



File Code: 2720

Date: May 5, 2005

Dear Friends:

The Forest Service is conducting an environmental analysis under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the renewal of a Special Use Permit for the continued operation and maintenance of Camp Hi-Hill Outdoor School by Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). We are soliciting public input of the issues to be addressed in the environmental analysis.

Introduction and Background

LBUSD currently operates the outdoor school on 13.18 acres within the Angeles National Forest, located approximately 1 mile east of the intersection of Red Box Road and the Angeles Crest Highway (Route 2). LBUSD has conducted an outdoor education program at the site since 1948, which is considered an integral part of the elementary school program for the District. The school is open to 5th grade classes and their teachers, to live and study in the outdoor school for up to one week. Approximately 215 students occupy the camp for each period. During the summer when regular school is not in session (6 to 7 weeks), and occasionally on weekends during the regular session, the facilities are rented to various organizations.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to renew the special use permit that would allow LBUSD to continue operation of Camp Hi-Hill for another 30 years. The need for the proposed action is to allow LBUSD to continue operation of the camp as an outdoor educational facility as part of the science curriculum for elementary school students in the District. Because of the increasing risks of wildfires on the Angeles National Forest, LBUSD needs to do fuels hazard reduction projects to minimize wildfire risks and provide for additional camper safety in the event of a wildfire. Therefore, an additional purpose and need of the proposed action is to implement additional fire safety measures, including brush removal, pruning and thinning trees, and creating safe zones/areas cleared of flammable materials.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would include renewal of the special use permit for the continued operation and maintenance of the existing camp facilities and access road for an additional 30 years. The proposed action does not involve any significant changes to the camp facilities or operations compared to the current conditions at the camp. The proposed action would not increase the area or boundaries of the camp, but would include existing offsite infrastructure (water line to the spring), and the maintenance of the access road to the camp. The proposed action includes enhancing fire safety and prevention for the camps occupants. As part of the permit renewal, LBUSD intends to provide fire safe areas within the camp, update evacuation plans, reduce



flammable vegetation (fuel) and modify vegetative cover around the camp to minimize fire danger. The proposed action involves the following components:

- Creation of fire-safe areas within the camp for “shelter-in-place” protection in the event of an immediate wildfire threat, and providing systematic evacuation procedures in the event of a wildfire, involving the following specific elements:
 - Provide fire-awareness training to teachers and staff.
 - Utilize 3 newer buildings (Willow, Larkspur, and Yucca) as shelter-in-place locations with adequate room for sheltering 200 or more people.
 - Reduce fuels around shelters by 50 percent for 300 feet in a 180-degree radius at the northern end of the camp.
 - Provide a new dry hydrant connected to the pool or portable pump to provide an additional 30,000 gallon fire-fighting capacity.
- Implementation of a fuel reduction and a fuel break system within and around the camp consisting of a 50 percent reduction in the tree canopy within the camp and up to 300 feet outside the camp and along the main access road, including the following specific elements:
 - Remove dead limbs throughout the camp.
 - Thin brush beyond oak stands.
 - Clean fuels on the ground first and remove groundcover to the maximum extent.
 - “Limb-up” trees to approximately 20 feet off the ground to increase canopy height.
 - Clear all vegetation around propane tanks for 50 feet (as currently required).
 - At upper side of camp, limb-up trees for 50 to 100 feet around camp to provide buffer area.
- Continued maintenance of the camp and related facilities; and
- Issuance of a Special Use Permit for a 30-year term.

Comments should be submitted in writing and will be accepted until June 6, 2005. Issues and concerns should be addressed to:

Marty Dumpis, Acting District Ranger
Los Angeles River Ranger District
12371 N. Little Tijunga Canyon Road
San Fernando, CA 91342

If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please contact Annitta Keck at (818) 899-1900.

Sincerely,

S/ MARTY DUMPIS
MARTY DUMPIS
Acting District Ranger