

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



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

PROJECT TITLE: Equestrian Family Campground Replacement

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park/ Anza-Borrego Desert 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, is considering the preparation of an environmental document (Environmental Impact Report) for the project identified above. A brief project description and list of anticipated environmental effects to be considered in the environmental analysis are contained in this Notice of Preparation (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 Karen Miner, CDPR Project Manager, at the address shown below. Responses should include your name or the name of a contact person at your agency or organization, and contact information. Please send your response at the earliest possible date, but **no later than June 30, 2006**.

A previous NOP (SCH# 2005101045) was issued on October 11, 2005 for the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Los Caballos Equestrian Campground Project. Subsequent to the release of the previous NOP, CDPR determined that the presence of substantial environmental constraints at the Los Caballos site required relocation of the project to an alternative site. The project was therefore renamed the Equestrian Family Campground Replacement project. This NOP supersedes the previous October 11, 2005 NOP.

For those interested, a public scoping workshop/meeting, pursuant to Public Resource Code 21083.9, will be held Thursday evening, June 15th, 2006, between 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the Mission Valley Marriott Hotel, 8757 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego, CA 92018.

All documents pertinent to this project are located at CDPR's Southern Service Center (see following address).

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION CONTACT PERSON:

Karen Miner, Project Manager

Southern Service Center, California Department of Parks and Recreation,
8885 Rio San Diego, Suite 270, San Diego, California 92108

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project is the replacement of the equestrian family camping facilities that were destroyed at the popular Los Caballos Equestrian Campground during the 2003 Cedar Fire. The proposed project will include approximately 18 campsites (including a host site), restroom(s), horse corrals, landscape and shade tree plantings, and associated utilities and infrastructure. New trails and/or trail connections to existing trails, including the California Riding and Hiking Trail, will be developed as part of the project. Depending on the location, restrooms would be on septic and/or a contained vault system, and access to water and power may need to be developed as part of the project.

PROJECT LOCATION: CDPR has investigated alternative locations for replacement of the equestrian campground facilities within the Cuyamaca Mountain area, north of Descanso and south of Julian, in San Diego County. The goal is to find a location with the potential to accommodate equestrian campground facilities and to provide a similar experience to that of Los Caballos equestrian campground. CDPR, in consultation with various stakeholders, has currently identified four possible project locations for further consideration. Listed alphabetically, these four sites include (also see Figure 1):

Arrowmaker's Ridge, a narrow site at the eastern base of Arrowmaker's Ridge, immediately west of Hwy 79, within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Proposed access would be developed off Hwy 79, approximately 1/4 mile from the turnoff to the pre-fire park headquarters, Cuyamaca School Camp and the historic Dyar House. This site is approximately 3.3 air miles from Los Caballos.

Los Vaqueros, a site adjacent to, and northwest of, the existing Los Vaqueros Equestrian Group Camp. This site is accessed via Stonewall Mine Road off Hwy 79, within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, and is approximately 0.3 air miles from Los Caballos.

Stonewall Mine/Tapawingo, site of the former Girl Scout Camp, Tapawingo, and the historic Stonewall Mine, within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. This site is approximately 0.8 air miles from Los Caballos and is accessed via Stonewall Mine Road off Hwy 79.

Tulloch Ranch, a recent land addition to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park® formally, but located immediately adjacent and contiguous with the northeast boundary of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. This site is north and east of Cuyamaca Lake, approximately 3.5 air miles northeast of the former Los Caballos equestrian facilities. Access to the site would be via an old section of the Mason Valley Truck Trail, off Hwy 79, approximately 0.7 miles north of the intersection with Sunrise Highway (S1).

POSSIBLE EFFECTS AND MITIGATIONS: In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15071 and 15126, and based on the existing resources and anticipated campground uses, 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, soils, hydrology, water quality, land use, utilities, traffic and recreation. Avoidance conditions and mitigation measures will be developed to avoid or reduce potentially significant environmental effects. Mitigation may include restoration and protection of the Los Caballos area.

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

Arrowmaker's Ridge

Cultural resources, land use (specifically the Pilcha Cultural Preserve), wetlands, sensitive plants, visual resources, soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, traffic and recreation.

Los Vaqueros

Cultural resources, wetlands, sensitive plants including two listed wet meadow species (Parish's meadowfoam, and Cuyamaca larkspur), land use (specifically the Cuyamaca Meadow Natural Preserve), visual resources, soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities and recreation.

Stonewall Mine/Tapawingo

Cultural resources, land use (specifically the Ah-Ha-Kwe-Ah-Mac/Stonewall Mine Cultural Preserve), wetlands, sensitive plants including three listed wet meadow species (Cuyamaca Lake downingia, Parish's meadowfoam, and Cuyamaca larkspur), visual resources, soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, and recreation.

Tulloch Ranch

Cultural resources, land use, wetlands, sensitive plants including two listed wet meadow species (Parish's meadowfoam, and Cuyamaca larkspur), soils, hydrology, water quality, utilities, traffic and recreation.

INTENDED USE OF THE CEQA DOCUMENT: The CDPR intends to use the CEQA document for consideration of the environmental effects and mitigation measures when reviewing the proposed project for approval, as well as for any subsequent discretionary actions by DPR or the California State Park and Recreation Commission required to implement the project as certified in the EIR. Alternative locations will be analyzed as part of the CEQA process. The analysis will serve as CDPR's CEQA compliance document, as well as serve responsible agencies in the future for any subsequent discretionary actions under their jurisdiction. This may include reference to the document by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for their compliance with NEPA when reimbursing the State for a portion of the funding.

Attachments: Figure 1, Project Location Map

PROJECT LOCATION MAP -EQUESTRIAN FAMILY CAMPGROUND REPLACEMENT

