

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



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:

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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

PROJECT LOCATION MAP EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

