Dear CRSP Planning Team,

Regarding the document titled General Plan, the Cuyamaca Equestrian Association(CEA) totally and completely opposes the more restrictive designations of areas currently used for recreation within Cuyamaca Rancho State Park(CRSP). The park and it's sensitive areas are already protected by the California Environmental Qualities Act(CEQA). These expanded/new historical, cultural and biological preserve designations will prevent/restrict improvements to Los Vaqueros Group Equestrian camp and may be used against equestrians in the future by new administrators who may interpret the regulations more strictly, as they were in the beginning of this process where the guidelines initially excluded equestrians from the natural preserves. Los Vaqueros is an island within these newly designated preserves, it is feared by many equestrians that California State Parks is slowly and methodically pushing us out of the park, either by neglect, policy or pricing. Sufficient protections are already in place and a balance use plan would be best for all interests and users as State Parks is charged with accomplishing.

None of the equestrian staging areas within CRSP have water, hitching posts, corrals, picnic tables, trash receptacles or permanent toilet facilities. We lost all that when Los Caballos was taken from us after the 2003 Cedar Fire. These have not been replaced. We had those things at Los Caballos. At the tiny Merigan trail head parking area, lacking all of these features, the park collects their $8 fee.

In the General Plan all we see is vague wording about improvements and working with equestrian user groups. In the past 10 years that CEA has worked with CRSP we have seen many plans and little action that required funding or the one word that is missing in California State Park's vocabulary, mitigation. Mitigation being balancing cultural sensitivities, ecological needs with recreational requirements. Mitigation at Los Caballos could have included capping sensitive sites, fencing and education. None of that was considered. Mitigation is missing in the General Plan. Not one single place in the entire document is mitigation mentioned and yet it is one of the most important aspects of managing this jewel of a park. Mitigation could have saved Los Caballos, in fact CEA and CRSP were working on a mitigation strategy when the legal process overtook our effort. Mitigation can give us a Los Caballos replacement in the north end of the park. Mitigation needs to be in the General Plan.

Ernest R. Smith

President

Cuyamaca Equestrian Association

I support the above comments on the CRSP General Plan by CEA President Ernie Smith and submit this letter to the CRSP Planning Team.

Cyndi Denny, Lakeside Frontier Riders Board, Member of Bonita Valley Horsemen, Avid trail user and equestrian camper in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

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Bill Butters Good job Ernie. I agree 100%

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Patti Achilly Well said, much better than mine.

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