



Northern Service Center
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500
Sacramento, California 95814

January 28, 2005

Scott Kranhold
Environmental Scientist
Waste Discharge to Land Unit
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
11020 Sun Center Drive #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

RE: Mitigated Negative Declaration
Calaveras Big Trees State Park
Visitor Center Project

Dear Mr. Kranhold:

Thank you for your comments during the public review period for the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), Visitor Center Project at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Your support for this project is appreciated and it is hoped that the following response will address your concerns regarding this project.

Your comment indicated that the current wastewater treatment and disposal system is regulated by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) Order No. 98-045, which limits the amount of wastewater discharge to a monthly average dry weather flow of 20,000 gallons per day. You further indicate that if the addition of a new visitor center will increase wastewater flows in the wastewater treatment and disposal system above what is prescribed in the Order, then California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) must submit a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) requesting an update of the WDRs, and that if the existing leach field were relocated then the WDRs would need to be updated. You also stated that DPR is expected to submit a RWD within the next five to six months describing leach field replacement.

As a separate distinct project, DPR is proposing improvements to the existing sewer system at the park. The sewer system improvements are anticipated to be on-line before the visitor center is open to the public, and are designed to improve service capacity for all core facilities in the park and the North Grove Campground, not just the proposed visitor center (MND, p. 65). DPR is not necessarily anticipating increased visitation due to the construction of the visitor center (MND, pp. 10 and 58).

The separate proposed sewer system improvement project is currently undergoing CEQA review. As proposed it will retain the existing sewer infrastructure of main trunk-line, 20,000 gallon septic tank, lift/pump station, pumps, distribution boxes and spray fields. It will install one additional wastewater holding/dosing tank and construct an additional 35,000 square ft. leach field.

Information regarding the proposed sewer system improvement project can be obtained directly from the project manager for that project, Chris Meyers, at (916) 445-8737. Questions and concerns regarding the WDRs and any potential RWDs should be directed to Mr. Meyers.

Your letter also provided information regarding permitting for storm water discharge (NOI/SWPPP), construction dewatering, and discharge of dredged or fill material (Section 404). This project will not disturb more than one acre, and does not include dewatering activities or discharge of dredged or fill material. Therefore, none of these permits are applicable to the proposed visitor center project.

Thank you again for your comments.

Sincerely,

Gail Sevrens
Environmental Coordinator
Northern Service Center

Cc: Michael Romo, Project Manager, Visitor Center Project
Chris Meyers, Project Manager, Sewer System Improvements Project
Susan Wilcox, Environmental Coordinator, Sewer System Improvements Project