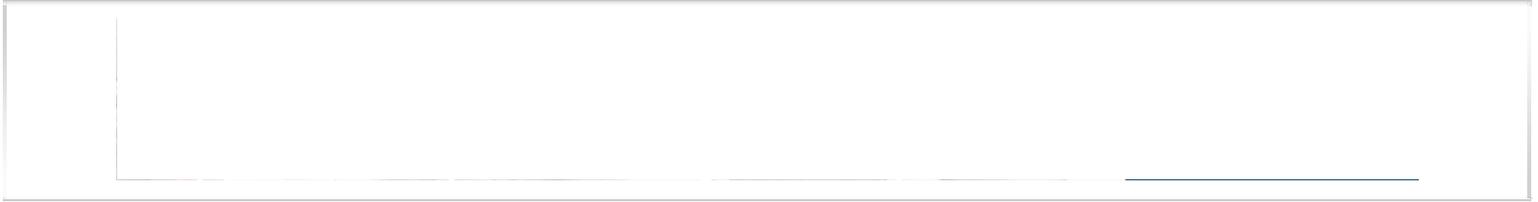
Sponsored Content on Press Democrat



This "Legal Steroid" Gets You Ripped Fast (No Prescription Needed) [↗](#)

By The Legal Steroid

Try It Today For Free



UPDATED: Please read and follow our commenting policy:

[Send a letter to the editor](#)

- *This is a family newspaper, please use a kind and respectful tone.*
- *No profanity, hate speech or personal attacks. No off-topic remarks.*
- *No disinformation about current events.*
- *We will remove any comments — or commenters — that do not follow this commenting policy.*

Loading...

RECENT STORIES

PD Editorial: Newsom shows some spending restraint with vetoes

Wednesday's Letters to the Editor

Skelton: Long-shot challenger offers GOP a path forward

Chemerinsky: Supreme Court is pushing U.S. law further to the right

OUR NETWORK