

Los Caballos Equestrian Campground Project – Focus Groups/Stakeholder Groups
MEETING NOTES
Southern Service Center, San Diego; September 19-22, 2005

Equestrian

Sept. 19, 2005 – 6pm

- DPR stated commitment to build Los Caballos Equestrian Camp at or in close proximity to the pre-fire campground location.
- Compare population vs. recreational opportunity
- Most used equestrian Campground in Southern California
- Vern Whittaker ramp built by BCHC – works well
- Typical duration of campers' stay unknown by representatives at meeting.
- Why EIR? = Post fire recognized new cultural resources in regard to restroom construction
- Limnanthes is “flourishing” – “It likes horses”
- Equestrians “preserved” site (isolated significant sites have been pot hunted by Los Caballos not because of presence – don't topple campground like before.
- 1986 General Plan (re: Los Caballos, general direction)
- Dyar family – deed gift documents (legislative representatives want these documents to see if equestrians can sue over loss of recreation)
- What about acquisition of Mack Ranch & facilities promised there?
- Frustrated with the “process” & quantity of time passing without ability to continue using site as before the fire. What is the anticipated timeline for the project?
- Why do we have to go through this process/ why is an EIR needed to rebuild existing what was already there?
- ADA guidelines using original footprint rather than expand restroom – “we really only need one ADA site”
- Does FEMA require replacement in exact location & will they pay for code improvements?
- Concerned that the Native Americans have the final say about this project
- Not enough equestrian campgrounds now – where will camping occur until 2008?
- Want the campground reopened “as is.” How did we get to this point?
- Why have other campgrounds been reopened, but not Los Caballos? Why are other campgrounds in Cuyamaca being treated differently? (P. Martin)
 - * Paso Picacho Campground (group camp), Arroyo Seco, Los Vaqueros, Hual Cu Cuish, Granite Springs [*not all facilities have reopened*]
- Request that NAHC be invited back to re-evaluate site based on current conditions. (Marla asked NAHC rep. & the reply was: evaluation was done in 2004; didn't see need to “re-evaluate”; NAHC knows Los Cab. is on an arch. site.)
- Joe [*rep. for Sen. Ray Haynes*]—wants sacred site definition/law [*Marla*]
- Additional/other areas: Parking area at North end of Park near Hual-Cu-Cuish/Milk Ranch Road area
- Cost involved for each layout? Comparison of costs
- Campground Layout—
 - * Like the rustic feel – don't level anything
 - * Connection between day-use & campground (w/connecting trail); prefer ability to use as overflow area

- * Distance between post & pre-restroom location
- * Consideration – 90% of Peggy’s respondents = “want it rustic like it was before the fire”
- * Would rather have narrow road if allows more sites + uses smaller footprint
- * Only need one ADA/graded site. Not all sites need level pad
- * Vault toilets/kybos
- Roadways—
 - * Roadway (pre-fire) = used only as one-way road (8’-10’ wide) & worked fine
 - * Allow 2-way at entrance
 - * Easy access (=no curbs); many use 5th wheel trailers – don’t like arrangement at Diamond Valley Lake – between Hemet & Temecula – [operated by MWD - see website: <http://www.dvlake.com/>]
 - * Use existing road to site? (see note on existing conditions drawing) combine existing & concept #1
 - * Unpaved road is okay, DG is better
- Corrals/Hitching—
 - * Gates on pipe corrals
 - * Prefer 12’x12’ area/corrals (for single horse)
 - * Can corrals be put into regular campgrounds & used during low-use season
 - * Pair (both) corrals & separated by space to address horse needs temperaments
 - * Area to “high-line” horses within sites; adds to corral space (Yosemite, Sierras – good examples)
- Campsites
 - * Want more campsites - 24
 - * What is the size of proposed campsite? Don’t need large sites.
 - * Most of campsites are still there; 90% of Peggy’s respondents = “give us back the campground as is”
 - * Electrical hook-ups – not necessary
 - * Tent Camping – keep space for this
 - * Don’t want all back-in sites (More pull-thru sites than back-in sites)
 - * Buddy-sites – NO, don’t like these at all; don’t cram all sites together - leave space between sites
 - * Review the General Plan (re: remove 3 sites)
 - * Leave room for horse to get to tack room at trailer – 10’x10’
 - * Lantern Hangers – not necessary
 - * Food Storage – keep small lockers for tent campers
- Use existing road on both sides of creek, but remove all campsites from north side (use for access?) put wood fence along road to prevent vehicle disruption
- What will happen to existing campsites/facilities/utilities? Will we reveg? Professionally scarify road – abandon existing utilities
- Now want to use existing campsites that are outside the “sensitive” areas (natural & cultural)
- Native Americans should be aware that some may take out their frustrations on sites
- Who contracted with Carmen Lucas & what for (285, restroom replacement)? [No DPR payment to her on that project]

- Can existing campgrounds be used for equestrians? Not a good idea.
- When getting all equestrians to agree on a design – will have meeting with Native Americans to get consensus? Who makes the final determination [*DPR Executive Committee*]
- What’s the best way to contact DPR / submit comments? [*e-mail*]
- Website – post summary of focus group meetings

Natural Resources	<i>Sept. 20, 2005 – 6:00 pm</i>
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- NAHC – visited in 2004
- Post signs to keep campers on trail/campground & off sensitive site areas

Native Americans	<i>Sept. 21, 2005 – 6:00 pm</i>
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- Disgusted with process – too lengthy
- [*DPR*] How do you want to disseminate information?
- [*DPR*] Is drainage line really a line?
- [*DPR*] Is restroom really an issue or is it the concentration of activity?
- [*DPR*] Are existing roads okay?
- Need to keep mitigations in mind for all resources
- DPR will do refinement

Local Businesses	<i>Sept. 22, 2005 – 3:30 pm</i>
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- Pull through sites = happier campers
- Camping (example: Lake Cuyamaca)
 - most campsites at too small
 - have 23 sites (back in)
- Septic (example: Lake Cuyamaca)
 - 2, 8,000-gallon tanks
 - No showers
 - 16 toilets
 - Biodegradable soap used for dishwashing
- Will likely have to expand leach field. Regional Water Quality Control Board has been hassling over effluent. Need a 50’ reserve. May have to increase leach field. Have to reduce nitrates in soil
- Riverside/Orange County area fishing/hunting trade show – had over 200 people ask about the horse camp
- Alternative “trailer park” park trailers in one area and motor homes at campsite
- Manganese & Iron also a concern
- A lot of lakes/bays separate trailer parking areas from vehicle parking

Cultural Professionals	<i>Sept. 22, 2005 – 6:30 pm</i>
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- General Plan – Los Caballos – general direction
 - calls for removal of campgrounds out of sensitive resource areas

- calls for removal of 3 specific sites at Los Caballos
- Has there been any analysis of archaeological sites impacted?
- Acreage affected – quantity?
- Site Significance:
 - not just 1 of hundreds at Cuyamaca, it's the Kumeyaay Village site
 - largest site in the Park & possibly the region
 - of great significance to the native American community & the scientific community
- Want to see a concept that completely avoids the site – EIR needs to consider the “move to alternative site” alternative
- Why is DPR so quickly apt. to return to this site recreational use? This is an opportunity to correct the past mistake (re: development on an arch. site). Impacts have already been major & to put the camp back in would cause further damage.
- Don't feel like any of these are acceptable concepts
- Why we are being asked to comment on unacceptable concepts without an ‘alternate site’ option included for comment
- This site is the “Mesa-Verde” of San Diego (10 room condo or 100 room condo)
- Why can't State Parks take a better look at mission statement; seems like DPR is considering equestrians more important than the mission.
- If parks understood the significance of the site, this project would not be going forward. Question is “should it be done” not “can it be done”
- Is possible to provide a high-quality recreation experience while still preserving/protecting resources; Not opposed to recreation, just opposed to impacting this important site
- DPR has the GIS data to look at the resources – what do we do with this data if not to protect/ plan with regard for those resources? Should use this data to find a more appropriate spot(s) for camping - more conducive to the recreational use needs
- Would follow mission statement much better if DPR took the data collected & followed what the analysis of that indicates.
- Is there possibility that executive level will seriously consider this location as a non-viable option and consider seriously other location(s) for the project
- Project name is forcing the site location – should just be “Equestrian Campground at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.”
- Inconsistent message regarding resource protection when comparing the Border Fence Project and this project (as though we are working with 2 different agencies called Calif. State Parks)
- Because of the grading for all site pads, there seems to be more impact, not less.
- Even if you keep the existing site; maintenance requires continued scraping of roadbed, which still destroys the site slowly (“death by 1,000 cuts”)
- Need to offer the option of an alternate site to equestrian user group (better site and/or improved facilities)
- Can 18 sites be split up into more than one campground in other areas of the Park (smaller groups of sites in multiple locations)?
- Status of national register nomination?

- Opposed to opening use anywhere within “cultural site boundary” – no matter what kind of configuration though would think day use only acceptable if in the southwestern arm with camping else where in the park
- Will the general plan be re-visited now that we have more information/more accurate information? Since the document is outdated, fire effects, & many ‘hot topics’ (Dyer House, Hual-Cu-Cuish, etc.), this seems like an appropriate time to redo the GP.
- “We understand parks” – have worked for county parks, but don’t understand this project.
- Concerned about things getting done based only on who has the \$ to sue in order to get their way.
- Not sure why equestrians are concerned about this site if DPR is willing the have camp elsewhere.
- Shift emphasis using another project name: this is a non-renewable resource
- This is a cemetery; having a campground of any kind on a site where human remains are located, is a desecration of those remains
- Part of the site is in a Cultural Preserve
- Are the other groups (equestrians) open to discussion, so all concerns can be hashed out – *[November 2 at public meeting]*
- Concerned that current momentum is too great toward building the campground and is now impossible to re-direct
- Appreciate being informed and the opportunity to be involved