



# Friends of China Camp, Inc. (FOCC)

## Operations Report for China Camp State Park Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Since the Operating Agreement between the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and Friends of China Camp (FOCC) was activated on July 27, 2012, FOCC has met its contractual obligations to operate China Camp State Park and to protect its natural and cultural resources.

Amendment 4 to the Operating Agreement, which was approved by the California Department of General Services on January 17, 2017, extends the term of the Operating Agreement until January 31, 2019.

### **I. Keeping China Camp State Park open, accessible and thriving**

FOCC's primary goals during the 2011-2012 "Save the Park" campaign were to insure that all of the park facilities would be open to visitors 365 days a year and that these visitors would have the opportunity to experience the exceptional natural and cultural features of China Camp in a well-cared-for environment.

During this fifth fiscal year of the operational contract, all facilities of the park remained open daily.

### **II. Friends of China Camp (FOCC) Personnel Changes**

Due to the increased responsibilities of FOCC as park operator, the recognition that the board should evolve from an operational board to a more traditional board, and the necessity to balance its operating budget for long-term financial sustainability, the FOCC board created the position of Executive Director and hired Martin Lowenstein to fill the position on August 1, 2016.

Recognizing the importance of offering a range of education and recreational programming in the park, the Executive Director, with full support from the

board, created the position of Program Director and hired Sheila Coll for that position on May 1, 2017.

As of the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Mr. Lowenstein and Ms. Coll were the only two administrators for FOCC.

### **III. Revenue Building**

#### **a Clarification of Pay Station Ticket**

The tickets issued at the four pay stations in the park have caused some confusion among park visitors. The tickets have not conveyed clearly enough that the ticket is only a temporary pass that needs to be redeemed on the FOCC website for the annual pass.

In 2016-17, FOCC redesigned the pay station ticket, and VenTek implemented the redesign. As a result, we saw more timely redemptions and a higher redemption yield, in general.

#### **b Pay Station Firmware Upgrade**

MasterCard announced that they would add a new 2 series BIN range, effective October 2016. Merchants, who do not already run 291 firmware (China Camp ran 229 firmware), would have to upgrade their firmware for \$295 per controller.

In October 2016, VenTek replaced the controllers in the four pay stations and upgraded their firmware to accommodate the new MC numbers.

#### **c Pay Station SIM Cards**

The four pay stations in China Camp currently use T-Mobile SIM cards. However, our pay station vendor was unable to tell us whether the pay stations connect to the nearest T-Mobile cell tower or whether they roam to an AT&T cell tower. Since AT&T announced the discontinuation of its 2G service, effective December 2016, we did not know whether our pay stations would require SIM card upgrades.

Beginning in January 2017, we began to monitor the connectivity of the four pay stations to determine whether we would need to upgrade the SIM cards. To date, the pay stations have maintained their connectivity, and, thus, we have not upgraded the SIM cards.

## **d Back Ranch Guard Kiosk Presence**

As an experiment to see whether the Back Ranch pay-station would experience greater transaction volume, we scheduled park aides and VIPP volunteers to sit in the Back Ranch guard kiosk over the course of four consecutive Fridays from 8 AM until 5 PM. The results showed that every park visitor, whether on foot, on a bike, or in a car, stopped at the guard kiosk, and those who didn't already have a campground reservation or an annual pass, utilized the pay-station.

## **e Membership Program Relaunch**

We created new FOCC Membership levels and associated benefits. With the help of a local marketing firm that performed pro bono website design for us, we recreated our Membership page with the following Membership levels and benefits:

### **\$35 Trail Membership**

- 1-Year Trail Pass
- Quarterly newsletter
- X CHINA CAMP PARKING NOT INCLUDED

### **\$60 Full Membership**

- All benefits of Trail Membership PLUS
- 1-Year FREE parking in all China Camp lots
- 1-Year FREE admission to village museum talks

### **\$120 Turtle Back Membership**

- All Benefits of Full Membership PLUS
- Your choice of 1 item of China Camp merchandise

### **\$240 Bullet Hill Membership**

- All the benefits of Turtle Back Membership PLUS
- Member Recognition Breakfast Event

### **\$480 Miwok Meadows Membership**

- All the benefits of Bullet Hill Membership PLUS
- Docent tour of China Camp Village (up to 10 people)

### **\$960 Grace Quan Membership**

- All the benefits of Miwok Meadows Membership PLUS
- Name on annually updated plaque in Ranger Station

**f New Generation of Merchandising**

FOCC worked with the nephew of Frank Quan to develop four new T-shirt designs to be unveiled in the 2017-18 fiscal year and priced at \$25 each.

The T-shirts will be displayed and for sale in the Village café, the Visitors Center, and possibly at the entrance to the campground. They will also be used as membership gifts who give at the \$120 level or above.

**IV. Day to Day Operational Functions**

Regular California State Parks CSP/FOCC operational meetings and working group meetings were held to share information, resolve issues and make decision regarding day to day operations

**a. Collaboration and Division of Duties between FOCC and CSP**

Operating the Park under the terms of the operating agreement between DPR and FOCC occasionally requires clarification of duties and procedures and improvement of communication channels. While accounting for FOCC revenue and expenses has been streamlined and data readily available, accounting for CSP expenses continues to be a challenge. Reporting for actual CSP expenses has been months behind. The time lag has made identification and resolution of discrepancies and irregularities more difficult, and financial planning less reliable.

**b. State Parks staffing**

The following California State Park positions were funded:

1 ½ Full-time Peace Officer/Park Ranger

1 Full-time Maintenance Worker I

3 Seasonal Park Aides

We experienced periods of understaffing due to vacations, illnesses and retirements. Although FOCC has contracted and provided funding for the above staffing level, there is not enough staff in the sector and district to cover absences.

Ranger Dan Vianueva has notified FOCC that he will retire in the second half of 2018, leaving China Camp with only a half-time ranger.

To counter what was becoming a noticeable drop in the upkeep of the park, FOCC hired a San Rafael cleaning service in lieu of continuing to bring in Seasonal Maintenance Aides.

**c. Operations handled, in part, through volunteer support**

Despite the hiring of FOCC's first two administrative employees during the period of 7/1/16 to 6/30/17, core volunteers were still needed to handle such responsibilities as collection of park-user fees, vendor contracts, park use permitting and special events, educational/interpretive programs as well as oversight and accounting.

**d. Communication Systems**

FOCC continues to pay for the WiFi internet connection which was established in 2013-2014 to serve campground hosts, CSP staff and volunteers working at the Back Ranch campgrounds and guard kiosk. This allowed for easier communications regarding camp reservations, visitor services and other operational needs.

Ongoing communication among FOCC employees, FOCC board members, CSP employees, and core volunteers is maintained by e-mail and a password secured administrative section of the website, which contains an updated calendar and copies of board minutes, committee notes, and key documents.

**V. Maintenance, Stewardship and Capital Improvement**

**a. Park Informational Signage**

80% of the trail display kiosks were rebuilt, uniformly re-keyed and stabilized. New Plexiglas was installed in each.

**b. Trail Survey Work**

No additional trail survey work was done or needed at this time. However, the trail conditions are continually monitored and reported by the FOCC Foot and Bike Ambassador team.

**c. Trails Maintenance and Restoration Project**

The Trails Work Group is a committee of the FOCC that is tasked with the restoration and long-term maintenance of the trail system in China Camp State Park. The Work Group is led by a board member and two core volunteers. In addition to monthly CSPF Champion events consisting of 25-30 volunteers, there are multiple small work events consisting of 4-10 VIPPs.

The goals for the Work Group are:

- The restoration of the full trail system to current CSP Multi-Use Trail Standards.
- The development of trails maintenance standards for CCSP Training VIPP volunteers capable of executing both construction and maintenance work.
- Restoration of the fire roads within CCSP. Developing “Best Practices” that make the volunteers experience both fun and productive.

### **Achievements for the past fiscal year**

- 19 Successful work days including CSPF Champions and FOCC VIPPs.
- Repairs done secondary to the land slides and flooding include clearing the campground of debris and mud, opening culverts, clearing trails and installing split rail fencing
- Over 1700 Volunteer hours for trail maintenance and repair
- Over 1200 VIPP hours dedicated to trail maintenance and repair.
- New compactor and major overhaul and repairs to toters.
- A focus on safety, both environmental and activity based
- Recruited and trained 17 new VIPP Volunteers, bringing our total trail VIP to 38 as of June 2017.
- Participation in Earth Day during which we groomed parts of 3 different trails.
- Approval by CSP of the PEF with a gabion-based rebuild design for the washed-out section of Shoreline Trail.

### **The Working Group addressed the following challenges:**

- Recruiting VIPP volunteers with diverse talents such as equipment operators, experienced trail builders, volunteer management and motivation and general management skills.
- The increased logistical difficulty in working on the Bayview and Echo Trails.
- Funding for materials and equipment for trails reconstruction.
- Managing the long term for both building and maintaining the trails.
- Developing a working relationship with the biking community to both meet the needs of the park and the desires of our bicyclists.

On Champion work days, two campsites are reserved for registered volunteers. This has significantly helped with recruitment.

**d. Addressing Vandalism**

FOCC continued to partner with Marin County Bicycle Coalition to address illegal trails and prevention of bike related problems. Rehabilitation of damaged areas was periodically accomplished through the efforts of park staff, the Coalition and other volunteers. There is routine monitoring of the rehabilitation work and if it has been tampered with, volunteers quickly repair the area to discourage renewed use of those areas.

Expanded volunteer foot and bike patrols also provide a visible deterrent and are able to report problem areas in a timely manner. FOCC contributed to Trail Partners, a collaborative between Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Marin Horse Council and Marin Conservation League focused on trail safety and resource protection. Trail Partners launched a trail etiquette campaign in June 2016, called "Slow & Say Hello". FOCC has placed their informational handout at the ranger station and campgrounds to encourage safe trail use and to reinforce an appreciation for the parks wildlife and natural habitat.

**d. Bullhead Flat – Accident or Arson**

In June 2017, a fire broke out in the bathroom structure at Bullhead Flat. A police investigation proved inconclusive. While it was determined that the fire originated in the garbage can beside the bathroom, which in turn ignited the eaves of the bathroom structure, it is unclear whether someone thoughtlessly put hot embers in the trash can or whether it was a deliberate act. The fiscal year ended with FOCC looking into who held responsibility for the repair of the bathroom structure and whether FOCC's liability insurance would apply to this incident.

**e. Village Improvements**

FOCC volunteers worked to maintain and stabilize the Village's historic fishing equipment including the shrimp shaker, the shrimp cooking vat, and boat ways engine. FOCC volunteers also installed new roofing material on one of the historic structures, and rebuilt five of the pier ladders. FOCC volunteers continued the restoration of the engine and hull of the historic fishing vessel St. Erina, intended for interpretive display and demonstration at the pier.

## **VI. Improved Web Site and Email Services**

The website, [www.friendsofchinacamp.org](http://www.friendsofchinacamp.org), which was developed during the Save the Park Campaign, continued as a key bridge to visitors and supporters of the Park. It includes information on park amenities, fees, reservations, park programs, and in-depth natural and cultural history. Information regarding how community members may become involved as volunteers and supporters is emphasized. The website provided updates regarding current events and issues of importance to the park as well as access to FOCC annual operational reports and media coverage. Links to partners and areas of interest were provided.

FOCC currently uses Mail Chimp to notify our supporters of upcoming events. Quarterly Newsletters have been implemented and have been an effective tool for keeping our supporters informed of new and ongoing activities. MailChimp is also being used on a monthly basis to remind our members to renew.

## **VII. Volunteer Services**

Volunteers continued to be of extreme value to the park's operation, services, and maintenance.

FOCC continued to work with CSP in expanding the Volunteers in Parks Program at China Camp which provided certified volunteers who supported and participated in the Trail Maintenance program, Natural History Docent program, in Ranger Station coverage, in expanded Foot Trail Patrol and Village Docent activities, and in Bike Patrol.

During this fiscal year, CSPF Park Champions workdays, which add much needed trail work and other projects, were held on a regular monthly basis. FOCC continued to host a Coastal Clean-up Day at China Camp Village and Earth Day restoration activities. Other FOCC volunteers are regularly involved in handling administrative duties, maintenance projects, in working groups and in the development and implementation of educational programs.

### **a. Park Champions Volunteer Workdays (CSPF Program)**

Four FOCC volunteers, trained by CSPF as core leaders, continue as workday project leaders. In addition, twenty-eight volunteers participated in more than two of the monthly Park Champion workdays, sponsored and promoted



by the California State Parks Foundation. These events were planned and implemented to address China Camp needs such as trail maintenance, erosion control and vegetation clearance, fence repairs, etc. Each workday brought in volunteers available to the stewardship of parklands and structures. In addition, work crews from corporations and other nonprofit organizations provided valuable trail and Village work.

The volunteer hours totaled just over 1,500 hours of actual trail work and about 200 hours of preparation, clean up and reporting. In addition to volunteers, Service Park Aides and Maintenance Aides provided over 50 hours of help with the trail renovation.

**b. Volunteers in Park Program (VIPPP) Trail Maintenance Work**

During the past year, in addition to CSPF Champion events, 36 China Camp Trail Maintenance VIPPP's have led and/or participated in organized volunteer events and worked countless hours providing ad hoc trail maintenance work and invasive plant removal.

**c. Board & Volunteer Development and Participation**

In addition to monthly working meetings, members of the FOCC Board and/or key volunteers participated in the annual Park Advocacy Day sponsored by the California State Parks Foundation, the Parks Forward Commission workshops, the Bioneers Conference, the annual California League of Park Associations (CALPA) Conference and in the Center for Volunteers and Nonprofit Leadership programs. Board members also participated in occasional meetings with the other AB 42 operators (Jack London State Historical Park, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, Mendocino Area Parks Association and Sugarloaf Ridge State Park), to discuss areas of common interest including pending state legislation.

## **VIII. Print Media Coverage and Promotion**

*Primary communication with supporters and park visitors was realized through the FOCC website and through quarterly newsletters and e-blasts initiated during this FY. Print media items are listed below.*

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS JULY 2016  
"Make a Difference at a Park Near You" promoted trail repair volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

*Marin Mommies*, Andrew Fox, July 28, 2016

“Outdoor Family Fun at Marin’s China Camp State Park” (article and photo)

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS SEPTEMBER 2016

“Want to Get Your Hands Dirty Helping State Parks?” promoted trail repair volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS OCTOBER 2016

“Protect State Parks – On Foot or By Kayak” promoted trail repair volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS NOVEMBER 2016

“Park Champions are Making History at California State Historic Parks” promoted campground cleaning volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS JANUARY 2017

“Cross Volunteering off Your Resolutions Checklist” promoted trail repair volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

CA State Parks Foundation E-NEWS FEBRUARY 2017

“Become a Park Champion” promoted trail repair volunteer opportunities in China Camp State Park.

*Marin IJ* Obituaries, August 19, 2016

“Frank Quan, last of the China Camp shrimpers in San Rafael, dies at 90” (article and photo)

*Marin IJ* Editorials, August 25, 2016

“Marin IJ Editorial: Frank Quan helped keep China Camp’s history alive” (article and photo)

*SF Gate* Obituaries, August 24, 2016

“Frank Quan 1925 – 2016” (article and photo)

*South China Morning Post*, August 23, 2016

“Frank Quan, last resident of San Francisco Bay’s historic Chinese shrimping village, dies at 90” (article and photo)

*CBS SF Bay Area, Channel 5 KPIX*, August 18, 2016

“Frank Quan, Last Fisherman in China Camp, Dies” TV segment lasting 2 min. 5 sec.

*San Francisco Chronicle* Carl Nolte, August 27, 2016

“China Camp losing its ‘living historical treasure’ (article and photo)

*KQED*, News, Janie Har, Associated Press, October 14, 2016

“At Marin Shrimping Village, a Fading History of Chinese Immigrants” (article and photo)

*Marin County Bicycle Coalition*. Events, October 15, 2016  
Announcement of event “Celebrating Frank Quan’s Life”.

*Marin Chinese Cultural Association*, PRESS RELEASE, September 14, 2016  
“China Camp’s Living Treasure, Shrimp Fisherman Frank Quan, Dies”

*Marin IJ ENVIRONMENT*, March 25, 2017  
“Pricey repair work needed to fix Marin’s storm-battered trails, fire roads” (article and photos)

*abc Channel 7 News*, WEATHER, March 27, 2017  
“Marin County’s China Camp State Park struggles with repairs after storms” TV segment lasting 1min. 48 sec. that aired at 5 PM on the Santa Rosa affiliate and at 6PM from the San Francisco station.

*Pacific Sun* magazine, Best of Marin 2017, April 2017  
“Best Bike Route/Trail” – Winner: China Camp State Park  
“Best Park/Open Space” – Winner: China Camp State Park

## **IX. Interpretive / Educational Programs**

### **a. Natural History Center**

The natural history display area at the Ranger Station was developed into the Natural History Center with enhanced interpretive displays and materials in 2012-2013. Staffed by a team of 5 volunteers, the center provides visitors with an opportunity to become acquainted with the wildlife and other natural features of the Park. In addition, information regarding interpretive programs, trails, camping and other services have been provided.

### **b. Natural History Interpretive Programs**

**Docents.** We have 4 active natural history docents this year. They have been involved in campfire programs and interpretive walks. The Park, in general, plans to focus on volunteer recruitment and a revised docent training program in the coming year.

**Village Talks.** A new series of monthly natural and cultural history lectures were offered this year in the Village museum this year. They have been led by professional experts from around the region. The program has been very successful, with almost every lecture filling to capacity. Lectures this year included presenters from the Hungry Owl project, NorCal Bats, UC Santa Cruz Anthropology

Department, California Native Plant Society, Project Felidae Marin County Parks, National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Marin County Parks. Most are family friendly but a few are targeted for adults and seniors.

**Interpretive Signage Renewel.** CSP and FOCC worked together to replace the damaged and faded natural history interpretive signage around Turtle Back Trail, re-using the artwork and materials from the initial signage project to the extent possible.

**Natural History Walks.** We introduced a new series of weekly hikes and monthly moonlight hikes led by natural history docents this year. The moonlight hikes and natural history walks have been very popular and have an average of 10 participants.

**Campfire Programs.** From May through September, Natural History interpretive volunteers have provided between three and four campfire programs per month for campers at Back Ranch Meadows. The campfire programs included topics such as endangered salt marsh animals and habitat, evolution and Charles Darwin, bats, local reptiles, and specific animals (owls, coyotes, raccoons, wild turkeys) or animal interdependencies. We also offered an astronomy evening at the campground once a month, led by a local astronomer.

### c. **Ongoing Stewardship and Interpretive Partners**

**Summer Learning Program.** We partnered with Mt Tamalpais State Park Interpreter I Rosanna Petralia to host part of the California State Park annual Summer Learning Program at China Camp Village. CSP partnered with San Francisco YMCA and the East Bay Asian Youth Center to bring a group of about 50 children for each trip. There were a total of 3 trips. The children received a docent led tour of the village museum and an interpretive nature walk along the Shoreline trail.

**Adventures Cross Country Programs:** We partnered with ARCC programs, an outdoor youth program, to hold an interpretive tour of the wetlands by the Bullet Hill trail and a fennel removal restoration project in the park for 50 middle school children.

**East Bay Regional Parks:** By request, East Bay Regional Parks requested a tour of the park and the village. They were given a natural history tour of Turtleback Trail and of China Camp Village.

**NERR:** Our partnership with the National Estuarine Research Reserve continues to grow. Staff from NERR are scheduled to lead natural history walks related to king tide, the salt marsh, sea level rise indicators, and endangered species at China Camp.

**d. School and Youth Organization, Seniors Tours:**

We have also provided an increasing number of natural history docent guided field trips this year, including students from different grades, as well as hiking and biking groups.

**e. China Camp Fishing Village Museum**

The museum, which is housed in one of the historic structures along the waterfront at China Camp Village, provided exhibits and interpretive displays about the history of the village and the Chinese shrimp fishing industry.

Six dedicated docents, one of whom speaks Mandarin and Cantonese, staffed the museum on weekends during the high season and gave tours by appointment for school groups, scout troops, senior citizens, and others. Several videos and CDs on China Camp and on San Francisco Bay were played for various groups according to their interests.

**Tours.** For this year, the docents provided tours for the following groups: Local girl & boy scout groups, Claire Lilienthal School Grass Valley Charter School, Indian Valley Academy, Wade Thomas School, French Education Bay Area, Dominican University: Torch Leadership Program, the East Bay Asian Youth Center, San Francisco YMCA, boating tour groups, and other adult groups.

**St. Erina.** FOCC volunteers stabilized the historic boat railway and windlass system on site. The St. Erina, a boat with historical China Camp Village connections, was brought ashore and displayed on the boat railway as a permanent marine history interpretive feature.

## **X. Special Events**

### **Celebrating Frank Quan's Life**

On August 15, 2016, Frank Quan passed away. In lieu of Heritage Day, FOCC organized a Celebration of Life in memory of Frank Quan, which was held in China Camp Village on October 15, 2016.

The day's program was as follows:

11:00 – 11:15 Lion Dancers

- 11:15 – 11:20 FOCC Executive Director welcomes everyone to CCSP, announces creation of Frank Quan Fund, acknowledges event partners, Quan family and VIPs, and introduces the Master of Ceremonies – John Muir.
- 11:20 – 11:25 MC announces the day’s program and logistics.
- 11:25 – 11:40 U.S. Navy flag ceremony
- 11:40 – 12:30 Speaker program
  - Congressman Jared Huffman
  - Assemblyman Marc Levine
  - Supervisor Damon Connolly
  - Elizabeth Goldstein
  - Danita Rodriguez
  - Pat Robards
  - Milton Quan
  - Ben Chuck
  - John Muir
- 12:30 – 14:00 Complimentary Chinese buffet with 1940s music

**Coastal Cleanup Day** celebrated at CCSP. FOCC gathered over 120 pounds of trash. This was followed by a tour of the village.

**Earth Day**, April 22, 2017 Over 40 volunteers participated in Earth Day activities. Restoration activities included trail building and fennel restoration. This event was sponsored by CSPF.

**FOCC Volunteer Appreciation** picnic June 25, 2017

## **XI. Building Partnerships**

### **a. New and expanded partnerships and joint projects**

During the Save the Park campaign, numerous alliances were formed and continued in support of operations and enhanced visitor experiences in recreation, natural and cultural history and park appreciation. These groups include cultural associations, educational institutions at various levels, conservation organizations, historical societies, community services groups, foundations, clubs and government agencies. A few of these include Dominican University of California, College of Marin, Marin School of Environmental Leadership, and Marin Chinese Cultural Association.

Time and services were donated to the operations of China Camp by:

- California State Parks
- The Harbormaster of the San Rafael Yacht Harbor
- QuarryHouse, a stone work business
- Marin Chinese Cultural Association
- California State Parks Foundation
- SF Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

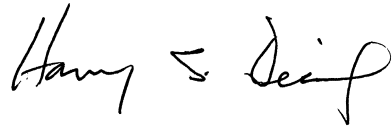
- Manifeste Marketing
- Paragon Machine Works
- Andy's Local Market

## **XII. Financial Status**

The Friends of China Camp financial reports for FY 2016-2017 operations of China Camp State Park are attached.



This report has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Friends of China Camp. Submitted: June 30, 2018



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