State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION

PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project
SCH # 2007051074
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
San Diego, CA

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), as Lead Agency under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), **is reissuing** a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified above in order to **add a new project site**. A brief project description and list of anticipated environmental effects to be considered in the environmental analysis are contained in this NOP. Interested persons, organizations, and agencies are encouraged to comment on the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the CEQA analysis. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Please send your written response to Christine Beck, CDPR Environmental Coordinator, at the address shown below. Responses should include your name or the name of a contact person at your agency or organization, and mailing address. Please send your response at the earliest possible date, but no later than December 15, 2009.

Previously, two NOPs were issued for the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Los Caballos Equestrian Campground Project. These NOPs addressed the replacement of the Los Caballos Equestrian Campground, which was lost during the 2003 Cedar Fire. In 2007, an NOP was circulated for the Equestrian Facilities Project at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park; however, it did not include the Green Valley Campground as a potential equestrian facilities site nor additional project changes that have been considered since the 2007 NOP was issued. The 2009 NOP has been reissued to include the following projects and sites: (1) within the existing Green Valley Campground, convert one loop of family camping to equestrian family camping, (2) construct a permanent day-use equestrian staging area near Paso Picacho, (3) construct an interim equestrian day-use facility that expands capacity at the existing Merigan Ranch day-use site, located near the community of Descanso in the southern portion of the Park, and 4) address, at a programmatic EIR level, future construction (when funding becomes available) of a campground, day-use amenities, and larger day-use staging area at the Merigan Ranch

site. Additionally, trail connections to each of these sites will be evaluated and potentially included as part of the project.

All documents pertinent to this project are located at CDPR's Southern Service Center (see following address). The NOP and site map are available on the following websites:

http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=983
http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=24063

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTACT PERSON:
Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation,
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270, San Diego, California 92108
Fax (619) 220-5400
E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities project includes (1) conversion of the existing Green Valley Campground Loop A (sites 1-22) to an equestrian campground containing 10-15 sites and associated amenities; (2) construction and operation of a Day Use staging area and related amenities at the site currently known as Paso Picacho East, which will be referred to in the EIR as the Paso Picacho Day Use site; (3) construction and operation of an expanded Day Use staging area and related amenities within the site currently known as Merigan Ranch, which will be referred to in the EIR as the Descanso Area Development Interim Day Use site; and (4) future construction and operation of a new equestrian campground and associated facilities within the Descanso Area Development. The construction and operation of the Descanso Area Development Campground project would be completed in a future phase and evaluated in the EIR at the programmatic level, while the remaining three projects will be evaluated at the project specific level. The Descanso Area Development Interim Day Use project will be constructed as an interim facility until funding for the campground can be secured. If future Capital Outlay funding is secured, then the ultimate campground and day-use project described for the Descanso Area Development could be built. This project, which would include construction of the equestrian campground and expansion of the Day Use area, would also require additional public review under CEQA and a final design. The campground would support approximately 20 individual campsites (including a host site) and associated amenities. For all of the projects, some trees may need to be removed and/or thinned and new trails and/or trail connections to existing trails, including the California Riding and Hiking Trail, would be developed. Depending on site conditions, restrooms would be on septic, a contained vault system, and/or composting system, and access to water and power may need to be developed as part of the project.

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project is located in San Diego County within three separate areas of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (see attached project location map) including:

Green Valley Campground – Loop A, located in the southern third of the Park, west of Highway 79. Access would be directly from Highway 79.

Paso Picacho – Day Use, located in the northern third of the Park across from the existing Paso Picacho use area, along the Cold Stream Trail. Access would be directly from Highway 79.

Descanso Development Area – Equestrian Campground, Interim Day-use Facilities, a former agricultural site located adjacent to the unincorporated community of Descanso, at the southern end of the Park. Access would be from Viejas Boulevard off Highway 79.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS AND MITIGATIONS: In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15071 and 15126, and based on the existing resources and anticipated uses of the proposed facilities, potential environmental effects that will be addressed in the CEQA analysis include, but may not be limited to: biological resources (including sensitive species and wetlands), cultural resources (including archeological sites, historical resources, and traditional cultural properties), visual resources (aesthetics), air quality, noise, soils, hydrology, water quality, land use, utilities, traffic and recreation. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be developed to avoid or reduce potentially significant environmental effects.

Possible environmental effects that may be addressed at each of the sites are as follows:

Green Valley
Cultural resources, land use, biological resources, visual resources (aesthetics), air quality, noise, soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, recreation, and traffic.

Paso Picacho
Cultural resources, land use, biological resources, visual resources (aesthetics), soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, recreation, and traffic.

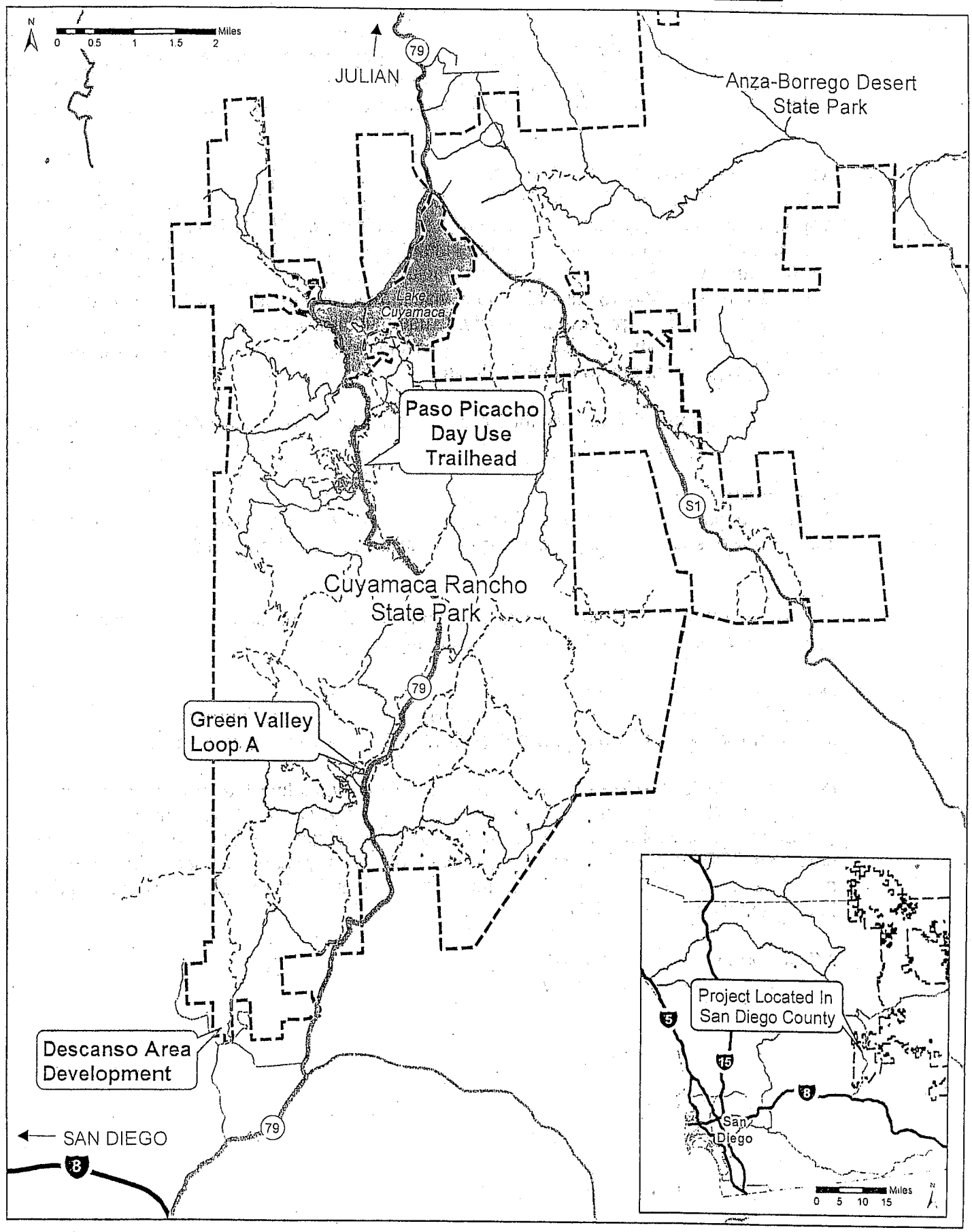
Descanso Development Area
Cultural resources, land use, biological resources, visual resources (aesthetics), air quality, noise, soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, recreation, and traffic.

INTENDED USE OF THE CEQA DOCUMENT: When evaluating the proposed project for approval, CDPR staff will consider the contents of the CEQA document including the review of the environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures. The EIR will serve as CDPR's CEQA compliance document. It may also be used by responsible agencies for any subsequent discretionary actions under their jurisdiction required for implementation of the project.

Attachments: Project Location Map
Initial Study Checklist

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
SOUTHERN SERVICE CENTER
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

PROJECT LOCATION MAP
EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES



EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers, except "No Impact", that are adequately supported by the information sources cited. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact does not apply to the project being evaluated (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on general or project-specific factors (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must consider the whole of the project-related effects, both direct and indirect, including off-site, cumulative, construction, and operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, the checklist answers must indicate whether that impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate when there is sufficient evidence that a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change may occur in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required.

4. A "Mitigated Negative Declaration" (Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated) applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures, prior to declaration of project approval, has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR (including a General Plan) or Negative Declaration [CCR, Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA, § 15063(c)(3)(D)]. References to an earlier analysis should:

   a) Identify the earlier analysis and state where it is available for review.

   b) Indicate which effects from the environmental checklist were adequately analyzed in the earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and whether these effects were adequately addressed by mitigation measures included in that analysis.

   c) Describe the mitigation measures in this document that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and indicate to what extent they address site-specific conditions for this project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate references to information sources for potential impacts into the checklist or appendix (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances, biological assessments). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should include an indication of the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7. Explanation(s) of each issue should identify:

   a) the criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate the significance of the impact addressed by each question and

   b) the mitigation measures, if any, prescribed to reduce the impact below the level of significance.

ENVIRONMENTAL (INITIAL STUDY) CHECKLIST

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Facilities Project **Project ID# 13360**
PCA# 10600

Contact Person: Christine Beck
Telephone: (619) 688-6140
Location: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park in San Diego County
Checklist Date: 11/15/2009

Project Description: The Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities project includes the following components (1) conversion of the existing Green Valley Campground Loop A (sites 1-22) to an equestrian campground containing 10-15 sites and associated amenities; (2) construction and operation of a Day Use staging area and related amenities at the site currently known as Paso Picacho East, which will be referred to in the EIR as the Paso Picacho Day Use site; (3) construction and operation of an expanded Day Use staging area and related amenities within the site currently known as Merigan Ranch, which will be referred to in the EIR as the Descanso Area Development Interim Day Use site; and (4) future construction and operation of a new equestrian campground and associated facilities within the Descanso Area Development.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
1. AESTHETICS.				
ISSUES				
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS

a-c) No change in the location of Loop A of the Green Valley Campground is proposed. Currently, Loop A is set-back from Highway 79 and buffered from the highway by mature oak and coniferous trees. Conversion of Loop A to an equestrian campground would be designed to avoid and/or minimize impacts to native mature trees, especially those closest to the highway, as Highway 79 has been classified as a first priority scenic route in the San Diego County General Plan.

For the Paso Picacho Day Use site, Highway 79 would need to be widened for a deceleration lane. This would require a permit from Caltrans. Widening of Highway 79 and construction of the parking lot would include the removal of a few mature native trees, possibly degrading the scenic view from the highway.

The Descanso Area Development campground would be located within the unincorporated town of Descanso. The site is currently an open field adjacent to Viejas Boulevard and is visible from businesses and residences in the area, as well as the neighboring elementary school. Converting the site to an equestrian campground with associated amentities would affect the viewshed, during and post-construction. Currently, many residences have equestrian facilities on their property, which are also visible from the road and school. Therefore, the views from Viejas Boulevard are already somewhat degraded by human uses. However, the open nature of the field and the views across it would be lost. The viewshed from the road would also change due to native landscaping around the campground. Viejas Boulevard has been classified as a third priority scenic route in the Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan. The potential for significant impacts to scenic

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT

vistas, the visual character, and nighttime views of the area as a result of implementing the project will be evaluated in the EIR.
d) It is expected that the amount of nighttime light at the Green Valley Campground would not increase as a result of the change in use. At the Descanso Area campground, security and other lighting will be put in near the restrooms, pathways, and self-pay station. Vehicles entering or departing the campground at night will also create a new source of light.

PROPOSED MITIGATION
Mitigation will be developed in the EIR. However, for any mature trees removed at the project sites, replacement plantings would be at appropriate ratios. The Descanso Area campground would incorporate a visual buffer between Viejas Boulevard and the campground and may include native trees and shrubs, earthen berms, boulders, and rustic style ranch fencing.

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997), prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model for use in assessing impacts on agricultural and farmland. Would the project:

ISSUES

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

a-c) Only the Descanso Area Development supports agricultural resources. Prior to Park ownership in 1977, the site was actively farmed. For the past 32 years the land has been fallow. The proposed campground and associated landscaping would directly impact this former agricultural site, making it unsuitable for future farming. Parks, however, did not purchase the property with the intent to farm it but with the intent to make is accessible to Park visitors. Therefore, conversion of the site from passive to active use would have little to no effect on existing agricultural production. However, the campground site is Farmland of Local Importance and would be removed from the agricultural land inventory available in San Diego County. Removing this Farmland of Local Importance is less than a significant effect because the farmland was effectively removed when it was purchased as Park land in 1977. Additionally, the improvements from the proposed campground use could be reversed if needed because of limited infrastructure and hardscape.

PROPOSED MITIGATION
N/A

3. AIR QUALITY.

ISSUES

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan or regulation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☒	☐	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations (e.g., children, the elderly, individuals with compromised respiratory or immune systems)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

a) The project will increase vehicle trips and barbeque/wood fires and their associated air pollution but the amount is insignificant when compared to the vehicle trips and daily combustable use within the San Diego Air Basin.

b-d) At all sites, dust may be raised during construction and operational activities. The Descanso Area campground site, in particular, is sandy and substantial dust (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) may be generated

e) Equestrian facilities have the potential to cause objectionable odors due to large numbers of horses being present and the smell of their waste. Both campgrounds will be self-contained but odors may drift from the two proposed campgrounds to neighboring sites.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

During project construction and operations, specific guidelines for dust control will be implemented to prevent or reduce the spread of contaminant dust both on and off all project sites. These measures will likely include water trucks or sprinklers to keep the dust down during construction and prior to daily equestrian activities at the campgrounds. Additional mitigation may be proposed prior to the approval of the project, subject to the planning and public review process. In an effort to reduce the spread of objectionable odors, horse waste would be removed on a regular basis from the facilities.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a sensitive, candidate, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by §404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Several sensitive species of flora and fauna are known to occur within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and could potentially be impacted by the proposed project. Surveys have been completed to determine the potential direct and indirect impacts to sensitive species and vegetation communities (e.g. wetlands) as a result of the proposed project. Specific information will be provided in the EIR. California Department of Parks and Recreation intends to mitigate any adverse effects on these resources to the fullest extent feasible.

a) There are two species which are either state and/or federally listed within or adjacent to the project sites: the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) and the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*). The Sweetwater River, which is adjacent to the Green Valley Campground supports habitat for both of these species. Potential habitat for the arroyo toad is also located in the vicinity of the Descanso Area Development site. A detailed discussion of the sensitive biological resources within each project area will be provided in the EIR.

b) As stated above the Sweetwater River is adjacent to Loop A of the Green Valley Campground. It is also in the vicinity of the Descanso Area site, as is Descanso Creek. The Paso Picacho Day Use site is located near Cold Stream. Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be utilized to avoid unnecessary damage or disturbance to these riparian systems.

c) Based on recent surveys, the likelihood of substantial adverse impacts to wetlands is low; however there may be stream crossings as part of the proposed projects. Additional information will be included in the EIR.

d) The project may interfere with the movement of native species. The Descanso Area campground site is potential habitat for arroyo toad dispersal; however the site does not support breeding habitat for this species. Further studies will be conducted to determine the presence of sensitive species in the vicinity of the proposed project. All avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures as well as potential impacts to dispersal habitat will be discussed in the EIR.

e-f) The proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. San Diego County is in the process of preparing a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Plan for the East County, which will include the areas of Descanso and Cuyamaca, however, the MSCP Plan has not been finalized or adopted. Although the County does not have authority over lands owned by the State of California, CDPR can participate in MSCP Planning on a voluntary basis.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

Sensitive biological resources would be avoided wherever possible through design modifications and construction BMPs. Direct, indirect, and temporary impacts to these resources will be minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. Specific project design proposals, avoidance, and mitigation measures will be discussed fully in the EIR.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to§15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is rich in historical and archaeological resources. Although some cultural resources have already been identified within the proposed project sites, additional surveys will be conducted in an effort to fully document these and other cultural features and their significance.

a) There are historic resources in the vicinity of the proposed project; however, these features would likely be avoided. Design avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be discussed in the EIR.

b-c) There are many known archaeological resources within the Park, including sacred sites. Some of these resources are known to be near the proposed project, however the knowledge of archeological resources within the Park is not exhaustive. Since all of the sites will be graded, there is a chance of uncovering unknown cultural resources. However, both the Green Valley Campground and the Descanso Area Development site have been previously disturbed, therefore uncovering buried resources may be somewhat reduced at these two sites.

d) Grading is expected to be minimal in recent sedimentary soils. Therefore, significant adverse effects to paleontological resources are not anticipated.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

CDPR will avoid all known cultural features. A Park's approved cultural monitor would be present during all soil disturbing activities to ensure protection of any newly discovered cultural resources. If an unknown underground resource is discovered, then work will shift from that area until the qualified cultural resource specialist can evaluate the discovery. Additional avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be discussed in the EIR.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area, or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☒	☐	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable, as a result of the project and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1997), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste disposal systems, where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

a) The project is located in Southern California, an area known for seismic activity. However, it is not anticipated that construction of the proposed equestrian facilities would expose people or property to a higher risk of danger due to seismic activity than is currently present. The project will require some grading and landform changes but the risk of substantial adverse effects will be eliminated through proper engineering and site design. The sites to be graded are mostly flat, however during construction and until revegetated slopes mature, the project will have a greater risk of soil erosion and landslides during heavy rains.

b) In general, the Park has highly erodable surface soils. Soil surveys will be conducted before the development of the new facilities. High levels of visitor and equine use may increase loss of topsoil.

c-d) The soil at the Descanso Area Development campground site is sandy and will need to be compacted prior to construction.

e) Either a septic system that operates at Regional Water Quality Control Board standards and/or vault and composting toilet systems will be utilized at the various project sites.

f) It is not expected that there would be significant adverse effects to paleontological resources due to the soil horizon that would be disturbed by grading. An evaluation will be made as part of the EIR.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

Appropriate BMPs will be installed in areas that are susceptible to soil erosion and/or landslides. These BMPs will be discussed in the EIR.

7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials, substances, or waste into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites, compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5, and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be located in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from wildland fires, including areas where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

a-b) The transport of hazardous materials is not anticipated for this project.

c) The proposed Descanso Area Development campground site is in close proximity to an elementary school. During construction, heavy equipment would generate emissions and dust. No hazardous materials would be used during construction or operation at any of the project sites.

d) The proposed project sites are not hazardous materials sites.

e-f) The proposed project sites are not located in the vicinity of airports or private airstrips.

g) During an emergency evacuation, there may be more traffic in the Descanso area due to Park visitors at the campground and/or the day-use area.

h) The Park is prone to wildfires and an increase in visitors could increase the risk of human-ignited fires.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

To minimize dust during construction, appropriate BMPs would be utilized including watering of the access roads and other denuded areas. When the Park is at high risk from wildfires, Park Rangers would limit campfire activities and if necessary, evacuate and close the Park. The Park's emergency response plan would also be updated to include the new proposed sites and uses.

8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☒	☐	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge, such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map, or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place structures that would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area?	☐	☒	☐	☐
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from flooding, including flooding resulting from the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

There are rivers, streams, and wells in the vicinity of the project sites, as well as seasonally wet meadows. The project will not construct facilities in such a way as to cause substantial environmental damage.

a) A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required for this project to identify potential sources of pollution and to design the use and placement of BMPs.

b) Construction of the Descanso Area campground would result in increased use of water comsumption due to use of hose bibs, restrooms, and dust control. However, the majority of the water would filter back to the on-site aquifer except for the water lost through evaporation. This potential impact will be addressed in the EIR and a subsequent project-specific EIR.

c-d) Grading will be minor and not substantially alter drainage patterns. If trails are constructed to incorporate creek or stream crossings, then minor impacts may occur. Additional information, design measures, and mitigation will be identified in the EIR.

e-f) There is a low potential for animal waste to enter one of the adjacent drainages. The proposed project may also result in an increase in runoff into adjacent streams and creeks due to an increase in impervious surfaces and compacted soils.

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT

g-i) A portion of the Descanso Area Development site will be within the 100-year floodplain of the Sweetwater River. This potential impact will be addressed in the EIR and a subsequent project-specific EIR.

j) Due to its location, the project is not likely to result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

A hydrology and water quality study is being completed and the results will be included as part of the EIR. The project will require a SWPPP and conformance with accepted BMPs for water quality and stormwater runoff. BMP's will be incorporated into the design of the equestrian facilities. Manure will be cleaned up and removed regularly to appropriate disposal locations. The EIR will contain additional design and evaluation of potential water quality issues.

9. LAND USE AND PLANNING.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict with the applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

a) The Descanso Area Development site is located within a portion of the Park that extends into the County of San Diego's unincorporated community of Descanso. It is also located adjacent to a school and across from several equestrian related businesses. Although many of the residents in this part of Descanso have horses or livestock on their property, some do not. The introduction of the campground and its users would increase the amount of noise, traffic, and lighting to this rural area. However, these new facilities may be considered a beneficial use for those members of the community that participate in equestrian activities. For those that do not, the new facilities may be considered a detriment to the area.

b) The proposed project is consistent with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan and the Area of Potential Effect would be limited to Park lands. Viejas Boulevard and the neighboring properties are under the jurisdiction of the County of San Diego, while the school is governed by the Mountain Empire Unified School District. CDPR is not aware of any conflicts with local zoning and would coordinate with the County of San Diego during the implementation of this project. CDPR will also coordinate with school officials to reduce or eliminate potential traffic and noise impacts to the school from construction and operation of the campground.

c) CDPR will coordinate, during the course of this project, with all appropriate resource agencies and the County of San Diego to ensure that the project is in conformance with any applicable planning efforts.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

On June 12, 2007, CDPR held a public meeting in the community of Descanso to involve the public in the planning process for the campground and other equestrian facilities. Additionally, CDPR will coordinate with all appropriate resource agencies and the County of San Diego to ensure that the project is in conformance with any applicable planning efforts. Additional mitigation may be proposed or implemented during the planning and public review process prior to project approval.

10. MINERAL RESOURCES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known	☐	☐	☐	☒

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
mineral resource that is or would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

a-b) The proposed project sites contains sandy soil but no other known resources. The site is currently owned by CDPR and would not be open to mining activities.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

N/A

11. NOISE.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Generate or expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in a local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Generate or expose people to excessive groundborne vibrations or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project (above levels without the project)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Create a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project, in excess of noise levels existing without the project?	☒	☐	☐	☐
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be in the vicinity of a private airstrip? If so, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

a-b) Primarily during construction, use of heavy equipment and tools would increase noise levels above the current baseline in all project areas. Additionally, if large trucks are required to bring equipment to the site, there would be an increase in noise along the sites' access roads. There are sensitive noise receptors located adjacent or close to both campgrounds and day-use sites. Loop A is separated from the other campground loops within the Green Valley Campground but close to the Green Valley Day Use area. The Paso Picacho campground and Park employee facilities are located across SR-79 from the proposed Paso Picacho Equestrian Day Use site. The Descanso Area site is located adjacent to a school, a County park, homes, and close to businesses.

c-d) The proposed project will create both permanent and temporary increases in the ambient noise levels. These noises will include the ingress and egress of vehicles to the facilities, the loading and unloading of horses and other livestock, and

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT

converstions between people at each location. Special events could increase noise levels on a temporary basis and are subject to CDPR approval.

e-f) There is no airstrip near the Park.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

It is anticipated that construction work near sensitive noise receptors would be limited to weekdays between 7 AM and 7 PM. Potential noise impacts to rural residences near the Descanso Area Development and appropriate mitigation will be addressed in the EIR and a subsequent project-specific EIR.

12. POPULATION AND HOUSING

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

The entire proposed project is located within State Park property and does not involve the demolition or construction of any homes.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

N/A

13. PUBLIC SERVICES.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Result in significant environmental impacts from construction associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	☐	☒	☐	☐
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
CDPR?	☐	☒	☐	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT

COMMENTS:

This a government (State Park) project and would require a long-term financial commitment for maintenance and operations and possibly require additional staff support. The cost would be partially offset by camping fees and/or other user fees. Park rangers provide law enforcement protection and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) provides fire protection to the Park and its users. Additional assistance may be required from these agencies to protect the new use areas in the event of a wildland fire. There is some potential for the Descano Area campground users to disrupt school activities, however there would be a visual and noise buffer between the campground and the school. A nominal amount of new public services such as trash, water, and electricity would be required for all of the project sites.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

The project design would incorporate a visual and noise buffer or berm between the proposed Descanso Area campground and the school. The Park's emergency response plan would be updated to include the new use areas.

14. RECREATION.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional CDPR or other recreational facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

a-b) Implementation of the proposed project would improve the equestrian recreational experience at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and possibly alleviate crowded conditions at other equestrian facilities in the region. The project would affect existing recreational use patterns within the Park by creating new facilities and improving existing facilities that focus on only one user group. Non-equestrian users of the Park may voice concern regarding the limited focus of the proposed project. There is potential, however, for the community to use the facilities at the proposed Descanso Area site for non-equestrian activities. Proximity to Interstate 8 and the town of Descanso would allow for the day-use area to be easily accessed, and Park visitation by non-equestrian users may increase. The proposed project may also result in increased visitation to the adjacent County park, which may accelerate its deterioration.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

During times of heavy use or special events, increased staffing may be required.

15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial increase in traffic, in relation to existing traffic and the capacity of the street system (i.e., a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Exceed, individually or cumulatively, the level of service standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
c) Cause a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Contain a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or a dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment) that would substantially increase hazards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

a-e) The proposed project will nominally increase vehicle miles traveled within the Park when compared to the regional volume of traffic on the nearby roadways. However, large vehicles towing horse trailers in the immediate areas of the campgrounds and day-use areas would increase as a result of the proposed project. These vehicles are slow moving and can cause increased traffic queues, especially on weekends and holidays or during special events. However, the Park's existing campgrounds are often occupied by campers with recreational vehicles. The number of slow-moving recreational vehicles on any given weekend would not change appreciably on SR-79 as there will be fewer campsites available at Green Valley and there would only be about 20 new campsites at the Descanso campground. However, there would be potential for increased traffic queues at intersections for turning vehicles.

f) The existing equestrian day-use parking is inadequate in both the northern and southern portions of the Park. The proposed project would improve parking for both equestrian and non-equestrian users in the southern portion of the Park. Also, a new driveway will provide better access into the southern day-use area. The northern day-use area will be constructed to Caltrans' requirements to allow safe ingress and egress onto State Highway 79.

g) The project does not provide for alternative transportation such as bicycle racks or bus turnouts since it is an equestrian facility, however, trail connections to the local community would allow for walking or equestrian access to the southern campground facility.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

During construction and special events, traffic control may be required.

16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.

ISSUES

Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment restrictions or standards of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Would the construction of these facilities cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Result in a determination, by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project, that it has adequate capacity to service the project's anticipated demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☒	☐	☐
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations as they relate to solid waste?	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

To facilitate the project, permanent infrastructure will be installed. A septic system, vault or composting toilets would be installed at the two day-use areas and the Descanso Area campground. New utility connections would also have to be installed at the Descanso Area campground. If septic systems are installed they would comply with the standards appropriate for the area. At the Descanso Area campground, a waste station dump site and electrical hook-ups may be provided for RVs. A watering system would also need to be installed to reduce dust impacts. Stormwater or drainage facilities would be constructed as part of all of the proposed projects and trash and manure would be collected frequently. Manure may be composted to avoid impacts to the local landfill. Additional information, design measures, and mitigation will be further identified in the EIR.

PROPOSED MITIGATION

Avoidance or relocation of any existing utility easements may be required. Additional information, design measures, and mitigation will be further identified in the EIR.

III. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.

Would the project:

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have the potential to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probably future projects?)	☒	☐	☐	☐
d) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on humans, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

a-b) The proposed project sites are in areas that have sensitive cultural and natural resources. CDPR will survey these areas and avoid areas known to have significant or sensitive resources. The full extent and significance of impacts to cultural

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT

resources, sensitive species, habitat, and wetlands will be detailed in the EIR. CDPR intends to mitigate any adverse effects to sensitive resources, as a result of the proposed project, to the fullest extent feasible.

c) The proposed project would have cumulative impacts on Cuyamaca Rancho State Park as well as on the community of Descanso and other nearby residents. Construction of the Descanso Area Development and the Paso Picacho Day-Use parking lot would result in an increase in visitor use and a rise in traffic, which would include larger equestrian vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and recreational vehicles. Finally, project implementation may result in an increase in use of Park-wide trail connections. An increase in facilities and trails would intensify visitation at locations throughout the Park as well as surrounding towns and businesses. In addition to the proposed Equestrian Facilities projects, other projects being proposed and/or developed within and surrounding the Park include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) projects, Americans with Disabilities Act improvements and upgrades, trail connections, and development projects in the communities of Descanso and Lake Cuyamaca. FEMA projects are a result of the 2003 Cedar Fire and include vegetation management activities,erosion control, and construction activities to replace structures lost during the fire.

d) The proposed Equestrian Facilites projects may result in some adverse impacts to nearby residents in the neighboring town of Descanso. The proposed Descanso Area Development site is in the vicinity of a school, businesses, and residences. There would be high levels of visitation and recreational use at this site, which would result in more noise, an increase in water and utility usage, and aesthetic impacts. Impacts to air and water quality and to sensitive biological resources would be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

IV. PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION

On the basis of the Initial Study,

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have an adverse effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect because the mitigation measures described in the attached Mitigation appendix will be required. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

PREPARER: Christine Beck

TITLE: Associate Park and Recreation Specialist DATE: 11/12/2009

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

Notice of Preparation

November 16, 2009

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Facilities Project
SCH# 2007051074

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Facilities Project draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

Please direct your comments to:

Christine Beck
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,

for Scott Morgan
Assistant Deputy Director & Senior Planner, State Clearinghouse

Attachments
cc: Lead Agency

1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, California 95812-3044
(916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2007051074
Project Title Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Facilities Project
Lead Agency Parks and Recreation, Department of

Type NOP Notice of Preparation

Description The project proposes to develop or enhance equestrian facilities in several locations in the Park. An equestrian facility near the southern portion of the Park will contain a campground and day-use staging area with trailhead parking. One loop of the family campground at Green Valley will be converted to equestrian camping, and a new day-use staging area with amenities will be constructed near the central portion of the Park at Paso Pichacho. Trail connections will be established between the new facilities and other, established trails.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Christine Beck
Agency California Department of Parks and Recreation
Phone (619) 688-6140 **Fax**
email
Address 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
City San Diego **State** CA **Zip** 92108

Project Location

County San Diego
City
Region
Cross Streets Viejas Boulevard, Highway 79
Lat / Long
Parcel No. 4080501700;3351200200
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways 79
Airports
Railways
Waterways Sweetwater River, Descanso Creek
Schools Descanso Elementary
Land Use State Park

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Drainage/Absorption; Fiscal Impacts; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Noise; Public Services; Schools/Universities; Septic System; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wildlife; Cumulative Effects

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Conservation; Cal Fire; Department of Water Resources; Native American Heritage Commission; Department of Fish and Game, Region 5; Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9; Caltrans, District 11

Date Received 11/16/2009 **Start of Review** 11/16/2009 **End of Review** 12/15/2009

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

NOP Distribution List

SL

County: San Diego

SCH# 2007051074

Resources Agency

- [x] **Resources Agency**
  Nadell Gayou
- [ ] **Dept. of Boating & Waterways**
  Mike Sotelo
- [ ] **California Coastal Commission**
  Elizabeth A. Fuchs
- [ ] **Colorado River Board**
  Gerald R. Zimmerman
- [x] **Dept. of Conservation**
  Rebecca Salazar
- [ ] **California Energy Commission**
  Eric Knight
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  Dept of Parks & Recreation
  Environmental Stewardship Section
- [ ] **Central Valley Flood Protection Board**
  James Herota
- [ ] **S.F. Bay Conservation & Dev't. Comm.**
  Steve McAdam
- [x] **Dept. of Water Resources**
  Resources Agency
  Nadell Gayou
- [ ] _____
  Conservancy

Fish and Game

- [ ] **Depart. of Fish & Game**
  Scott Flint
  Environmental Services Division
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 1**
  Donald Koch
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 1E**
  Laurie Harnsberger
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 2**
  Jeff Drongesen
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 3**
  Robert Floerke
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 4**
  Julie Vance
- [x] **Fish & Game Region 5**
  Don Chadwick
  Habitat Conservation Program
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 6**
  Gabrina Gatchel
  Habitat Conservation Program
- [ ] **Fish & Game Region 6 I/M**
  Brad Henderson
  Inyo/Mono, Habitat Conservation Program
- [ ] **Dept. of Fish & Game M**
  George Isaac
  Marine Region

Other Departments

- [ ] **Food & Agriculture**
  Steve Shaffer
  Dept. of Food and Agriculture
- [ ] **Depart. of General Services**
  Public School Construction
- [ ] **Dept. of General Services**
  Anna Garbeff
  Environmental Services Section
- [ ] **Dept. of Public Health**
  Bridgette Binning
  Dept. of Health/Drinking Water

Independent Commissions,Boards

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  Linda Flack
- [ ] **Office of Emergency Services**
  Dennis Castrillo
- [ ] **Governor's Office of Planning & Research**
  State Clearinghouse
- [x] **Native American Heritage Comm.**
  Debbie Treadway
- [ ] **Public Utilities Commission**
  Leo Wong
- [ ] **Santa Monica Bay Restoration**
  Guangyu Wang
- [ ] **State Lands Commission**
  Marina Brand
- [ ] **Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)**
  Cherry Jacques

Business, Trans & Housing

- [ ] **Caltrans - Division of Aeronautics**
  Sandy Hesnard
- [x] **Caltrans - Planning**
  Terri Pencovic
- [ ] **California Highway Patrol**
  Scott Loetscher
  Office of Special Projects
- [ ] **Housing & Community Development**
  CEQA Coordinator
  Housing Policy Division

Dept. of Transportation

- [ ] **Caltrans, District 1**
  Rex Jackman
- [ ] **Caltrans, District 2**
  Marcelino Gonzalez
- [ ] **Caltrans, District 3**
  Bruce de Terra
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  Lisa Carboni
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- [ ] **Caltrans, District 10**
  Tom Dumas
- [x] **Caltrans, District 11**
  Jacob Armstrong
- [ ] **Caltrans, District 12**
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Cal EPA

Air Resources Board

- [ ] Airport Projects
  Jim Lerner
- [x] Transportation Projects
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- [ ] Industrial Projects
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- [ ] **State Water Resources Control Board**
  Regional Programs Unit
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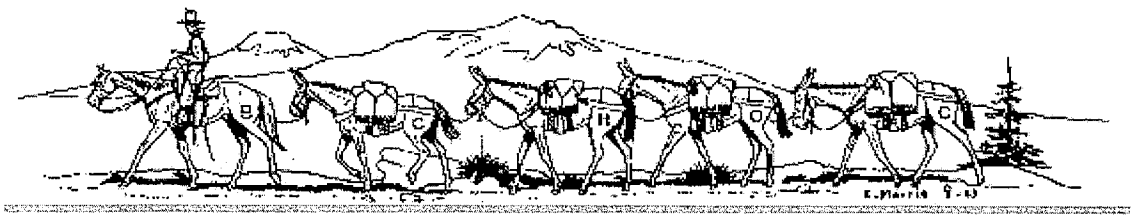
- [ ] **State Water Resources Control Board**
  Student Intern, 401 Water Quality Certification Unit
  Division of Water Quality
- [ ] **State Water Resouces Control Board**
  Steven Herrera
  Division of Water Rights
- [ ] **Dept. of Toxic Substances Control**
  CEQA Tracking Center
- [ ] **Department of Pesticide Regulation**
  CEQA Coordinator

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

- [ ] **RWQCB 1**
  Cathleen Hudson
  North Coast Region (1)
- [ ] **RWQCB 2**
  Environmental Document Coordinator
  San Francisco Bay Region (2)
- [ ] **RWQCB 3**
  Central Coast Region (3)
- [ ] **RWQCB 4**
  Teresa Rodgers
  Los Angeles Region (4)
- [ ] **RWQCB 5S**
  Central Valley Region (5)
  - [ ] **RWQCB 5F**
    Central Valley Region (5)
    Fresno Branch Office
  - [ ] **RWQCB 5R**
    Central Valley Region (5)
    Redding Branch Office
- [ ] **RWQCB 6**
  Lahontan Region (6)
  - [ ] **RWQCB 6V**
    Lahontan Region (6)
    Victorville Branch Office
- [ ] **RWQCB 7**
  Colorado River Basin Region (7)
- [ ] **RWQCB 8**
  Santa Ana Region (8)
- [x] **RWQCB 9**
  San Diego Region (9)

- [ ] **Other** _____

Last Updated on 10/21/2009



Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

December 7, 2009

Dear Ms. Beck,

As the president of Backcountry Horsemen of California/San Diego Unit, representing over one hundred thirty individuals and families, I would like to share our collective support for the proposed equestrian facilities.

We had previously provided comments to the proposed Merigan Ranch Equestrian Campground. Though we support the expanded day use area proposed in the current NOP, we want to express our desire to see funding re-secured to complete the campground as soon as is feasible. The expanded day use facility will help in providing more parking for rigs, but does not replace the opportunity to camp. We might suggest a less ambitious campground design. It may prove to be more affordable, as many equestrians are content with a more rustic ambiance anyway.

We strongly support the conversion of the Green Valley Campground Loop to equestrian sites. This will provide opportunities for families to once again horse camp in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

We support the proposed Paso Picacho Day Use site. This day use facility will provide the opportunity to ride the many trails accessed from that northern part of the park.

Though these projects are most welcome and we support them, they do not replace what we had at Los Caballos Family Campground. The Green Valley project will go a long way in providing family horse camping, however it does not provide camping in the northern part of the park. We request State Parks to continue to pursue a location that will provide that opportunity while also being sensitive to significant cultural resources as well as natural resources.

We would also like you to know that you can call on us to provide you input from an equestrian point of view as these projects move forward.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cheryl L. Wegner, President
Backcountry Horsemen of California
San Diego Unit
236 Oak Street
Ramona, CA 92065
760-788-0354
chrylwgnr@cox.net

COURTNEY ANN COYLE
ATTORNEY AT LAW

HELD-PALMER HOUSE
1609 SOLEDAD AVENUE
LA JOLLA, CA USA 92037-3817

TELEPHONE: 858-454-8687 E-MAIL: COURTCOYLE@AOL.COM FACSIMILE: 858-454-8493

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
California State Parks
8885 Rio San Diego # 270
San Diego, CA 92108

Via Confirmed Fax: 619.220.5400
December 15, 2009

Re: Comments on NOP for Equestrian Facilities Project
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (Winter 2009)

Dear Ms. Beck:

This NOP comment letter for the above-captioned project is sent on behalf of Carmen Lucas, Kwaaymii Band of Laguna Indians. The notice for the NOP invited comment on the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the CEQA process.

As you may know, tribal entities have in the past provided extensive information to State Park's staff and management through consultative meetings, site visits, attendance at equestrian hosted meetings, attendance at NOP scoping meetings including on June 15, 2006 and June 12, 2007, and through prior correspondence including NOP-related letters from my office dated October 31, 2005, May 3, 2006, June 30, 2006 and July 11, 2007. This comment letter supplements those prior communications.

This letter offers comments on the current NOP and raises project specific and general concerns to be addressed in the DEIR. Please know that it is our intent to continue to try to work cooperatively with DPR and other interested parties to arrive at a project, or suite of projects, that can both satisfy recreational needs while offering appropriate management for the irreplaceable historic and tribal cultural resources that are under State Park's care and management.

Status of Tribal Consultations

Contrary to the NOP, *three* previous NOPs have been issued in the recent past related to equestrian facilities in one form or another for Cuyamaca Rancho State Park: first, the "Los Caballos Equestrian Campground Project" (Fall 2005); the "Equestrian Family Campground Replacement" (Spring 2006); "Equestrian Facilities Project Cuyamaca Rancho State Park" (Spring 2007) and finally, the current project.

With prior NOPs, NOP scoping meetings were held. Also, DPR had previously been meeting semi-regularly with concerned tribes to keep them informed and to solicit feedback regarding potential facilities. As no scoping or tribal consultation meetings have been held in the last few years, to our knowledge, this new NOP came as a surprise to us, and probably to other tribes. Given the sensitivities surrounding proposed projects in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, we believe that the process would have been better served for some kind of outreach to tribes onsite at the Park to have occurred prior to, or during, the NOP release.

As such, we sincerely hope that State Parks will provide an opportunity for a State Park-Tribal site visit in the near future to explain the differences between the last and current versions of the project, solicit current tribal concerns and provide more detail than what was available in the NOP as to the proposed project's specific locations and components.

Actively participating tribal entities over the past five years have included representatives from Jamul, Manzanita, Mesa Grande, Sycuan, Viejas, and Santa Ysabel in addition to the Kwaaymii. Each should be invited to a collective consultative session.

Status of NOP

The new NOP states it is a "reissuing" of the prior NOP "in order to **add a new project site**[,]" the Green Valley Campground (Emphasis original). The NOP also states that this reissued NOP includes "additional project changes" that have been considered since the 2007 NOP was issued. What is the practical impact of reissuance of an NOP? What are the specific additional project changes being proposed? Again, it is our opinion in the spirit of ongoing consultation that such project changes should have been directly addressed to interested tribes prior to the release of the reissued NOP, if this has not occurred.

Additional Information Needed

Please provide more specific detail on the following bulleted items. Without such detail, it is difficult to provide specific comments. This information should be provided to tribes prior to the consultative meeting referenced above:

- A project component is to establish connecting trails to all three of the proposed project facilities. Our concern is that, to our knowledge, tribal representatives have not been provided a map of the proposed connection segments/locations and have not had an opportunity to walk the proposed connection. This opportunity should be provided as soon as possible;

- The attached Project Location map did not provide sufficient detail as to the proposed locations of the projects, especially for Paso Picacho; please provide a more specific locational map;

- The NOP stated that an Initial Study Checklist was attached to the NOP; it was not. Please provide; and

- What specific project related or associated amenities or facilities are being proposed along with each major project component? These must be specified in the DEIR's Project Description for the document to be legally compliant with CEQA.

Issues to be Addressed in DEIR

Location Specific/Design Issues: The following items should be specifically addressed in the DEIR as project mitigation measures or conditions of project approval to minimize impacts to tribal cultural resources and to try to mitigate project impacts:

Regarding Merigan:

- A qualified professional should be retained to draft an ethnographic/prehistory report of the Descanso area and how it ties in to the Cuyamaca region;

- DPR should consider acquiring additional lands on either side of the Merigan property that are currently designated as rural residential to help minimize the potential for future land use conflicts;

- Known areas with tribal human remains must be avoided and provided an adequate buffer;

- Project design should support, not inhibit, any wildlife corridors that might occur in this area.

Regarding Paso Picacho:

- This area is rich in tribal cultural resources. Any recreational use would need to be very carefully designed. We need to be provided with the specific proposed project location to fully comment;

- Impacts to streams and cultural resources along the Cold Stream Trail must be avoided and actively managed, including redesign of the trail away from cultural resources;

- Decomposed granite or other permeable materials should be used wherever possible instead of paving;

- The project also should be screened from public views from the scenic road.

Regarding Green Valley Campground:

- No specific comments at this time.

Regarding Trail Connections:

- All trail locations/segments/design should be looked at and evaluated in collaboration with the tribes to avoid and move segments away from cultural resource locations. This is consistent with language in the Cuyamaca General Plan quoted below;
- What are the various lengths of the proposed trail connections?
- Trail locations, and other trail facilities, could be optimized and tribal cultural resources better protected by DPR drafting and adopting a Trails Management Plan simultaneously with the proposed project.

General Issues for All Locations: The comments below are more general in nature and apply to each of the four listed major project components:

- Has an updated search of the California Historic Information System (CHRIS) and Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) lists been done for each of the project locations?;
- All project locations and aspects must have archaeological surveys with qualified Native American participation;
- A qualified Native American monitor must be present during all ground disturbing activities;
- Each aspect of the project must avoid sensitive biological and cultural resources, sites, deposits and human remains and propose effective barriers to protect these resources;
- A consistent and funded active monitoring program must be implemented for archaeological and water resources;[1]
- DPR must analyze the project and each alternative for its potential impact to tribal traditional cultural properties (TCPs). Key to this understanding

[1] The DPR Handout for the June 12, 2007 public meeting referenced the temporary trailhead parking at Hual-Cu-Cush, another location containing sensitive tribal cultural resources. (Handout, page 2). Is this use still occurring and when will it stop? What monitoring for cultural resources has been performed since the re-opening of this area to the public and what are the results? Can these help inform a monitoring program for this project?

will be the direction found in the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties (USDOI 1994);

- If groundwater will be used at any location, a complete study should be conducted on how the individual projects will be supported by, and potentially affect, the water table;

- All toilet facilities must be located away from and downhill of tribal cultural resource locations;

- Solar power is generally preferred to avoid the potential for powerlines to be installed as either unsightly power poles or underground lines which may cause potentially unnecessary physical disturbances to cultural and biological resources;

- Any consideration of interpretative sites, themes or materials, at any of the project sites, can only be done after consultation with tribal entities regarding the appropriateness and form of such activities. The concern is that the public already may know about cultural resource locations, but tribal entities may not want to draw any more attention to them. Tribal cultural resources must not be exploited;

- Noninvasive, native plants should be used whenever possible;

- Natural landforms including trees, boulders, and drainages should be avoided wherever possible;

- The NOP states that some trees may need to be removed or thinned. Does this apply to all three project areas as well as to connecting trails? The DEIR must provide specifics on the number, type and approximate age of trees that would be impacted for each of the project components;

- Project conditions must include the avoidance of impacts wherever possible to important trees such as oaks. If such trees must be disrupted, an opportunity should be made for tribal entities to salvage the wood; and

- Also, if it is envisioned that trees will need to be planted, it may be advisable to get those started in the DPR plant nursery now. DPR should also take advantage of trees that may become available as development occurs elsewhere in the backcountry and make every effort to pot, replant or otherwise "bank" such salvaged trees, especially the old, grandfather trees.[2]

[2] Environmental Design <treemover.com>, for example, uses a 14 foot hydraulic spade and ten blades to dig seven feet deep to carve out root balls as wide as 14 feet.

Off-Site Alternatives/Project Location

If an off-site Alternative is studied as part of the DEIR, we respectfully request that it does NOT include any of the locations that tribal entities have previously deemed unacceptable for campground facilities through consultation with DPR prior to the release of this NOP, for example, Los Vaqueros and Stonewall.

As you may know, tribal entities have previously identified Tulloch Ranch, Cuyamaca Lodge and Lucky 5 North as potentially acceptable locations for an equestrian campground, subject, of course, to environmental review and further consultation.[3] The tribes, in good faith, have identified several potential locations for horsecamp use. When the tribal entities visited each potential location they asked how will this work for horses and the equestrians, not just would this location pose an unacceptable impact to heritage resources.[4]

On the other hand, certain sites are NOT acceptable to tribes for this project (or as part of any General Plan update or revision) because of significant, unmitigated impacts to cultural, historic and tribal resources. Cuyamaca has one of the best groupings of historic sites remaining in the county: To locate campground facilities in these locations would directly violate the Cuyamaca Rancho General Plan which states that, "The department shall locate/relocate roads, trails, campsites, and other facilities away from Native American sites, and shall install buffers around the sites where necessary." (Plan, page 26). Moreover, locating a campground at such locations, within the identified corridor of cultural concern, would present an unacceptable spiritual violation for the tribes, as previously explained face-to-face to DPR.

The proposed Los Vaqueros location was already physically staked by Parks before the tribes went on their site visit with DPR staff. Notably, it was the only staked location of the twenty-some locations we visited. The tribes immediately expressed their concern that it appeared that Parks had predetermined the new campground location prior to conducting tribal consultations. As for the Stonewall location, just because a place may have been "disturbed" by a previous use, does not mean the area no longer has historic or tribal cultural values.

We agree with the analysis and conclusion in the DPR "Frequently Asked Questions" handout from the June 15, 2006 NOP public meeting, that rebuilding in or

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[3] Green Valley had been identified as another potentially acceptable location. It has now been added to the proposed project. We hope that this addition will not directly or indirectly result in unacceptable locations being chosen as alternative locations.

[4] Arrowmakers Ridge was also identified as potentially acceptable, but it is still an area of concern for the tribal entities, and therefore ranked lower than the aforementioned locations.

around the former Los Caballos campground is infeasible and not legally defensible.[5] If for some reason this site must be studied as an alterative, the DEIR should also reference that the Ah-ha'-Kwe-ah'-mac village site has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper, including under Criterion A (Tribal Values).

Programmatic Approach

As we have stated previously, we believe a programmatic approach still has promise to provide enhanced equestrian facilities from those existing in the Park prior to the Cedar Fire, while doing a better job of respecting tribal cultural values and historic resources.

Conclusion

We hope that these comments will be of use to you and that State Parks will reinitiate onsite project consultation with the interested tribal representaitves to work toward a solution for which we can all be proud. Please include my office on the list to receive two hard copies of the DEIR and any technical reports or appendices relating to it.

Very truly yours,

Courtney Ann Coyle

Courtney Ann Coyle
Attorney at Law

Cc: Hon. Monique LaChappa, Campo
Hon. Raymond Hunter, Jamul
Nick Elliott, Manzanita
Hon. Mark Romero, Mesa Grande
George Prieto, Sycuan
Lisa Hawes, Viejas
Bernice Paipa, La Posta
Clint Linton, Santa Ysabel
Steve Banegas, KCRC
Dwight Dutschke, SHPO
Larry Myers, NAHC
Client file

[5] This location is of particular concern given prior newspaper articles which quoted an equestrian that she hopes Los Caballos might reopen. See, for example, San Diego Union Tribune *"Park officials propose horse camp at Merigan,"* May 18, 2007. Also, we are concerned that tribes have not been informed regarding litigation surrounding the Los Caballos closure. An update on those proceedings and their status should be part of the State Park-Tribal consultative meeting mentioned above.

San Diego County Archaeological Society, Inc.

Environmental Review Committee

24 November 2009

To: Ms. Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, California 92108

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report
Equestrian Facilities Project

Dear Ms. Beck:

Thank you for the Notice of Preparation for the subject project, received by this Society last week.

We are pleased to note the inclusion of cultural resources in the list of subject areas to be addressed in the DEIR, and look forward to reviewing it during the upcoming public comment period. To that end, please include us in the distribution of the DEIR, and also provide us with a copy of the cultural resources technical report(s).

SDCAS appreciates being included in the environmental review process for this project.

Sincerely,

James W. Royle, Jr., Chairperson
Environmental Review Committee

cc: SDCAS President
File

P.O. Box 81106 • San Diego, CA 92138-1106 • (858) 538-0935

Christine Beck
Southern Service Center, California Department of State Parks
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270, San Diego,California 92108

I am writing this letter on behalf of the California Equestrian Trails and Lands Coalition. CET&LC is a coalition of fifteen horse organizations that have in their memberships over 35,000 horse owners.

CET&LC has been working for many years with CEA (2004) on the reopening of Los Caballos. CET&LC has read the NOP and have come to many conclusions.

1) Los Caballoes could be opened. But, State Parks again has proven it dos not care about the majority of users. It only cares about being politically correct and would rather move an existing horse camp and spend more money then to work with the local residents and bring back a camp that has major "historical" significance.
2) There is no science available to back up the closing of Los Caballos. We cannot find anything in the archeological findings that says: reopening Los Caballos will destroy "Indian grounds". CET&LC feels that the internal workings of the archeologists have kept this area closed. CET&LC feels that State Park archeologists have not proven that reopening Los Caballos will be a detriment to any Indian burial sites.
3) State Parks is, again, proving that State Parks is not recreationally inspired. The attitude of species over recreation is again showing its ugly head and again State Parks is using environmental language, only, to close an area that has been in use for decades.
4) Working with CEA CET&LC will abide by CEA's decision and their choice of a "new camps". But, CET&LC will be very wary in future negotiations with State Parks on "future land" talks.
5) CEA has asked CET&LC to abide by their wishes of using the Green Valley Campground for the "new camp". But please realize CET&LC feels Green Valley is not a replacement, but a temporary conversion for Los Caballos. CET&LC hopes that some day clearer minds and a more positive recreation theme will take over State Parks and Los Caballos can again be used like it has in the "past".
6) Finally. CET&LC feels: State Parks does what it wants and has very little consideration for the User. CET&LC has tried to work with State Parks but have now come to realize that State Parks will continue to look upon horse use with a negative attitude. CET&LC will continue to try and work with State Parks on other trails issues in California; CET&LC can only hope that State Parks will work with a more positive approach in future negotiations.

Sincerely,
John Keyes
Chairman: California Equestrian Trails and Lands Coalition
http://www.calequestriancoalition.com/

Environmental Review

From: Nancy Reed [nancyreed@cox.net] **Sent:** Sat 12/12/2009 4:54 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca
Attachments:

You can cut and paste this or write your own.

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time.

Environmental Review

From: Larry Pustinger [larrypustinger@yahoo.com] **Sent:** Fri 12/11/2009 6:10 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc: Mary Lou Lackey
Subject: NOP Comments
Attachments:

Attn: Christine Beck:

Descanso Interim Equestrian Day Use proposal;

The existing dirt lot is utilized by an increasingly larger number of diverse park visitors. This observation is anecdotal but based upon ten years of personal daily observation and use. I live less than two tenths of one mile from the site. My wife and I are nearly daily visitors. We enter the park at this point to either hike, or ride our horses. We do not park in this area, as our close proximity allows us to walk or horseback ride directly from out nearby home.

Any redevelopment of this interim day use area must provide for IMPROVED SAFE ACCESS. Children from the local community of Descanso frequently hike in or ride their horses into the park through the existing trail head. The congestion is very crowded and chaotic at times with vehicles entering, leaving, unloading mountain bikes, horses, chairs, coolers, even strollers! Any redesign should establish clear and reasonably separate staging areas for non-equestrian and equestrian visitors. Redesigned staging areas should also provide for ease of safe access for Descanso residents whether they are walking or horseback riding, or mountain biking directly from their homes to and through the Descanso Trail Head.

Thank you,

Larry Pustinger 619-659-3437

Merigan Ranch, Descanso
Joyce A. (Merigan) Peterson
Fax 858-453-1356 Cell 619-884-6088
jpeters1@san.rr.com

December 1, 2009

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

RE: Equestrian Facilities Project, SCH #2007051074
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, San Diego, CA

Dear Ms. Beck;

My family enthusiastically supports the proposal for the interim equestrian day-use expanded facility across from the Merigan Ranch in Descanso. Additionally, when funding is available, we encourage the construction of an equestrian campground and adjunct facilities at the site.

As you know, these proposals are located on property that the Merigan family donated to the State of California several years ago, with the specific intent that an equestrian camp facility would be constructed there. The property had been used to pasture cattle and grow feed since we purchased the land in 1958. Prior to that, the former owner also conducted a livestock business there for many years. Additionally, the property contained several rental homes that were razed by the State of California after the purchase.

My brother Bob Merigan and I have attended all past workshops and meetings concerning these proposals. Taking into account the prior use of the land, its easy access to main highways, and its ideal location at the southern end of the park; we came to the conclusion that any negative aspects of the project are easily mitigated. The Merigan family intended our property donation to be used by all the people and not just the privileged few. The Descanso Equestrian Facilities Project and current proposals are the right projects in the correct location, and we are thrilled to lend our enthusiastic support for their approval.

Sincerely;

Joyce A. (Merigan) Peterson

Environmental Review

From: Ute Pelzer [upelzer@designerwhey.com] **Sent:** Sun 12/13/2009 8:20 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Horse campping Cuyamaca State Park
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

The thrill of riding your horse through beautiful countryside is an amazing experience and something I treasure.

Thank you for your time.

Horse owners,

Ute Pelzer and family

Attachments can contain viruses that may harm your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.

Environmental Review

From: A K [montecielo@hotmail.com] **Sent:** Tue 12/15/2009 1:37 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Comments: NOP SCH #2007051074 Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
Attachments: AKolkey Comments NOP Rncho Cuyamaca.doc(38KB)

Ms. Beck:

Please consider the attached document as comments on the NOP SCH#2007051074 Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

Thank you,

Annette Kolkey
Monte Cielo Ranch
Anderson, CA
San Diego, CA

Hotmail: Trusted email with powerful SPAM protection. Sign up now.

Ms. Annette D. Kolkey
Monte Cielo Ranch
5147 Chestnut Street
Anderson, CA 96007

Local address:
7243 Alliance Court
San Diego, CA 92119

December 15, 2009

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks & Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite #270
San Diego, CA 92108

Re: Comments NOP Equestrian Facilities Project SCH# 2007051074,
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, San Diego, CA

Dear Ms. Beck:

It is a pleasure to provide comments about the above referenced new equestrian project(s) in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park of San Diego County, CA. The CASP is to be commended for working closely with local equestrian groups (stakeholders) to develop entirely new and additional equestrian related recreational opportunities.

This correspondence supports creation of equestrian family camping at the Green Valley Campground, by conversion of existing camping Loop A to horse facilities capable of accommodating 10-15 sites with associated amenities. Creation of additional equestrian camping in Cuyamaca addresses current and projected future increase in equine recreational use; at present 80% of horseback riding is done by the recreational sector. Sales of and an increased popularity in use of living quarter type trailers makes horse camping a natural option for families and groups. Special attention should be given to designing easy access, "pull through" truck and trailer friendly sites. Similar facilities at Lake Oroville SRA in Northern California are booked to capacity by the same user groups.

This correspondence supports expansion and development of the Day Use staging area at Merigan Ranch, the Descanso Area Development Interim Day Use site. This will create easier equestrian day-use access to the Southern region of Cuyamaca State Park. I encourage CASP to explore all funding options (conventional, partnering, grant, fundraising) to expedite construction of the proposed ultimate 20 site campground, associated facilities and day-use project described for the Descanso Area Development.

In preparation of CEQA and EIR documents for the above referenced projects, it is requested that the CASP continues to consider/include local equestrian group and stakeholder input. When designing and evaluating said projects, please focus on "quality of user experience" and aesthetics as provided by CEQA with the same weight given to environmental effects. Whenever possible preserve a wilderness-type experience via single track trail development meeting safety standards exclusively for riding/hiking use, particularly for new trails and/or connections to the California Riding & Hiking Trail (which specifically excludes motorized vehicle use).

Likewise, appreciation is extended to CASP for its efforts to restore the Los Caballos camp ground lost in the 2003 Cedar fire. The proposed Project SCH# 2007051074 is not to be considered mitigation for the Los Caballos site.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on these worthwhile equestrian developments at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Please add my Anderson, California address to the contact list for all future correspondence.

Sincerely,

Annette Kolkey (via email)
montecielo@hotmail.com
Monte Cielo Ranch
Anderson, CA

Teri R. Kerns

December 14, 2009

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite #270
San Diego, CA 92108

Fax: 619.220.5400

Re: Equestrian Facilities Project - SCH #2007051074, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

Dear Ms. Beck:

I am writing in response to the above NOP, which was reissued, adding a new project site. I appreciate the additions listed, including (1) equestrian family camping to Green Valley, (2) Permanent Day-Use near Paso Picacho, and (3) interim equestrian day-use at Merigan, and (4) Future permanent construction at Merigan, along w/ potential trail attachments to all. I would also like to suggest the following:

(1) The addition of four to six individual horse camps to Paso Picacho, too, due to it's proximity to the trails, and how far south Green Valley is in the parks, which will limit access.
(2) Overnight parking be allowed at the day-use area, to support on-trail camping.
(3) New maps be created, outlining trail connectivity.

I think this seems to be a win-win for the equestrian community and wanted to voice my support, as both a local equestrian, and member of the Ramona Trails Association and Back Country Horseman member.

Happy Holidays,

Teri R. Kerns
619.925.5008
ramonaranch@yahoo.com

I close with a quote I find relevant to this NOP:

Edwin C. Bearss, NPS Chief Historian, 1981-1994: *"As we Americans celebrate our diversity, so we must affirm our unity if we are to remain the 'one nation' to which we pledge allegiance. Such great national symbols and Mecca's as the Liberty Bell, the battlefields on which our independence was won and our union preserved, the Lincoln Memorial, the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and numerous other treasures of our national park system belong to all of us, both legally and spiritually. These tangible evidences of our cultural and natural heritage help make us all Americans."*

Teri R. Kerns

December 14, 2009

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite #270
San Diego, CA 92108

Fax: 619.220.5400

Re: Equestrian Facilities Project - SCH #2007051074, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

Dear Ms. Beck:

I am writing in response to the above NOP, which was reissued, adding a new project site. I appreciate the additions listed, including (1) equestrian family camping to Green Valley, (2) Permanent Day-Use near Paso Picacho, and (3) interim equestrian day-use at Merigan, and (4) Future permanent construction at Merigan, along w/ potential trail attachments to all. I would also like to suggest the following:

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Happy Holidays,

Teri R. Kerns
619.925.5008
ramonaranch@yahoo.com

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Environmental Review

From: Susan [billsus@cox.net] **Sent:** Thu 12/10/2009 1:16 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck,

I feel that the proposed improvements to the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, the Green Valley Loop, the Paso Picacho Day Use Area and the Merigan Ranch expanded Day Use Area would be a great addition to our parks. I hope the Parks Department will move forward with these improvements.

Thank you,

Susan Keavney
14917 Driftwood Creek Rd.
El Cajon, CA 92021

Environmental Review

From: Joyce Jewell [hpmetals@yahoo.com] **Sent:** Mon 12/14/2009 8:10 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: NOP
Attachments:

I support any equestrian projects in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, which by the way was given to the public.

I am upset that Los Caballos was closed, for no good reason.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.
Joyce Jewell

Environmental Review

From: Jenny [jaf@smi-mfg.com] **Sent:** Wed 12/16/2009 9:11 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments:

In regards to the NOTICE OF PREPARATION

PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project

SCH # 2007051074

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

San Diego, CA

I would like to cast my support for the Green Valley Campground, Loop A option.

Thank you for your efforts in replacing our horse camp.

Jenny Forward

Environmental Review

From: gritma@aol.com [gritma@aol.com] **Sent:** Wed 12/16/2009 7:48 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: SCH #2007051074
Attachments:

E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

In regards to the NOTICE OF PREPARATION
PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project
SCH # 2007051074
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
San Diego, CA

I would like to cast my support for the Green Valley Campground, Loop A option.

Thank you for your efforts in replacing our horse camp.

Janean Jansen

Environmental Review

From: Roberta Jackson [sweetwaterfarms@cox.net] **Sent:** Sat 12/12/2009 1:09 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time,

Roberta Jackson
Sweetwater Horses, Inc
3051 Equitation Lane
Bonita, CA 91902
www.sweetwaterhorses.com
Ph: 619-267-7477
fax: 619-474-1978
email:
info@sweetwaterhorses.com

Environmental Review

From: Ann H. Huss [ahuss@cox.net] **Sent:** Fri 12/11/2009 12:21 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities
Attachments:

To Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator

From Ann Huss, President Desert Arabian Horse Association
14880 Shanteau Dr.
El Cajon, CA 92021

Our San Diego based equestrian club, of approximately 80 members, is in favor of all of the proposed sites for new equestrian facilities in Cuyamaca State Park. Our club has been a strong supporter of Cuyamaca equestrian camps for over 50 years. We reserved Las Vaqueros for 10 days this year at a cost of $4,500 and we are looking forward to staying there again in 2010.

We have supported the Cuyamaca Equestrian Association through input and with financial contributions, to help facilitate equestrian usage in Cuyamaca. Our main gaol is to restore Las Caballos which had its bathroom destroyed by fire in 2003, but was taken away from the equestrians by cultural interests.

Respecrfully submitted by the DAHA board menbers,

Ann Huss, Jean Graves, Gail Tipton, Ann Whitley, JoAnn Harlan, Katy Hammack and Aaron Harlan

Attachments can contain viruses that may harm your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.

Environmental Review

From: Kathleen Hayden [Kats@hughes.net] **Sent:** Sat 12/12/2009 3:07 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Comments RE: http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/980/files/2009-FINAL%20NOP.pdf
Attachments: Fw: (241KB) (no name)(166KB) keene collier act.doc(3MB)

Re:http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/980/files/2009-FINAL%20NOP.pdf

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation,
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270, San Diego, California 92108
Fax (619) 220-5400
E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

Dear Christine
As an individual and southern representative for California Equestrian and Lands Coalition I support any improvements and restorations in State Parks that benefit the equestrian community. This was the purpose of California's first trail legislation. You will find the spirit of legislated intent contained in the attachments.
Thank you,
Kathleen Hayden

Senate Bill No. 420

CHAPTER 265

An act to add Article 4 (commencing with Section 5050) to Chapter 1 of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, relating to the state park system, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor May 21, 1974. Filed with Secretary of State May 21, 1974.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 420, Collier. State park system.

Authorizes the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide hostel facilities in state park system units, as specified, and to acquire lands for, develop, and maintain recreational trails to and between units. Empowers the Director of Parks and Recreation to adopt necessary rules and regulations to administer such provisions.

Requires the department to prepare and submit to the Legislature not later than February 1, 1975, a preliminary plan for the development of hostel facilities and the establishment of recreational trails. Provides that the Legislature may comment upon the submitted plan by concurrent resolution as an expression of legislative intent.

Appropriates $2,150,000 from the Abandoned Vehicle Trust Fund to the General Fund and from the General Fund to the Department of Parks and Recreation for such purposes, as specified. Requires that an amount equal to that expended for hostel facilities be repaid to the Abandoned Vehicle Trust Fund from hostel facilities use fees.

Requires acquisitions made pursuant to the act to be subject to the provisions of the Property Acquisition Law.

To take effect immediately, urgency statute.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 4 (commencing with Section 5050) is added to Chapter 1 of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

Article 4. Hostel Facilities

5050. This article shall be known and may be cited as the Collier-Keene State Hostel Facilities Act.

5051. The Legislature finds that a substantial number of Californians bicycle and walk for recreational enjoyment and that, given safer routes and more suitable accommodations, would choose such travel means to reach and enjoy scenic areas and recreation facilities throughout the state. The Legislature finds that it is in the public interest to provide means for bicyclists and hikers to reach

Bill Jones
Secretary of State
California State Archives
1020 O Street
P.O. Box 944260
Sacramento, CA 94244-2600

KATHLEEN HAYDEN
P O BOX 236
SANTA YSABEL CA 92070

CHAPTER 1469

An act to add Article 6, comprising Sections 5070 to 5077, inclusive, to Chapter 1 of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, authorizing the State Park Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to make investigations, reports, recommendations and plans for the location and development of a State Trails System and to establish an advisory committee for that purpose; and making an appropriation therefor.

In effect September 15, 1945

[Approved by Governor July 17, 1945. Filed with Secretary of State July 17, 1945.]

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 6, comprising Sections 5070 to 5077, inclusive, is added to Chapter 1 of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

Article 6. California Riding and Hiking Trails

California Riding and Hiking Trails Law

5070. This article shall be known and may be cited as the California Riding and Hiking Trails Law.

Purposes

5071. It is hereby declared to be the public policy of this State and the purpose of this act to promote the conservation, development, and use of the natural resources of this State for purposes of health, recreation, and protection against fire and other hazards; to increase the accessibility and encourage the use of such natural resources by the residents of this State and by nonresidents; to provide opportunity for the development of public and private facilities for the service of persons visiting and utilizing the natural resources of the State; to encourage increase in riding and hiking as influences for the improvement of the health of the people; and to provide for the establishment, development, maintenance and use of a statewide system of riders' and hikers' trails.

The conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Riding and Hiking Trails Projects Committee of the Reconstruction and Reemployment Commission submitted to said commission are adopted in principle.

Definitions

5072. As used in this article, the following terms have the meanings attributed to them in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Trails" means riders' and hikers' trails for public use.

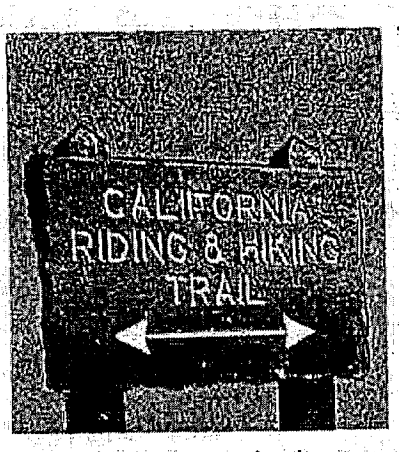
"California Riding and Hiking Trails Project" otherwise referred to in this article as the "project" means any work or undertaking to:

(a) Plan, chart, map or survey any trail area.

(b) Acquire land for the building of trails.

(c) Provide for the project, which may include buildings, equipment, recreational facilities, rest stations, shelters, and other real or personal property with necessary, convenient, or

HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT



Trails and horses have played a dominant role in California's colorful history. To our early pioneers the horse was the best means of travel; the trail was the route of travel.

Since the pioneer period, the use of trails has gradually changed from transportation utility to a use primarily by the increasing number of people seeking outdoor recreation.

In 1944, through the interests of many individuals and conservation groups, a California Riding and Hiking Trails Project Committee was established to initiate development of a statewide trails system. As a result of recommendations of this Committee, the 1945 Legislature approved the California Riding and Hiking Trails Bill, which was signed by Governor Earl Warren and became law under Chapter 1469, Statutes of 1945. Responsibility for the project was placed with the California State Park Commission, which later appointed a Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee.

LOCATION—The recommendation to the Legislature was for a 3,000-mile Trail, extending from San Ysidro, San Diego County, north through the Tehachapi Mountains and Sierra Nevada to the Oregon line, and returning southward through the Coast Range. The Division of Beaches and Parks then initiated a statewide survey of existing trails and proposed trail sites. During initial meetings, the Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee recommended that the trail route should be determined by local interest. Thus far 29 counties, of the 38 counties which the route will traverse, have submitted plans that have been approved by the State Park Commission. The original Act of 1945 provided funds to begin the project.

ACQUISITION—Rights-of-way for the project are obtained by the Division of Beaches and Parks in the form of easements, gifts, use-permits or purchases. The Act specifically denied the right of eminent domain to acquire property. The Trail will pass through a variety of areas, including desert, coastline, high mountains up to 10,000 feet, forest, chaparral, grassland, and suburban developments.

DEVELOPMENT—Construction specifications call for a minimum tread-width of 30 inches to be built on a 20-foot right-of-way. State funds finance both building and maintenance of the Trail. In addition to construction by State

Environmental Review

From: THOMAS HARRIS [jbkharri@msn.com] **Sent:** Fri 12/11/2009 1:10 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca
Attachments:

Christine Beck, December 10, 2009

Thank you for your attention to providing for equestrian camping in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. I have been camping in the park since 1957 when I was 6 years old with the Oceanside Council of Camp Fire Girls. We used to rent the Cuyamaca School camp. We enjoy the park and are very interested in your new ideas for equestrian camping in Green Valley Falls and day use parking near Paso Picacho. If you could let the governor and the committee know that we would like to see these projects move forward we would appreciate it. If there is anything our riding groups could help with we would be interested. We ride with the Saddle Sore-ority and the Los Senderos de San Diego.

Sincerely, Jill and Bill Harris
1140 Mulberry Dr. San Marcos, CA
(760)744-1675

Environmental Review

From: Gravel 'N Grit [gravelgrit@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Thu 12/10/2009 2:36 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Horse camp
Attachments:

Please open the horse camp sites proposed in SCH#2007051074. The areas lost in the fires were devastating, it is necessary and important to provide new camps to people who love this park and love horses.

Lori Hill
Gravel 'N Grit
Office Manager
619-561-4748
Fax 619-561-4794
gravelgrit@sbcglobal.net

"Don't look back and ask why, look forward and ask why not."

Dec 1, 2009

Christine Beck

We, the under signed do not want a campground of any kind at the merigan Ranch site. (Descanso Area Development) Please bury this idea forever because of all the possible effects and unmitigatable conditions listed on the NOP. (SCH # 2007051074)

Signed

Terry GIBSON 9452 Hwy 79 DESCANSO
Janet Lockett 25706 Oak Ln DESC
Heather Torres 25286 Manzanita Ln. Descanso
[illegible] 25238 Guatay Rd Descanso CA 91916
[illegible] 1031 [illegible] Lane CA 91901
TRAVIS SALZANO 9413 Hwy 79 DESCANSO CA. 91916
[illegible] 25854 SUNDANCE VIEW LANE 91916
[illegible] 29031 Old Hwy 80 / Pine Valley, Ca 91962
[illegible] 25757 Potrero Vly Rd
[illegible] 9018 Guatay View Ln Guatay 91931
Leon Bullock PO 99 Pine Valley 91962
[illegible] P.O. Box 99 Pine Valley 91962
[illegible] 9807 River Drive 91916
[illegible] 9807 River Drive 91916
Claudia [illegible] 9871 Mizpah Ln 91916
Shannon Nutting 25237 Manzanita Ln. 91916
[illegible]

to Christine Beck

[illegible] 9534 Mizpah Ln
Descanso 91916

Bill Lockett	25106 Oak Lane	Descanso Cal. 91916
Lori Hamelehle	9692 Chiquita Rd	Descanso
Nathan Bailey	14518 Rios Canyon Rd	El Cajon Ca. 92021
Janet Johnson	24444 Lilac Ln	Descanso CA 91916
Kate Miller	9739 Hwy 79	Descanso, CA 91916
Peggy Machado	24766 Oak Lane	Descanso, CA 91916
Deirdre Carter	9717 Mizpah Spur	Descanso, CA 91916
Charlene Bradbury	29978 OAK DR	CAMPO CA 91906
Susan Barry	PO Box 422	Jacumba, CA 91934
Sara Shelton	PO Box 175	Descanso CA 91916
Donna Tisdale	PO Box 1275	Boulevard CA 91905
[illegible]	9885 Deer Valley Trail	Descanso CA 91916
Shayla Rea	789 Rancho Fanita Dr.	Santee CA 92071

12/09

To Christine Beck, Project Manager

I'm writing in response to the proposed equestrian campground near the community of Descanso. This is not a good choice for the campground for many reasons. Vehicles, camping trailers and trucks with horse trailers would have to drive through the middle of town on a quiet country road where residents walk, bike and horse ride. The site would form a triangle with the elementary school and the library. This is not where a campground should be. There would be dust and flies. Campground noice well into the night would carry to the many residents who live nearby. The horse trails at the south end of the park are very limited. Cuyamaca State Park campgrounds should be entered into off of highway 79, not through the small town of Descanso. The proposed site sits in a pristine meadow that needs to be left intack. The proposed sites at Green Valley Campground and Paso are wonderful ideas. Let"s focus on those sites.

Thank you
Terry Gibson
9452 Highway 79
Descanso Calif.

This is a copy of a letter I sent to Karen Miner, old project manager, in July 2007. Also a copy of signatures collected against the proposed campground in Descanso. In July 2007 the highlighted sentence was added.
THANKS

1. [illegible]
2. Heather Jones
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. Michelle [illegible]
6. [illegible]
7. Kathleen M. Likes
8. Stella M Burrows
9. Debbie Burrows
10 - Robert Burrows
11 [illegible]
12th [illegible]
13. Gene Pardy
14. [illegible]
15 [illegible]
16 [illegible]
17. [illegible]
18. Sunny Jones
19. [illegible]
20. David Christensen
21 [illegible]
22 [illegible]
23 [illegible]
24 [illegible]
25 [illegible]
26. Tina [illegible]
27. [illegible]
28 James W. Perry
29. Maureen Anderson
30. Cory Rushing
31. Jerry [illegible]
32. Cody Walker
33 [illegible]
34 [illegible]
35 [illegible]

#36. Jed Andersen
#37. Todd J Salvano
38 Carolyn Kok
#39 Kelly Salvano
#40 Brent A. Prieto
#41 Makrah Salvano

Nov 20 -2009

Christine Beck

I have read over the NOP Project - equestrian Fac. # 200705107

I love the idea of a (#1) horse facility @ Green Valley and a (#2) day use area near Paso.

But #3 re: Morgan Trailhead concerns me and (#4) future construction in all aspects for an equestrian campground I Am Dead Against. Do I need to restate my reasons -

Please Keep a Campground of Any Kind out of the middle of Descanso.

By the way Los Caballos was not lost in the Cedar Fire - Its still there. The bathrooms burned they were lost. You were misinformed. Los Caballos is where the horse camp should be -

Thank You

Terry Gibson
9452 Hwy 79

Po Box 142
Descanso Ca
91916

Environmental Review

From: jofrankland@aol.com [jofrankland@aol.com] **Sent:** Tue 12/15/2009 3:04 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Green Valley Equestrian Campground
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck
I would like to comment on the NOP for Green Valley Equestrian Campground.
An Equestrian Campground within Cuyamaca State Park in certainly needed, and while this is not a suitable replacement for the old Los Cabelos site, it would be a very useful addition to the available campgrounds in San Diego County.
The Pros are the easy access , and the fact that the campground already exists, so this would be an easy and quick addition.
The Cons are the proximity to the highway- with all the traffic noise, and all the extra traffic, with regular campers and day use visitors having access to our area- it would not feel as secure or private.

Paso Picacho Day Use Site is a great suggestion- a useful addition to the north end of the Park- with good trail access.

Merigan ranch- extending the day Use Parking is a great idea- it is much to small of an area for all the large Horse rigs that would like to park there

Yours Sincerely Josephine Frankland

Environmental Review

From: Julie Edwards [jedwards@sedwards.com] **Sent:** Sun 12/13/2009 12:24 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Horse Camping in Cuyamaca State Park
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time.

Julie Edwards
760 723 2727

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Environmental Review

From: shirley duermit [msbarn520@hotmail.com] **Sent:** Sun 12/13/2009 1:25 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: RE: [cuyamaca_equestrian] Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Projects Comment period
Attachments:

Christine Beck,

I read the plan and it sounds great. As a family we did enjoy camping and riding our horse at Cuyamaca. I do hope this plan goes through. Let me know if there is anything else I can do to help get this plan activated.

Shirley DuErmit
760-765-1598

Date: Thu, 10 Dec 2009 08:45:56 -0800
From: julianactive@sbcglobal.net
Subject: Fw: [cuyamaca_equestrian] Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Projects Comment period
To: msbarn520@hotmail.com

--- On **Thu, 12/10/09, Ernest** ***<ernestoz@yahoo.com>*** wrote:

From: Ernest <ernestoz@yahoo.com>
Subject: [cuyamaca_equestrian] Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Equestrian Projects Comment period
To: cuyamaca_equestrian@yahoogroups.com
Date: Thursday, December 10, 2009, 5:53 AM

The comment period for the Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities project ends December 15th, CEA encourages all equestrian interests to comment favorably on these proposed projects

Information on these projects:

http://www.parks. ca.gov/pages/ 980/files/ 2009-FINAL% 20NOP.pdf

Email, fax or snail mail your comments to:

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation,
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270, San Diego, California 92108
Fax (619) 220-5400
E-mail: enviro@parks. ca.gov

__._/_._____

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YOU CAN SEE THEIR E-MAIL ADDRESS IN THE HEADER OF THEIR MESSAGE.

Environmental Review

From: joellen [joellen@aabol.com] **Sent:** Sun 12/13/2009 7:41 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: dpgdocremeriganfireroadequestrian09
Attachments:

It's all ready to go, Claudia. Just forward it on to enviro@parks.ca.gov

---

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator

Southern Service Center

Department of Parks and Recreation

8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270

San Diego, CA 92108

Fax (619) 220-5400

E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

RE: Notice of Preparation

Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project

SCH # 2007051074

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

San Diego, CA

December 13, 2009

This correspondence is in regard to the 2009 Notice of Preparation that has been reissued for the proposed future construction of the Merigan Ranch campground.

On June 21, 2007 the Descanso Planning Group (DPG) reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP)

and the attached CEQA document for the Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

At this time we reiterate our concerns for the 2009 NOP. The Project description has not changed significantly, so all the same comments and concerns sited in 2007 still need to be addressed regarding this proposed project.

Regarding (1) The Green Valley Campground and (2)the Paso Picacho Campground, these two campgrounds are out of the area of concern for the Descanso Community Planning Group.

Regarding (3) and (4) the proposed Merigan Ranch Campgound, the DPG submits the following comments.

This correspondence will serve to inform you of our concerns with the proposed project. We request these comments and concerns be addressed in the EIR.

AESTHETICS:

1. The project will have substantial adverse effects on a scenic vista. The project is visible from the school, library, businesses and several residences in the area. This project will permanently affect the viewshed; the open meadows and the views across it. Viejas Blvd. has been classified as a third priority scenic route in the Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan.

2. Night skies will be adversely impacted by lighting from the project. This area is currently protected by the Night Skies Ordinance because of its close proximity to the Mount Laguna Observatory. Neighboring residences will be affected by this new source of lighting from this project.

3. This project will substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.

4. The Descanso Elementary School is a historic building. The project will degrade the visual character and the quality of the school.

5. Proposed earthen berms to mitigate the visual effects will create additional visual impacts and create more dust and pollutants; especially during the many wind storms and impacts dry high pressure systems that happen in this area of the County. Proposed mitigation through landscaping will be difficult. Trees will not grow in this area due to the fact that this is a seasonal wetland. This area is subject to flooding and is a

high groundwater area.

AIR QUALITY

1. This project will result in substantial degradation to the Air Quality in the area through increased daily vehicle trips, dust from the campground, roads, trails, proposed arenas, and any unpaved area.

2. There will be a significant impact on the surrounding community regarding odors from the large number of horses, horse manure, manure bins, trash bins, restrooms, and dump stations for RV waste disposal.

3. Proposed mitigation for dust through the use of a water truck or sprinkler is highly improbable due to the rapid evaporation rate during the summer months. Drought, high air temperatures, and the constant movement of horses and vehicles will create constant dust and airborne

pollutants.

4. The children and staff of the neighboring school will be exposed to airborne pollutants through the grinding of manure into the soil by the horses which will then be carried by dust and winds into the school grounds. Children are reported to be sensitive receptors to these pollutant concentrations.

5. Insects will be attracted to the area by the odors permeating the air of the surrounding area. This will increase the insect population of the school grounds and the surrounding community. There will be the potential for a much larger number of horses than already exist in the area. This will carry a significant impact from daily exposure to the increased numbers of flies, bees, mosquitoes to the residences as well as the children and staff at the Descanso School.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. This area has increased in significance after the 2003 Cedar Fire. It is one of a small number of areas that did not burn in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park after the fires swept through this area. This area acts as a regenerative area for the surrounding areas that were burned.

2. This is a meadow, seasonal wetland and wildlife corridor. This project will carry significant impact to wildlife and their habitat.

3. There is a seasonal stream that runs through this meadow. There is a culvert to accommodate the stream located next to the Descanso School that runs underground Viejas Blvd., draining into the Sweetwater River. Mitigation for runoff carrying pollutants into the Sweetwater River from this project needs to the addressed in the EIR.

4. The use of a meadow for the development of this project is inconsistent with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan.

Quoting the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan: Meadows:

"Meadowlands, which are an important ecological resource in the park, ***shall*** be protected to the maximum extent possible from impairment caused by human use. Any new visitor facilities ***shall*** be located away from meadow environments."

This area has been left to return to its natural state for more than thirty (30) years.

CULTURAL RESOURCES.

1. There is an archaeological site north of the meadow. The site contains mortar (grinding holes) rocks, dozens of shards of ancient Tizone brownware, and other important findings. This project will cause degrading of soil and increased use of the area.

How will this site be protected from human trespassing?

Who will determine the significance of the site?

Has this site been reported to the bureau of Indian Affairs or any other agency or resource specialist who will provide oversight, specialized advice, or guidance in mitigation, avoidance, or use denial?

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

1. The meadow this project is to be developed upon is a seasonal wetland. The north side of this meadow leading back into the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is on a steep grade. Rainfall flows into this bottom-land meadow.

2. In dry years, high levels of visitor and equine use will increase the loss of topsoil

3. In wet years, high levels of visitor and equine use will cause significant runoff in already degraded topsoil to occur.

4. The entire project is to be located in the meadow. Liquefaction of soil will occur during wet years. Horses, people, and vehicles will sink into the marshy, boggy soils. No mitigation through construction will all eliviate this problem.

5. Groundwater is at surface level during the wet season in this meadow. Consequently this will affect percolation of septic systems in this area.

6. Removal of horse manure in wet marshy soil becomes improbable, if not impossible.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

1. This project will cause the release of waste and airborne pathogens into the environment through manure being mixed into the soil and released through the dust created by wind, traffic, horses, and people using the facility.

2. This project is located less than ¼ mile from an existing school. Transportation and handling of human and animal waste and waste byproducts from this project will occur within this area.

3. This project has the potential to create an obstruction during an emergency evacuation. During an emergency evacuation. traffic may increase due to high visitation at the campground and equestrian staging areas. There is ingress and egress from only one driveway at the site. The site to the east, west, and south is surrounded by State, County, and private property. The north is access further into the State Park by way of the unpaved Merigan Fire Road. Sole egress and ingress into the facility is from Viejas Blvd. which is a 2 lane road. This road is the sole evacuation route for the population of Descanso. Viejas Blvd. is flanked by 2 bridges. If either bridge were closed due to fire, it would leave all traffic to funnel through one escape route onto Highway 79. School busses evacuating the children from the Descanso Elementary school, emergency response vehicles, and trailers carrying livestock, (both from the campground and the residents), residents and visitors must all use Viejas Blvd. as an evacuation route. Park rangers assisting in evacuation will not mitigate the problem of increased traffic and gridlock on this road during high risk of wildfire.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

1. Percolation may be an issue at this site due to water levels rising to surface level during wet years

2. This project would be located approximately ¼ mile from the Descanso Community Water District (DCWD). Currently the DCWD has one well available for usage. The other wells available to the DCWD are not able to be permitted by the State. The DCWD serves

312 homes in Descanso. The school and private property owners also have wells in close proximity to the project. All are concerned with the degradation of water quality through nitrates leaching into the groundwater.

3. It is unknown whether the project would substantially interfere with groundwater recharge, or whether a net deficit in aquifer volume would occur due to construction and use. There will be increased use of water consumption by horses, humans, proposed landscaping, and proposed sprinkler systems. It is also unknown if the water level would drop to a level that would not support pre-existing nearby wells. A comprehensive groundwater study must be completed as part of the EIR.

4. There is a seasonal stream located on this site. Existing culverts currently aid in drainage from this area. Drainage patterns may be altered due to construction and grading. This could cause flooding.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

1. This project is not in keeping with the rural character of the community. In the Central Mountain Community Plan, the Goals are:

"Preserve the small-town rural character of the communities in the Subregion and the natural ambience of mountains, hills, valleys, and public lands.

Encourage the protection of existing vegetation, wildlife and other natural resources.

Discourage high density public and private development."

This project, due to its size and scope are not only incompatible, but are also in violation of the Community Plan.

Increased activity, traffic, insects, noise, lighting, and a transient population will all have adverse impacts on the school, library and private property owners and their property values.

2. It should be noted that the Superintendent of the Mountain Empire School District has not been notified of the project; and that copies of the NOP were delivered to the Superintendent and the Mountain Empire School Board by the DPG.

NOISE

1. There will be increased noise along the site's access roads.

2. Permanent increased noise levels will occur in the vicinity of the project.

3. There will be impacts to the school through permanently increased noise levels that can affect school activities, teaching and learning.

PUBLIC SERVICES

1. This project carries the potential for significant impact to the school and fire protection services. If, after implementation of the project, the adverse impacts require closure of the existing school, the cost would be prohibitive for the construction of a new school. Response times from fire protection could be dramatically reduced due to increased traffic to and from the project; especially during special events and weekends at the facility.

RECREATION

1. Due to the closure of Los Caballos, the equestrian campground on the north end of the park, there would be increased visitation at the proposed facility. Proximity to Highway 79and the town of Descanso would also result in increased visitation. This may require expansion of the project that would further exacerbate the negative impacts of this project.

2. This could increase visitation to the adjacent County community park located on the school grounds leading to the further deterioration of the school grounds. They are badly in need of repair and there is no available funding for the County Park. PLDO funds are no longer available to Descanso due to a liability issue in the Joint Powers Agreement between the school district and the County of San Diego.

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

1. Residences are mixed with wildlands in this area. There is one entrance and exit from this project.

This project carries the risk of exposing humans and structures to wildfire. Significant risk of loss, injury, and death could result in delayed response times from emergency vehicles due to traffic congestion. This congestion will be created, in part, by the large slow moving vehicles towing horse trailers and RV's that will be frequenting this facility. Regular visitation for day use to the facility will also increase traffic congestion. The Descanso Falls is located just north of the proposed facility and has been a long time attraction for visitors to the area.

2. There is no proposed mitigation for the impacts of the increased traffic in this area. This

project is miles removed from Interstate 8. It is stated in the CEQU document that a mitigating factor for the campground is that is not far from Interstate 8. This is not a mitigating factor and is an absurd statement.

3. Neither will an improved driveway provide mitigation. There is still only a 2 lane road onto which vehicles can ingress and egress.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. This project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, threaten plant and wildlife habitat and corridor, destroy an archaeological site, and threatens the community of Descanso through exposure to increased danger from wildfire.

2. This project also has the potential to cause harm to the Descanso Elementary school children and its staff through exposure to increased insects, a transient population, respiratory problems from manure and dust, noise and increased traffic congestion. In addition to all the concerns and comments listed above, we would like to add that at a time when our State's budget is in critical condition, parks are being closed, needed maintenance on existing facilities is being delayed indefinitely, and state employees are losing their jobs; it is incomprehensible that a costly project such as this could even be suggested. We have been told extensive grading and filling would be necessary to make this boggy meadow suitable for use by large animals. This creates a situation where huge amounts of money are needed. This money would be better spent on keeping existing facilities open and preventing loss of employment.

3. No supervision of this campground is proposed. There will be no one to monitor a transient population immediately adjacent to the elementary school, library and homes. California's children are our most valuable asset and need to be protected! With no full time supervision, there is no one to monitor who is camping there, how they behave, or the risks they pose to elementary school students on the other side of the fence.

We thank you for time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your response to our concerns.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Claudia White at (619) 445-05759, or Jo Ellen Quinting at (619) 445-7462.

Respectfully,

The Descanso Planning Group

P.O. Box 38

Descanso, CA 91916

cc: San Diego County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob

MEUSD School board Member Trina Ambrose

Dave Nissen, San Diego Rural Fire

Duncan McFetridge, President, Save Our Forests and Ranchlands

Rick Heller, M.A. Anthropology

DPLU/ San Diego county Planner and Coordinator, Jennifer Campos

Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Park and Recreation

Senator Dennis Hollingsworth

Jose Aponte, Director San Diego County Library

Brian Bruce, General Manager, Descanso Community Water District

Friends of the Descanso Library

Nedra Martinez, Superintendent, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

Troy Murphree, Sweetwater Authority

Environmental Review

From: joellen [joellen@aabol.com] **Sent:** Sun 12/13/2009 7:42 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc: Dianne Jacob
Subject: dpg comments on the proposed Merigan Ranch Campground
Attachments:

Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator

Southern Service Center

Department of Parks and Recreation

8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270

San Diego, CA 92108

Fax (619) 220-5400

E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

RE: Notice of Preparation

Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project

SCH # 2007051074

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

San Diego, CA

December 13, 2009

This correspondence is in regard to the 2009 Notice of Preparation that has been reissued for the proposed future construction of the Merigan Ranch campground.

On June 21, 2007 the Descanso Planning Group (DPG) reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP)

and the attached CEQA document for the Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

At this time we reiterate our concerns for the 2009 NOP. The Project description has not changed significantly, so all the same comments and concerns sited in 2007 still need to be addressed regarding this proposed project.

Regarding (1) The Green Valley Campground and (2)the Paso Picacho Campground, these two campgrounds are out of the area of concern for the Descanso Community Planning Group.

Regarding (3) and (4) the proposed Merigan Ranch Campgound, the DPG submits the following comments.

This correspondence will serve to inform you of our concerns with the proposed project. We request these comments and concerns be addressed in the EIR.

AESTHETICS:

1. The project will have substantial adverse effects on a scenic vista. The project is visible from the school, library, businesses and several residences in the area. This project will permanently affect the viewshed; the open meadows and the views across it. Viejas Blvd. has been classified as a third priority scenic route in the Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan.

2. Night skies will be adversely impacted by lighting from the project. This area is currently protected by the Night Skies Ordinance because of its close proximity to the Mount Laguna Observatory. Neighboring residences will be affected by this new source of lighting from this project.

3. This project will substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.

4. The Descanso Elementary School is a historic building. The project will degrade the visual character and the quality of the school.

5. Proposed earthen berms to mitigate the visual effects will create additional visual impacts and create more dust and pollutants; especially during the many wind storms and impacts dry high pressure systems that happen in this area of the County. Proposed mitigation through landscaping will be difficult. Trees will not grow in this area due to the fact that this is a seasonal wetland. This area is subject to flooding and is a high groundwater area.

AIR QUALITY

1. This project will result in substantial degradation to the Air Quality in the area through increased daily vehicle trips, dust from the campground, roads, trails, proposed arenas, and any unpaved area.

2. There will be a significant impact on the surrounding community regarding odors from the large number of horses, horse manure, manure bins, trash bins, restrooms, and dump stations for RV waste disposal.

3. Proposed mitigation for dust through the use of a water truck or sprinkler is highly improbable due to the rapid evaporation rate during the summer months. Drought, high air temperatures, and the constant movement of horses and vehicles will create constant dust and airborne

pollutants.

4. The children and staff of the neighboring school will be exposed to airborne pollutants through the grinding of manure into the soil by the horses which will then be carried by dust and winds into the school grounds. Children are reported to be sensitive receptors to these pollutant concentrations.

5. Insects will be attracted to the area by the odors permeating the air of the surrounding area. This will increase the insect population of the school grounds and the surrounding community. There will be the potential for a much larger number of horses than already exist in the area. This will carry a significant impact from daily exposure to the increased numbers of flies, bees, mosquitoes to the residences as well as the children and staff at the Descanso School.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. This area has increased in significance after the 2003 Cedar Fire. It is one of a small number of areas that did not burn in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park after the fires swept through this area. This area acts as a regenerative area for the surrounding areas that were burned.

2. This is a meadow, seasonal wetland and wildlife corridor. This project will carry significant impact to wildlife and their habitat.

3. There is a seasonal stream that runs through this meadow. There is a culvert to accommodate the stream located next to the Descanso School that runs underground Viejas Blvd., draining into the Sweetwater River. Mitigation for runoff carrying pollutants

into the Sweetwater River from this project needs to the addressed in the EIR.

4. The use of a meadow for the development of this project is inconsistent with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan.

Quoting the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan: Meadows:

"Meadowlands, which are an important ecological resource in the park, ***shall*** be protected to the maximum extent possible from impairment caused by human use. Any new visitor facilities ***shall*** be located away from meadow environments."

This area has been left to return to its natural state for more than thirty (30) years.

CULTURAL RESOURCES.

1. There is an archaeological site north of the meadow. The site contains mortar (grinding holes) rocks, dozens of shards of ancient Tizone brownware, and other important findings. This project will cause degrading of soil and increased use of the area.

How will this site be protected from human trespassing?

Who will determine the significance of the site?

Has this site been reported to the bureau of Indian Affairs or any other agency or resource specialist who will provide oversight, specialized advice, or guidance in mitigation, avoidance, or use denial?

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

1. The meadow this project is to be developed upon is a seasonal wetland. The north side of this meadow leading back into the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is on a steep grade. Rainfall flows into this bottom-land meadow.

2. In dry years, high levels of visitor and equine use will increase the loss of topsoil

3. In wet years, high levels of visitor and equine use will cause significant runoff in already degraded topsoil to occur.

4. The entire project is to be located in the meadow. Liquefaction of soil will occur during wet years. Horses, people, and vehicles will sink into the marshy, boggy soils. No

mitigation through construction will all eliviate this problem.

5. Groundwater is at surface level during the wet season in this meadow. Consequently this will affect percolation of septic systems in this area.

6. Removal of horse manure in wet marshy soil becomes improbable, if not impossible.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

1. This project will cause the release of waste and airborne pathogens into the environment through manure being mixed into the soil and released through the dust created by wind, traffic, horses, and people using the facility.

2. This project is located less than ¼ mile from an existing school. Transportation and handling of human and animal waste and waste byproducts from this project will occur within this area.

3. This project has the potential to create an obstruction during an emergency evacuation. During an emergency evacuation. traffic may increase due to high visitation at the campground and equestrian staging areas. There is ingress and egress from only one driveway at the site. The site to the east, west, and south is surrounded by State, County, and private property. The north is access further into the State Park by way of the unpaved Merigan Fire Road. Sole egress and ingress into the facility is from Viejas Blvd. which is a 2 lane road. This road is the sole evacuation route for the population of Descanso. Viejas Blvd. is flanked by 2 bridges. If either bridge were closed due to fire, it would leave all traffic to funnel through one escape route onto Highway 79. School busses evacuating the children from the Descanso Elementary school, emergency response vehicles, and trailers carrying livestock, (both from the campground and the residents), residents and visitors must all use Viejas Blvd. as an evacuation route. Park rangers assisting in evacuation will not mitigate the problem of increased traffic and gridlock on this road during high risk of wildfire.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

1. Percolation may be an issue at this site due to water levels rising to surface level during wet years

2. This project would be located approximately ¼ mile from the Descanso Community Water District (DCWD). Currently the DCWD has one well available for usage. The other wells available to the DCWD are not able to be permitted by the State. The DCWD serves 312 homes in Descanso. The school and private property owners also have wells in close proximity to the project. All are concerned with the degradation of water quality

through nitrates leaching into the groundwater.

3. It is unknown whether the project would substantially interfere with groundwater recharge, or whether a net deficit in aquifer volume would occur due to construction and use. There will be increased use of water consumption by horses, humans, proposed landscaping, and proposed sprinkler systems. It is also unknown if the water level would drop to a level that would not support pre-existing nearby wells. A comprehensive groundwater study must be completed as part of the EIR.

4. There is a seasonal stream located on this site. Existing culverts currently aid in drainage from this area. Drainage patterns may be altered due to construction and grading. This could cause flooding.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

1. This project is not in keeping with the rural character of the community. In the Central Mountain Community Plan, the Goals are:

"Preserve the small-town rural character of the communities in the Subregion and the natural ambience of mountains, hills, valleys, and public lands.

Encourage the protection of existing vegetation, wildlife and other natural resources.

Discourage high density public and private development."

This project, due to its size and scope are not only incompatible, but are also in violation of the Community Plan.

Increased activity, traffic, insects, noise, lighting, and a transient population will all have adverse impacts on the school, library and private property owners and their property values.

2. It should be noted that the Superintendent of the Mountain Empire School District has not been notified of the project; and that copies of the NOP were delivered to the Superintendent and the Mountain Empire School Board by the DPG.

NOISE

1. There will be increased noise along the site's access roads.

2. Permanent increased noise levels will occur in the vicinity of the project.

3. There will be impacts to the school through permanently increased noise levels that can affect school activities, teaching and learning.

PUBLIC SERVICES

1. This project carries the potential for significant impact to the school and fire protection services. If, after implementation of the project, the adverse impacts require closure of the existing school, the cost would be prohibitive for the construction of a new school. Response times from fire protection could be dramatically reduced due to increased traffic to and from the project; especially during special events and weekends at the facility.

RECREATION

1. Due to the closure of Los Caballos, the equestrian campground on the north end of the park, there would be increased visitation at the proposed facility. Proximity to Highway 79and the town of Descanso would also result in increased visitation. This may require expansion of the project that would further exacerbate the negative impacts of this project.

2. This could increase visitation to the adjacent County community park located on the school grounds leading to the further deterioration of the school grounds. They are badly in need of repair and there is no available funding for the County Park. PLDO funds are no longer available to Descanso due to a liability issue in the Joint Powers Agreement between the school district and the County of San Diego.

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

1. Residences are mixed with wildlands in this area. There is one entrance and exit from this project.

This project carries the risk of exposing humans and structures to wildfire. Significant risk of loss, injury, and death could result in delayed response times from emergency vehicles due to traffic congestion. This congestion will be created, in part, by the large slow moving vehicles towing horse trailers and RV's that will be frequenting this facility. Regular visitation for day use to the facility will also increase traffic congestion. The Descanso Falls is located just north of the proposed facility and has been a long time attraction for visitors to the area.

2. There is no proposed mitigation for the impacts of the increased traffic in this area. This project is miles removed from Interstate 8. It is stated in the CEQU document that a mitigating factor for the campground is that is not far from Interstate 8. This is not a

mitigating factor and is an absurd statement.

3. Neither will an improved driveway provide mitigation. There is still only a 2 lane road onto which vehicles can ingress and egress.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. This project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, threaten plant and wildlife habitat and corridor, destroy an archaeological site, and threatens the community of Descanso through exposure to increased danger from wildfire.

2. This project also has the potential to cause harm to the Descanso Elementary school children and its staff through exposure to increased insects, a transient population, respiratory problems from manure and dust, noise and increased traffic congestion. In addition to all the concerns and comments listed above, we would like to add that at a time when our State's budget is in critical condition, parks are being closed, needed maintenance on existing facilities is being delayed indefinitely, and state employees are losing their jobs; it is incomprehensible that a costly project such as this could even be suggested. We have been told extensive grading and filling would be necessary to make this boggy meadow suitable for use by large animals. This creates a situation where huge amounts of money are needed. This money would be better spent on keeping existing facilities open and preventing loss of employment.

3. No supervision of this campground is proposed. There will be no one to monitor a transient population immediately adjacent to the elementary school, library and homes. California's children are our most valuable asset and need to be protected! With no full time supervision, there is no one to monitor who is camping there, how they behave, or the risks they pose to elementary school students on the other side of the fence.

We thank you for time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your response to our concerns.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Claudia White at (619) 445-05759, or Jo Ellen Quinting at (619) 445-7462.

Respectfully,

The Descanso Planning Group

P.O. Box 38

Descanso, CA 91916

cc: San Diego County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob

MEUSD School board Member Trina Ambrose

Dave Nissen, San Diego Rural Fire

Duncan McFetridge, President, Save Our Forests and Ranchlands

Rick Heller, M.A. Anthropology

DPLU/ San Diego county Planner and Coordinator, Jennifer Campos

Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Park and Recreation

Senator Dennis Hollingsworth

Jose Aponte, Director San Diego County Library

Brian Bruce, General Manager, Descanso Community Water District

Friends of the Descanso Library

Nedra Martinez, Superintendent, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

Troy Murphree, Sweetwater Authority

Environmental Review

From: Chestnuthillec@aol.com [Chestnuthillec@aol.com] **Sent:** Sat 12/12/2009 12:16 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca Equestrian Facilities
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park.

We used to utilize the Los Caballos facility several times a year, and several families would meet up there for a week or a few days and have a great time. Since the loss of this facility, we have not had a good place to horse camp, and we have missed it terribly. I feel that this generation is lacking in outdoor and camping experience, and the loss of these facilities is sad.

We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. I would love to have a facility at Green Valley. I would love to have something in the North end of the park, but I will take anything you can support.

I regularly donate money to help keep our State Parks open, and feel it would be great if we were allowed to utilize them better.

Thank you for your time.

Shayne Wireman and family
Bonsall, CA

Environmental Review

From: innerspacedesign.org [laura@innerspacedesign.org] **Sent:** Mon 12/14/2009 7:42 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Please bring back Horse Camping at Cuyamaca
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time.

Please send to: enviro@parks.ca.gov

Laura Wireman

Innerspace Design
(760) 717-6005
(760) 722-2705 fax
www.innerspacedesign.org
laura@innerspacedesign.org

Environmental Review

From: Claudia White [cwhite@meusd.net] **Sent:** Mon 12/14/2009 8:49 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: FW: dpgdocremeriganfireroadequestrian09
Attachments:

------ Forwarded Message
From: joellen <joellen@aabol.com>
Date: Sun, 13 Dec 2009 19:40:57 -0800
To: 'Claudia White' <cwhite@meusd.net>
Cc: <joellen@aabol.com>
Subject: dpgdocremeriganfireroadequestrian09

It's all ready to go, Claudia. Just forward it on to enviro@parks.ca.gov

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Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator
Southern Service Center
Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108
Fax (619) 220-5400
E-mail: enviro@parks.ca.gov

RE: Notice of Preparation
Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project
SCH # 2007051074
Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
San Diego, CA

December 13, 2009

This correspondence is in regard to the 2009 Notice of Preparation that has been reissued for the proposed future construction of the Merigan Ranch campground.
On June 21, 2007 the Descanso Planning Group (DPG) reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP)
and the attached CEQA document for the Project Title: Equestrian Facilities Project, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.
At this time we reiterate our concerns for the 2009 NOP. The Project description has not changed significantly, so all the same comments and concerns sited in 2007 still need to be addressed regarding this proposed project.
Regarding (1) The Green Valley Campground and (2)the Paso Picacho Campground, these two campgrounds are out of the area of concern for the Descanso Community Planning Group.
Regarding (3) and (4) the proposed Merigan Ranch Campgound, the DPG submits the following comments.
This correspondence will serve to inform you of our concerns with the proposed project. We

request these comments and concerns be addressed in the EIR.

AESTHETICS:
1. The project will have substantial adverse effects on a scenic vista. The project is visible from the school, library, businesses and several residences in the area. This project will permanently affect the viewshed; the open meadows and the views across it. Viejas Blvd. has been classified as a third priority scenic route in the Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan.
2. Night skies will be adversely impacted by lighting from the project. This area is currently protected by the Night Skies Ordinance because of its close proximity to the Mount Laguna Observatory. Neighboring residences will be affected by this new source of lighting from this project.
3. This project will substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.
4. The Descanso Elementary School is a historic building. The project will degrade the visual character and the quality of the school.
5. Proposed earthen berms to mitigate the visual effects will create additional visual impacts and create more dust and pollutants; especially during the many wind storms and impacts dry high pressure systems that happen in this area of the County. Proposed mitigation through landscaping will be difficult. Trees will not grow in this area due to the fact that this is a seasonal wetland. This area is subject to flooding and is a high groundwater area.

AIR QUALITY
1. This project will result in substantial degradation to the Air Quality in the area through increased daily vehicle trips, dust from the campground, roads, trails, proposed arenas, and any unpaved area.
2. There will be a significant impact on the surrounding community regarding odors from the large number of horses, horse manure, manure bins, trash bins, restrooms, and dump stations for RV waste disposal.
3. Proposed mitigation for dust through the use of a water truck or sprinkler is highly improbable due to the rapid evaporation rate during the summer months. Drought, high air temperatures, and the constant movement of horses and vehicles will create constant dust and airborne pollutants.
4. The children and staff of the neighboring school will be exposed to airborne pollutants through the grinding of manure into the soil by the horses which will then be carried by dust and winds into the school grounds. Children are reported to be sensitive receptors to these pollutant concentrations.
5. Insects will be attracted to the area by the odors permeating the air of the surrounding area. This will increase the insect population of the school grounds and the surrounding community. There will be the potential for a much larger number of horses than already exist in the area. This will carry a significant impact from daily exposure to the increased numbers of flies, bees, mosquitoes to the residences as well as the children and staff at the Descanso School.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. This area has increased in significance after the 2003 Cedar Fire. It is one of a small number of areas that did not burn in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park after the fires swept through this area. This area acts as a regenerative area for the surrounding areas that were burned.
2. This is a meadow, seasonal wetland and wildlife corridor. This project will carry significant impact to wildlife and their habitat.

3. There is a seasonal stream that runs through this meadow. There is a culvert to accommodate the stream located next to the Descanso School that runs underground Viejas Blvd., draining into the Sweetwater River. Mitigation for runoff carrying pollutants into the Sweetwater River from this project needs to the addressed in the EIR.
4. The use of a meadow for the development of this project is inconsistent with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan.

Quoting the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Plan: Meadows:

"Meadowlands, which are an important ecological resource in the park, ***shall*** be protected to the maximum extent possible from impairment caused by human use. Any new visitor facilities ***shall*** be located away from meadow environments."

This area has been left to return to its natural state for more than thirty (30) years.

CULTURAL RESOURCES.

1. There is an archaeological site north of the meadow. The site contains mortar (grinding holes) rocks, dozens of shards of ancient Tizone brownware, and other important findings. This project will cause degrading of soil and increased use of the area.

How will this site be protected from human trespassing?

Who will determine the significance of the site?

Has this site been reported to the bureau of Indian Affairs or any other agency or resource specialist who will provide oversight, specialized advice, or guidance in mitigation, avoidance, or use denial?

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

1. The meadow this project is to be developed upon is a seasonal wetland. The north side of this meadow leading back into the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is on a steep grade. Rainfall flows into this bottom-land meadow.
2. In dry years, high levels of visitor and equine use will increase the loss of topsoil
3. In wet years, high levels of visitor and equine use will cause significant runoff in already degraded topsoil to occur.
4. The entire project is to be located in the meadow. Liquefaction of soil will occur during wet years. Horses, people, and vehicles will sink into the marshy, boggy soils. No mitigation through construction will all eliviate this problem.
5. Groundwater is at surface level during the wet season in this meadow. Consequently this will affect percolation of septic systems in this area.

6. Removal of horse manure in wet marshy soil becomes improbable, if not impossible.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

1. This project will cause the release of waste and airborne pathogens into the environment through manure being mixed into the soil and released through the dust created by wind, traffic, horses, and people using the facility.
2. This project is located less than n mile from an existing school. Transportation and handling of human and animal waste and waste byproducts from this project will occur within this area.
3. This project has the potential to create an obstruction during an emergency evacuation. During an emergency evacuation. traffic may increase due to high visitation at the campground and equestrian staging areas. There is ingress and egress from only one driveway at the site. The site to the east, west, and south is surrounded by State, County, and private property. The north is access further into the State Park by way of the unpaved Merigan Fire Road. Sole egress and ingress into the facility is from Viejas Blvd. which is a 2 lane road. This road is the sole evacuation route for the population of Descanso. Viejas Blvd. is flanked by 2 bridges. If either bridge were closed due to fire, it would leave all traffic to funnel through one escape route onto Highway 79. School busses evacuating the children from the Descanso Elementary school, emergency response vehicles, and trailers carrying livestock, (both from the campground and the residents), residents and visitors must all use Viejas Blvd. as an evacuation route. Park rangers assisting in evacuation will not mitigate the problem of increased traffic and gridlock on this road during high risk of wildfire.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

1. Percolation may be an issue at this site due to water levels rising to surface level during wet years
2. This project would be located approximately n mile from the Descanso Community Water District (DCWD). Currently the DCWD has one well available for usage. The other wells available to the DCWD are not able to be permitted by the State. The DCWD serves 312 homes in Descanso. The school and private property owners also have wells in close proximity to the project. All are concerned with the degradation of water quality through nitrates leaching into the groundwater.
3. It is unknown whether the project would substantially interfere with groundwater recharge, or whether a net deficit in aquifer volume would occur due to construction and use. There will be increased use of water consumption by horses, humans, proposed landscaping, and proposed sprinkler systems. It is also unknown if the water level would drop to a level that would not support pre-existing nearby wells. A comprehensive groundwater study must be completed as part of the EIR.
4. There is a seasonal stream located on this site. Existing culverts currently aid in drainage from this area. Drainage patterns may be altered due to construction and grading. This could cause flooding.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

1. This project is not in keeping with the rural character of the community. In the Central

Mountain Community Plan, the Goals are:

"Preserve the small-town rural character of the communities in the Subregion and the natural ambience of mountains, hills, valleys, and public lands.

Encourage the protection of existing vegetation, wildlife and other natural resources.

Discourage high density public and private development."

This project, due to its size and scope are not only incompatible, but are also in violation of the Community Plan.

Increased activity, traffic, insects, noise, lighting, and a transient population will all have adverse impacts on the school, library and private property owners and their property values.

2. It should be noted that the Superintendent of the Mountain Empire School District has not been notified of the project; and that copies of the NOP were delivered to the Superintendent and the Mountain Empire School Board by the DPG.

NOISE

1. There will be increased noise along the site's access roads.
2. Permanent increased noise levels will occur in the vicinity of the project.
3. There will be impacts to the school through permanently increased noise levels that can affect school activities, teaching and learning.

PUBLIC SERVICES

1. This project carries the potential for significant impact to the school and fire protection services. If, after implementation of the project, the adverse impacts require closure of the existing school, the cost would be prohibitive for the construction of a new school. Response times from fire protection could be dramatically reduced due to increased traffic to and from the project; especially during special events and weekends at the facility.

RECREATION

1. Due to the closure of Los Caballos, the equestrian campground on the north end of the park, there would be increased visitation at the proposed facility. Proximity to Highway 79and the town of Descanso would also result in increased visitation. This may require expansion of the project that would further exacerbate the negative impacts of this project.
2. This could increase visitation to the adjacent County community park located on the school grounds leading to the further deterioration of the school grounds. They are badly in need of repair and there is no available funding for the County Park. PLDO funds are no longer available to Descanso due to a liability issue in the Joint Powers Agreement between the school district and the County of San Diego.

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

1. Residences are mixed with wildlands in this area. There is one entrance and exit from this project.

This project carries the risk of exposing humans and structures to wildfire. Significant risk of loss, injury, and death could result in delayed response times from emergency vehicles due to traffic congestion. This congestion will be created, in part, by the

large slow moving vehicles towing horse trailers and RV's that will be frequenting this facility. Regular visitation for day use to the facility will also increase traffic congestion. The Descanso Falls is located just north of the proposed facility and has been a long time attraction for visitors to the area.
2. There is no proposed mitigation for the impacts of the increased traffic in this area. This project is miles removed from Interstate 8. It is stated in the CEQU document that a mitigating factor for the campground is that is not far from Interstate 8. This is not a mitigating factor and is an absurd statement.
3. Neither will an improved driveway provide mitigation. There is still only a 2 lane road onto which vehicles can ingress and egress.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE
1. This project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, threaten plant and wildlife habitat and corridor, destroy an archaeological site, and threatens the community of Descanso through exposure to increased danger from wildfire.
2. This project also has the potential to cause harm to the Descanso Elementary school children and its staff through exposure to increased insects, a transient population, respiratory problems from manure and dust, noise and increased traffic congestion.
In addition to all the concerns and comments listed above, we would like to add that at a time when our State's budget is in critical condition, parks are being closed, needed maintenance on existing facilities is being delayed indefinitely, and state employees are losing their jobs; it is incomprehensible that a costly project such as this could even be suggested. We have been told extensive grading and filling would be necessary to make this boggy meadow suitable for use by large animals. This creates a situation where huge amounts of money are needed. This money would be better spent on keeping existing facilities open and preventing loss of employment.
3. No supervision of this campground is proposed. There will be no one to monitor a transient population immediately adjacent to the elementary school, library and homes. California's children are our most valuable asset and need to be protected! With no full time supervision, there is no one to monitor who is camping there, how they behave, or the risks they pose to elementary school students on the other side of the fence.

We thank you for time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your response to our concerns.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Claudia White at (619) 445-05759, or Jo Ellen Quinting at (619) 445-7462.

Respectfully,
The Descanso Planning Group
P.O. Box 38
Descanso, CA 91916

cc: San Diego County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob
MEUSD School board Member Trina Ambrose
Dave Nissen, San Diego Rural Fire
Duncan McFetridge, President, Save Our Forests and Ranchlands
Rick Heller, M.A. Anthropology
DPLU/ San Diego county Planner and Coordinator, Jennifer Campos
Ruth Coleman, Director of California State Park and Recreation
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth
Jose Aponte, Director San Diego County Library
Brian Bruce, General Manager, Descanso Community Water District
Friends of the Descanso Library
Nedra Martinez, Superintendent, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
Troy Murphree, Sweetwater Authority

------ End of Forwarded Message

Environmental Review

From: Jeri Walz [jeri@walzgroup.com] **Sent:** Mon 12/14/2009 8:52 AM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project
Attachments:

PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project

SCH # 2007051074

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

San Diego, CA

Dear Christine Beck,

I am writing to show my support of this project, particularly for overnight camping with our horses. It breaks my heart that we cannot camp at Los Caballos, in Cuyamaca, with our horses. I have been going to Cuyamaca with my horses for over 50 years. It is my home away from home. I live too far away for day use and my friends and family would love to bring our horses back to the Cuyamaca area for camping.

Thank you for your efforts to return family/ horse camping back to Cuyamaca.

Jeri Walz

65 Via Casitas

Bonsall, CA 92003

760-500-7873

jeri@walzgroup.com

Environmental Review

From: sherry volz [sherrydvolz@yahoo.com] **Sent:** Sat 12/12/2009 3:15 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: Cuyamaca State Park
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time.

Sherry Drysdale Volz

This message was sent with high importance.

Environmental Review

From: Ingrid Tighe [mulemamma@cox.net] **Sent:** Tue 12/15/2009 9:19 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: equestrian camp
Attachments:

Dear Christine!

We don't have any additional comments to the one's you have received from BCHC as well as RTA members. We are members of both groups as well and have talked many times.

There is no question that we must have a group camp and my husband Mark and I are thrilled that this is finally in motion.

By the same token, there is absolutely no reason that I can see, why the sensitive areas at Caballos could not be fenced in and the camp restored for us. As it is, we all ride through there already, coming from Los Vacqueros.

Thank you for all you do! We fully understand that this has by no means been an easy issue to solve, considering the political pressures.

Sincerely, Ingrid and Mark Tighe

1109 Alice Street

Ramona, CA 92065

760-789-8709

Attachments can contain viruses that may harm your computer. Attachments may not display correctly.

Environmental Review

From: Kim Tarbell [kimtarbell@msn.com] **Sent:** Wed 12/16/2009 8:31 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments: Kim.vcf(930B)

In regards to the NOTICE OF PREPARATION

PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Facilities Project

SCH # 2007051074

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

San Diego, CA

I would like to cast my support for the Green Valley Campground, Loop A option.

Thank you for your efforts in replacing our horse camp.

KIM TARBELL

Environmental Review

From: Diana Schmidt [dlks@roadrunner.com] **Sent:** Tue 12/15/2009 2:17 PM
To: Environmental Review
Cc:
Subject: horse camp facilities
Attachments:

Dear Christine Beck, Environmental Coordinator:

I have looked at the new proposals for horse camping facilities in Cuyamaca State Park, and I support this plan and any plan to help bring family horse camping back to the park. We live too far away to really utilize day use facilities, so having overnight campgrounds is of primary importance to us. We would love to have a facility at Green Valley.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Diana Schmidt