AN ALTERNATIVE CAMPING PROGRAM FOR CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

2005 CALIFORNIA PARKS CONFERENCE
California State Park Ranger Association
Rohnert Park, CA
March 8, 2004
Presented by DPR Planning Division
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS

- Developed: 55%
- Primitive: 24%
- RV: 7%
- Dock/Moor: 9%
- Hike/Bike: 2%
- Environmental: 3%
- Alternative Camping: <1%
WE CAN DO BETTER

RESPOND TO TRENDS

IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

INCREASE PARK USE IN SHOULDER SEASON
TRENDS

- POPULATION GROWTH
- DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS
- STRESS IN DAILY LIFE
- DEMAND FOR CAMPING
CUSTOMERS

AGING BABY BOOMERS
PARENTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
FORMER RV OWNERS
CAMPERS WITH DISABILITIES
CHILDLESS MIDDLE AGERS
NEW OFF-SEASON CAMPERS
YOUNG ADULTS (‘TWIXTERS)
A DIFFERENT WAY TO GO CAMPING

NO TENT

NO RV
ALTERNATIVE CAMPING FACILITIES

- Rustic Cabins
- Yurts
- Tent Cabins
- Floating Camps
A COMMON PRACTICE IN OTHER STATES

- WIDESPREAD
- SUCCESSFUL
- POPULAR
- EASILY MAINTAINED
- REVENUE PRODUCER
“A dream program from a marketing standpoint…”

“Off-season camping up 5%…”
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS

“The program has been incredibly successful.”

“Rented 200 nights a year... Only need 145 nights to break even...”
“Results have been excellent.”

“The program makes money.”
RESULTS ELSEWHERE

HAPPY CAMPERS  →  REVENUE
CURRENT SITUATION IN CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

UNITS IN PLACE
• 25 rustic cabins
• 1 yurt
• 10 floating campsites
• 36 tent cabins
  (Big Basin concession)

ISSUES
Inconsistent marketing and standards:
• Not all available to the public
• Not all on central reservations system
PROGRAM PROPOSAL

- TEST MARKET ALTERNATIVE CAMPING AT REPRESENTATIVE, GEOGRAPHICALLY-SPREAD PARKS (2 years)
- ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVE CAMPING BRAND TO RAISE USE OF UNDERUTILIZED SITES
- EVALUATE OPERATIONS AND RESULTS IN-HOUSE + HOST-ASSISTED + CONCESSION-RUN
- DETERMINE CUSTOMER PREFERENCES
- LONG-RANGE PLAN BASED ON RESULTS
PROPOSED FACILITIES

22 NEW ALTERNATIVE CAMPING FACILITIES

• 2 rustic cabins
• 18 yurts
• 2 modern tent cabins

+ 

72 EXISTING ALTERNATIVE CAMPING FACILITIES

• 94 total facilities
• and possible new concessions
**Distribution**

**North**
- Patricks Pt (1+1)
- Lake Oroville (6)
- Hendy Woods (4)
- Sugarloaf Ridge (4)
- Tomales Bay
- Samuel P. Taylor (3)
- Mt Tam (9)
- Angel Island
- Big Basin (36)

**South**
- Leo Carrillo (2)
- Palomar Mt (2)
- S. Carlsbad (2)
- Cuyamaca (7+2)

Potential Concessions
- Proposed New Sites
- Existing Yurt, Tent Cabins, Cabins, Float Sites
• Marketing plan
  (consultant contract)
• Full use of central reservations system
• Outreach to target user groups
• Consistent delivery throughout State Park System
• Customer satisfaction survey and analysis
IMPLEMENTATION

LOW-COST MAINTENANCE

• BASIC INTERIORS
• CUSTOMERS BRING OWN BEDDING
• MINIMAL UTILITIES
• LOCKABLE DOORS

HOUSEKEEPING

• SIMPLE UPKEEP
• PARK STAFF AND CAMP HOSTS
• JANITORIAL CONTRACT IF 11+ UNITS

(Ohio State Park volunteer)
SITE DESIGN

- ADA ACCESSIBILITY
- ROOFED ENTRY
- FRONT DECK
- INTEGRATED WITH CAMPGROUND AMONG OTHER SITES or SEPARATE LOOP

(Oregon State Park yurt village)
## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1ST YR ONE-TIME COSTS</th>
<th>O&amp;M PER YEAR</th>
<th>RESERVE PER YEAR</th>
<th>GROSS REVENUE PER YEAR</th>
<th>NET</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$18K (existing units) +$230K (new additions) +$10K (marketing)</td>
<td>$90K</td>
<td>$58K</td>
<td>$530K</td>
<td>$124K (1st yr) to $372K (beyond)</td>
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## NEXT STEPS FOR PROPOSAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEXT STEPS</th>
<th>HQ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues / Costs</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations / Maintenance</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reservation System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Install New Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upgrade Existing Facilities</td>
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<td>Training Staff</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market, Announce Program</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor/ Evaluate</td>
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<td>X</td>
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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