To: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park General Planning Team

Email: enviro@parks.ca.gov Date: 9/29/14

Subject: Comments regarding the General Plan for Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

Dear Planning Team,

Please consider the following comments and corrections I have listed, after reviewing the General Plan for Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. My comments are listed by page numbers and section number. I also made note of missing information and referenced other pages/sections in the Plan.

Page EXE-3: This section needs to include the location of the Equestrian Family Camp in the north end of the Park and to be included in the General Plan.

Page 1-19: Under equestrian stakeholder meetings, it should say “requests” for north end equestrian camp and staging areas. At every public meeting of the plan, equestrians requested a north end replacement camp for losing Los Caballos. The locations should specifically reference the north end of the Park. See Page 2-49, Sect 2.7.4.

Page 2-6: “A day-use parking lot (Merigan day–use parking), should include “equestrian parking” in its description, as is specified for “Sweetwater” day use.

Page 2-10: Under Equestrian Use, correction needed. There are 15 horse sites, but really only 12 horse sites are available to reserve because one site is the camp host site and two other sites are ADA.

Page 2-14: Driving Forces behind Trends. “Horseback riding” needs to be added to this section. Horseback riding has been an active part of the history of the Park and the reason for camps Los Vaqueros and Los Caballos (unfortunately closed) and now Green Valley Horse Camp. Horseback riding is a sport and lifestyle that includes all generations, not just youth specific, and let’s not forget the volunteer Mounted Assistance Unit. Horseback riders have been using this park since its establishment, before the arrival of mountain bikes, and equestrians will continue to be Park users and campers. Equestrian clubs have been riding and camping here for 20 to 30 years; therefore, “horseback riding” should be included in this section.

Page 2-15: Under “Impact of 2003 Cedar Fire on Park Facilities,” please include “the former Los Caballos Equestrian Campground was permanently closed and removed to protect highly significant archaeological and natural resources at the site.” This verbiage is found on Page 3-4.

 The Park replaced the restroom/shower building at the Los Vaqueros Group Horse Camp as it was destroyed in the Cedar Fire, and this should be added to this paragraph on 2-15.

Page 2-49: “Additional equestrian staging and camping facilities” should read “North end equestrian camping facilities and staging” for clarity, as equestrians have always requested this since the loss of Los Caballos.

 Page 3-4 Section 3.2.1: Horseback riding: “a location could not be agreed upon” is incorrect. Some locations were off limits due to environmental/cultural reports, and other sites were not feasible due to road access, terrain (no water, no shade, wind exposure, not level), site size, and no/limited access to the trails network. Please reference page 4-91, section 4.5.2 which describes some requirements of a horse camp.

Page 3-5: Issues Analysis. Green Valley Horse Camp is appreciated by equestrians, BUT it is not an equal replacement of Los Caballos. While Los Caballos had more sites, level ground, room for larger rigs, and shade over corrals and in the north end of the park. In Green Valley Horse Camp, only the ADA accessible sites are level, also only 12 sites out of 15 are able to be reserved, as two sites are ADA and Site 8 is the camp host’s site. The rest of the Green Valley’s sites are not level. Some sites require four-wheel drive to back the rigs into place. Half of the Green Valley corrals do not have shade of any kind. This camp does not easily allow for the large type of living quarters trailers and rigs that equestrians now use. As the RV industry has changed with bigger rigs so has equestrians’ trailers. There are only three pull-through sites to accommodate larger rigs. Access into some sites with larger rigs is difficult due to site location. Despite the many shortcomings of the Green Valley Horse Camp, equestrians are grateful for it, but this camp needs improvements which will encourage increased use, just as much as the other campgrounds.

Corrections: Equestrians have “requested” an equestrian campground and equestrian staging in the North Region of CRSP to replace Los Caballos in the north end of the park, not a “strong desire.” Please see 2-49 2.7.4 where it accurately states “requests” for a horse camp in the northern part of the Park and additional horse staging areas.

Page 3-10, Sect. 3.3.5: Equestrians did ask for Camp Hual-Cu-Cuish as a replacement for Los Caballos. If reconstructed as a campground, then it is a possible location for a north end horse camp.

Page 3-10, Sect. 3.3.6: “Loop A” was a replacement for the loss of Los Caballos, AND no location was given for equestrians in the north end of the Park. As of the new current policy, equestrians are sharing Green Valley Horse Camp with non-equestrian campers. Rangers should consider campers without dogs and young children when placing non-equestrian campers with Equestrians at Green Valley Horse Camp.

Los Vaqueros Group Horse Camp is also being rented to non-equestrian groups, making group camp unavailable at key times for equestrians who only have the one group camp to use for the whole Park. Also, small equestrian clubs cannot afford to camp at Los Vaqueros because they cannot afford the $550.00 a night.

Stated on Page 2-10: It is written “that a group camp in Paso Picacho Campground that was closed is being rebuilt and planned for reopening. “ So with the rebuilt group camp in Paso Picacho coming online, this issue is being addressed.

Page 4-16 and Page 4-37: And all Historic zone goals – Stonewall Mine and Haul-Cu-Cuish, are these historical re-builds going to include facilities, cabin/camping areas with corrals/livery also? If it is a historical re-build, it should include horse facilities as they were a part of the building transportation of the area during that time, also to include a blacksmith shop for the tourists.

Page 4-55 #6: As long as the re-route is completed BEFORE closing the trail.

Page 4-20, #2: If group camps are reopened for regular campers and other campsites developed and expanded, then the Horse Camps (Green Valley and Los Vaqueros) could go back to exclusive use of horse campgrounds. Otherwise, equestrians are discriminated against because everyone else can come into our sites but we do not have the same opportunity. We don’t have the flexibility to move around to other campsites. We are limited to facilities and sites because we are equestrians. Isn’t that discrimination?

Page 4-21: Horseback Riding: a new location for north end of the Park has not yet been found. Please see 2-49 2.7.4, where it accurately states requests for a horse camp and horse staging areas in the north end of the Park. Please see 3-5 Issues Analysis, same applies.

Page 4-60.1: After the Cedar Fire, the restroom/shower facilities at Los Vaqueros were rebuilt, and several issues are worth mentioning: The showerhead location causes the entire shower room floor to be wet, including the dressing area, requiring one to dress while standing in water. It is also a slip hazard. Also, the showerheads do not adjust, so the water sprays into the dressing area. If the showers had a sill/curb to contain the water in the shower area, it would help. In addition, if the showerheads had a swivel feature, one could adjust the showerhead downward for short individuals and redirect the water from spraying to the back wall. At present, if you are 5’ 2’’ and shorter, the jet spray actually shoots over your head because the shower heads do not swivel. We know that the new bathroom at Los Vaqueros was expensive for the Park, and it is a shame that for the expense the design is so poor.

The old shower house at Los Vaqueros was a better designed as old as it was, and you actually had a dressing area where your clothes stayed dry and you could change without standing in water.

Page 4-82: No. 4 is a concern, "remove trails" as necessary....

Page 5-8: Clarify Los Caballos and continuation from 1986 plan listing 16 camps 128 people and 32 horses...??? Should it be listed as Alternative 3, preferred plan is...to re-locate the camp in the north end of the park close to lake?

Pages 5-22, 5-23: "Human remains," this section confuses actual bodies of humans with "human remains" which is evidence of archeological items. This should be clarified.

Page 5-34: Impact Analysis, Instead of "could" it should read "should."

Page 5-36: "Potential" equestrian staging area should read, "A new equestrian staging in the area will require......"

Page 5-41: Again, no project alternative (for Los Caballos), as stated above on page 5-8?

Page 5-42 and 5-43: New alternative not necessary?

We requested a new Equestrian camp in the north end of the Park. Need to include the location of the Equestrian Family Camp in the Plan in the north end of the Park to be included in the General Plan.

 Page 6-16: What are the names of the “over 50” equestrian groups you contacted? How did you contact them? My club was not contacted.

Page 6-31: Should include the PEIR program on all trail reclassifications. Please follow the Programmatic EIR for Changes to Trail Use - California State Parks

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Avid Trail User of the Park and frequent equestrian camper.