

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Hollister Hills SVRA Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project

Project Location: Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area adjacent to the community of Hollister off Cienega Road in San Benito County, California.

Project Description: The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, proposes to construct hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails on the northern portions of the Renz (West Ranch) and Hudner (East Ranch) properties of the SVRA. The project trails would be located in areas designated by the Hollister Hills General Development Plan Amendment as buffer areas, which may be used for non-motorized recreation.

The proposed new trails on both properties would be multi-use trails and would be constructed and maintained through training opportunities and volunteer efforts. Generally, the trails would be 48" wide, constructed to follow land contours (curvilinear alignment) and would generally not exceed 10 percent overall gradient where feasible. The trails would be constructed with small equipment such as mini-excavators and trail dozers. On steeper side slopes, trails would be cut in by crews using hand tools. Best management practices (BMPs) would be selected from the OHV BMP Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control and utilized as necessary during trail construction. All trails would be designed to minimize the concentration of water and maintain hydrological invisibility per the 2008 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines. The primary design methods used for controlling trail drainage and erosion would be out-sloping, break-in-grades, and rolling dips.

A small practice mountain bike trail called a pump track would be located adjacent to the lower staging area. A pump track is a small mountain bike trail system that is commonly built in backyards. The proposed pump track would be 30 by 90 feet. The pump track would offer steeply banked turns and small roller jumps that riders could use to generate speed by "pumping" their bike with their arms and legs rather than pedaling. These types of practice tracks help mountain bike riders improve their bike handling skills and can be used by beginner to expert riders before or after riding the trails.

Two parking areas would be constructed to provide staging areas and access to the non-motorized trails. The primary staging area, approximately 3.5 acres in size, would be gravel Class II road base and would include parking for up to 40 vehicles, a CXT pre-cast vault toilet building, trash receptacles, picnic tables, and two shade structures. A second staging area would be located on the east side of Cienega Road northeast of Cienega gate. This staging area would be gravel Class II road base and would include parking for 15 vehicles and trash receptacles. The parking areas would be fenced in to keep people from driving outside the staging areas but will also provide large turn around areas for horse trailers.

A hike-in day use area would be installed in an area known as the "Pepper Tree" area, which would consist of picnic tables and trash receptacles. The Pepper Tree area is located about a third of a mile south from the main parking area.

The OHMVR Division has determined the project is subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The OHMVR Division is the Lead Agency under CEQA and has prepared an Initial Study and draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) finding the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

Project Applicant: OHMVR Division, Hollister Hills District
7800 Cienega Road
Hollister, CA. 95023

Comment Period: In accordance with CEQA, the OHMVR Division is soliciting comments on the adequacy and completeness of the analysis described in the IS/MND for the project. The public comment period begins on January 17, 2012, and ends on February 17, 2012, at 5 p.m. The public is also invited to attend the January 17, 2012, San Benito County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at 481 4th Street, Hollister, CA at 5:30 pm, during which the project will be discussed. The OHMVR Division shall consider the IS and all written comments received by the close of the comment period prior to deciding whether to adopt the MND and approve the project.

Document Availability:

The IS/MND and all documents referenced therein are available for the 30-calendar day public review and comment period. During the review period, copies of the IS/MND and all documents will be available for review at the following locations:

- Hollister Hills SVRA
7800 Cienega Road
Hollister, CA. 95023
831-636-2064
wesgray@parks.ca.gov
Contact – Wesley Gray
- CDPR, OHMVR Division
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 445-9152
Contact – Ryan Miller
- Electronic copies of all documents can be viewed and downloaded from OHMVR Division's website at ohv.parks.ca.gov/ohv_planning, on the CEQA / EIR Notices link.

How to Comment: Interested parties may provide written comments on the IS/MND, which must be **received** by the OHMVR Division no later than 5 p.m. on February 17, 2012. Written comments on the IS/MND may be provided by email to wesgray@parks.ca.gov or be sent via U.S. mail to the following address:

Attn: Wesley Gray
Hollister Hills SVRA
7800 Cienega Road
Hollister, CA. 95023

Verbal and written comment will also be accepted at the January 17 San Benito County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. For further information, please call Wesley Gray, Environmental Scientist, at 831-636-2064.