

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
March 17, 2011

LAKE BERRYESSA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CAMP

File No. 11-003-01
Project Manager: Sam Jenniches

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,500,000 to Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District to construct the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp on the Putah Creek arm of Lake Berryessa, approximately 30 miles northeast of the city of Napa, in Napa County.

LOCATION: Putah Creek arm of Lake Berryessa, approximately 30 miles northeast of the city of Napa, Napa County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Site Photos](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

Exhibit 4: [Mitigated Negative Declaration for Camp Berryessa](#)

Exhibit 5: [Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for Camp Berryessa](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) to the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District (the “District”) to construct the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp (the “project”), Napa County, subject to the following conditions:

1. The project shall not commence and no Conservancy funds shall be disbursed for the project until the Executive Officer of the Conservancy has reviewed and approved in writing:

- a. A project work program, budget, and timeline.
 - b. The names of any contractors that the District will retain to carry out all or part of the project.
 - c. A signing plan that acknowledges Conservancy funding.
 - d. Documentation that the District has obtained all permits and approvals required for the project under federal, state, and local law and, in particular, that the federal process under the National Environmental Protection Act has been completed and the project approved by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (“Reclamation”).
 - e. An agreement executed between the District and Reclamation that authorizes the District to construct the project improvements and establishes adequate site control and operation and maintenance authority.
2. In carrying out the project, the District shall comply with all applicable mitigation and monitoring measures for the project that are identified in the *Mitigated Negative Declaration for Camp Berryessa* (“Negative Declaration”) and the *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for Camp Berryessa* (“Mitigation Monitoring Program”), both adopted by the District on February 14, 2011, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibits 4 and 5, respectively.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31164, regarding the Conservancy’s mandate to address the resource goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program adopted by the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District on February 14, 2011 pursuant to CEQA (Exhibits 4 and 5) and finds that the project, as mitigated, avoids, reduces or mitigates possible significant environmental effects and that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize a grant of up to \$1,500,000 to the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District (the “District”) to construct the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp on the Putah Creek arm of Lake Berryessa, approximately 30 miles northeast of the city of Napa, in Napa County.

Conservancy funding will enable an initial phase of construction that will include the following components of the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp:

- Preparation of engineering plans and acquisition of permits,
- Mobilization and site work for construction access infrastructure,
- Development of access roads, trails and parking,
- Development of water, wastewater, and electrical systems and infrastructure,
- Facilities construction (including tent cabins, outdoor cooking facilities, toilets, showers, minor out-structures, and signage),
- Development of recreation and outdoor education facilities, and
- Funding for reservation system and other pre-operations start up needs.

Camp Berryessa will be the first public outdoor environmental education camp in Napa County, and will be constructed with sustainability as the guiding principle. Located on approximately 10 acres of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation land, the camp will flexibly accommodate groups of as few as 8 to as many as 120 campers in 30 tent cabins clustered in various locations on the site. Surrounded by water on three sides, the camp will be well situated to provide water recreation, including swimming, canoeing, kayaking and fishing. The camp will also connect to trails heading north along Putah Creek and south and east along the shores of Lake Berryessa, offering opportunities for hiking, riding and nature observation.

As an environmental education facility, the camp will primarily target school-aged children. The camp will be available for use by school groups as well as youth-serving organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Summer Search, Aldea Family Services and Court-Appointed Special Assistance. Environmental organizations such as Sierra Club, Audubon, California Native Plant Society will be secondary target users. The service area for the camp includes Napa County, but also extends throughout the Bay Area and the northern Central Valley. Within this service area, Camp Berryessa will be unique.

Site Description: Camp Berryessa is a former Boy Scout Camp on Lake Berryessa, along the east shore of Putah Creek. Lake Berryessa and most of its shoreline areas and hillslopes immediately above this (including Camp Berryessa) are owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (“Reclamation”), which maintains a branch office at the lake. Lake Berryessa, located approximately 30 miles northeast of Napa, is a reservoir that was formed when Reclamation built Monticello Dam on Putah Creek in 1957. In addition to acting as flood control, the lake is used for agricultural irrigation and drinking water and is one of the largest bodies of freshwater in California. It is also a major recreation destination, serving the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento Valley, and offering opportunities for boating and water sports, camping, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor recreation.

Camp Berryessa will occupy an approximately 15-acre peninsula that extends into and is surrounded on three sides by the Putah Creek arm of Lake Berryessa (Exhibit 1). Associated trails and facilities to be constructed and operated by the District will occupy an additional 15 acres of upland area. The peninsula includes a low hill with gentle slopes leading to the water’s edge. Approximately half the site is open blue oak woodland, with the remainder containing chemise chaparral scrub vegetation. Camp Berryessa has direct access to adjacent Reclamation

lands, as well as nearby lands managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Project History: When Reclamation adopted a new plan for Lake Berryessa in 2005 it identified the former boy scout camp on the Putah Creek arm of the lake as an ideal location for an environmental/outdoor education camp, provided a local partner could be found to construct and operate the camp. The Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District in 2007 entered into an agreement with Reclamation giving the District the right to prepare a feasibility study and preliminary design for such a camp. That study has been completed and accepted by Reclamation staff. In 2010, the District and Reclamation entered into a second agreement setting up a cooperative process for completing review under the the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On February 14, 2011, after completion of CEQA review, the District completed the CEQA process by adopting the *Mitigated Negative Declaration for Camp Berryessa* (“Mitigated Negative Declaration”, Exhibit 4) and the *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for Camp Berryessa* (“Mitigation Monitoring Program”, Exhibit 5). Reclamation has concurrently undertaken its required process under NEPA which is expected to be completed within the next several months. Once the NEPA process is completed and Reclamation has approved the project, Reclamation and the District expect to enter into a 25 year land-use agreement, renewable for additional terms, granting the District the authority to construct and operate the camp.

PROJECT FINANCING:

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|---|--------------------|
| Coastal Conservancy | \$1,500,000 |
| Napa County | \$ 50,000 |
| Mead Foundation | \$ 50,000 |
| Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District | <u>\$ 150,000</u> |
| Total Project Cost | \$1,750,000 |

In addition to the above, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is providing approximately 30 acres of prime waterfront property for the camp without charge, through a 25-year land use agreement, renewable for additional terms after the first 25 years. While valuation is difficult as no comparable arrangement exists in the region, the purchase of such a site, if one were available, could total over \$1 million.

Staff expects to use funds appropriated to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program from the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). This funding source may be used for the development of land resources, including protection of beach areas through the development of facilities that allow for public access to and continued enjoyment of those natural areas, in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. As discussed below, the project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The project is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165, to address resource goals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp project is located in Napa County, one of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties in which the Conservancy is authorized, under Sections 31160 and 31162 of the Public Resources Code, to undertake projects and award grants to address resource and recreational goals for the region.

Under Section 31162(d), the Conservancy may provide grants to promote, assist, and enhance projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes. That is the exact purpose and function of Camp Berryessa.

Further, the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp project satisfies all of the criteria for determining project priority under 31163(c), since the project: 1) is supported by adopted regional plans including: the Napa County General Plan (2008), through its Goal ROS-2, Policy ROS-20, and Policy ROS-28 that support the creation of environmental education facilities and access; and the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District Master Plan (2009) in Sections VI-10-100, VII-13-14, VI-80-81, VI-109 and VIII-3-4, that indicate campgrounds and environmental education facilities as a pressing need, and identify Camp Berryessa specifically as supporting this type of programming; 2) serves a regional constituency by creating access to open space and natural areas with camping and educational facilities to be used by regional school children; 3) can be implemented in a timely manner as project partners are ready to begin work immediately once funds are secured; 4) provides benefits that would be lost if the project is not quickly implemented, in terms of recreational and education opportunities for the region; and 5) will include significant matching funds, in the form of cash, in-kind services and use of land.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective B**, the proposed project will provide recreational facilities such as picnic and staging areas, docks and piers, campgrounds, parking lots, interpretive signs, and interpretive or educational centers.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective L**, the proposed project will include wheelchair-accessible or other ADA-compliant elements.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective M**, the proposed project will create, expand, or improve educational or interpretive programs that are tied to on-the-ground restoration projects or trail construction or enhancement and are available to the urban population of the Bay Area.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted July, 2007, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Organizations that support the project include the Blue Ridge Berryessa Partnership, the local district of the Boy Scouts of America, the Napa group of the Sierra Club, the Napa Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and the Napa Chapter of the Audubon Society. See Project Letters in Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** The project is located 30 miles northeast of the city of Napa in Napa County, within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
5. **Need:** The project could not be implemented without Conservancy funds, because there are very few granting agencies that will assist with developing new campground and environmental education facilities. Once the phase one facility is up and running and a successful track record developed, the District anticipates seeking funding from the Stewardship Council and other grant programs for future phases of improvements and enhancements.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp will fill a distinct gap in environmental education facilities accessible in the Bay Region. Additionally, the project will create much-needed camping facilities and make adjacent freshwater-based recreation more accessible to the Bay Region.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** If the District is not able to move forward in a timely way with the development of Camp Berryessa, Reclamation will most likely put the site out to bid for a private concessionaire to run as a for-profit facility. Such a facility would likely be too expensive for most school groups and non-profit organizations to make regular use of.
8. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
9. **Readiness:** The project is scheduled to be constructed in summer 2011 provided the necessary funding can be obtained.
10. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See the "Project History" section above.

11. **Cooperation:** The Bureau of Reclamation is the District's federal partner on this project, providing the land without charge and coordinating with preparing plans and obtaining permits.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Pursuant to CEQA, the District, as lead agency, prepared an initial study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Lake Berryessa Environmental Education Camp project (Exhibit 4). These circulated for a 30-day agency and public review period on Dec 23, 2010. The County received a letter from the State Clearinghouse dated January 24, 2011 stating that no state agencies submitted comments on the Draft Initial Study. The County did not receive any other comment letters regarding the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration. On February 14, 2011, the District adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program (Exhibits 4 and 5, respectively) The proposed Conservancy authorization requires that the District implement the mitigation measures identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program.

CEQA requires consideration of potential environmental effects of agency actions and approvals, unless exempt. The Mitigated Negative Declaration identified potentially significant impacts of the proposed project in the areas of biological resources and cultural resources. Mitigation measures were proposed and adopted to ensure that these potential impacts are avoided or reduced to *less-than-significant levels* as summarized here:

Biological Resources:

Plant Communities:

Temporary impacts on vegetation would occur from clearing for staging or trampling by workers or heavy machinery. Long-term direct impacts would result from permanently removing vegetation where new facilities and infrastructure would be located, including removing several trees and shrubs. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 will be implemented to further reduce impacts on native oak woodland vegetation.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1

Tree protection measures will reduce impacts to trees during construction and may include the following measures:

- To avoid impacts on mature oak trees (those with a six-inch minimum diameter at breast height), orange construction barrier fencing will be installed at their drip lines. Where appropriate, the barrier fencing will be installed 20 feet outside their drip lines;
- Trees in designated construction areas will be removed only if they had been designated for removal;
- Where avoidance is not possible, long-term impacts on oaks will be minimized by trimming limbs and branches over access roads or construction zones and by avoiding parking and excavating in the root zone.

Wildlife:

During construction, temporary impacts on wildlife due to increased noise, human presence, vegetation removal, and soil disturbance would occur. Permanent impacts would occur from habitat loss in those locations where vegetation is removed due to the construction of new structures and development. Implementing Mitigation Measure BIO- 2 would ensure impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2

To the extent possible, removal of trees and potential bird breeding habitat in the project area will occur between September 1 and January 31, when birds are not expected to be nesting, in order to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Prior to any tree removal and construction, a qualified biologist will conduct preconstruction field surveys in and adjacent to the project area for nesting migratory birds, including raptors. Surveys will be conducted during the season immediately preceding tree removal and grading operations when birds are building and defending nests or when young are still in nests and dependent on the parents. If no nests are found during the surveys, tree removal and grading may proceed. If nests are found, construction activities including tree removal shall not be conducted within a buffer zone designated by USFWS or the CDFG around the nest(s) until after the breeding season (typically February to the end of August).

Special Status Species:

Plants:

During Construction would have short-term temporary and long-term permanent, indirect, less than significant impacts on special status plant species due to habitat disturbance and loss. Reclamation would implement Mitigation Measure BIO-3 to ensure less than significant project impacts.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3

Before construction begins and during the appropriate season, a qualified biologist will conduct a survey for Green jewelflower, Jepson's milk-vetch, two-carpellate western flax, and Napa western flax. If these species were observed during surveys, project features will be adjusted to the degree possible to avoid impacts. If it were not possible to adjust project features to avoid sensitive plants, appropriate conservation measures will be implemented to ensure that impacts were less than significant. Possible conservation measures include transplanting particular specimens to a location outside of the construction zone and replacing affected individuals with nursery stock in the same location after restoring the affected area.

Wildlife:

Bald eagle, golden eagle, and prairie falcon could occur within the project vicinity. Construction would have short-term indirect impacts on these species due to increased noise and human presence. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-4, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4

If construction activities must occur during the breeding season for special-status birds and/or bats (February 1 to August 31), a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct nesting-bird surveys within 500 feet of the project site. These surveys must be conducted within one week prior to initiation of construction activities at any time between February 1 and August 31. If no active

nests or roosts are detected during surveys, then no additional minimization measures are required. If special-status birds are found in the construction area or in the adjacent surveyed area, a no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting/roosting location to avoid disturbance or destruction of the nest site/roost site until after the breeding season or after a wildlife biologist determines that the young have fledged (usually late-June through mid-July). The extent of these buffers will be determined by a wildlife biologist in consultation with the applicable resource agencies (i.e., USFWS and CDFG) and will depend on the level of noise or construction disturbance, line of site between the nest/roost and the disturbance, ambient levels of noise and other disturbances, and other topographical or artificial barriers. These factors will be analyzed and used by a qualified wildlife biologist to assist the USFWS and CDFG in making an appropriate decision on buffer distances.

Cultural Resources:

Native American consultations for the current Proposed Action have not yet begun. Although no Native American resources, such as sacred sites or TCPs, were identified through the consultations conducted for the wastewater treatment and disposal feasibility study, concerns or resources may be identified as a result of these subsequent consultations. Therefore impacts on Native American resources may occur by implementing the Proposed Action. These impacts would be reduced to less than significant by implementing Mitigation Measure CR-1. One archaeological resource, CA-NAP-0655, has been identified next to the APE and has been determined to be ineligible for listing on the NRHP. Therefore, no significant impacts on known archaeological resources are anticipated. In the event that previously unidentified cultural resources were encountered during construction or operation of the Camp Berryessa recreation facilities, Reclamation will comply with all applicable laws, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, in the event that human remains were identified. To avoid significant impacts on potentially buried or otherwise unanticipated cultural resources, Mitigation Measure CR-2 would be implemented.

Mitigation Measure CR-1

Reclamation will consult with Native Americans identified by the California Native American Heritage Commission as having cultural ties to the Camp Berryessa area. Tribes and individual Native Americans will be invited to voice concerns about project impacts on cultural resources. Reclamation will formally consult with respondents to resolve any impacts identified through the consultation process.

Mitigation Measure CR-2

If previously unidentified cultural resources were discovered as a result of the Proposed Action, project activities within the vicinity of the find will be stopped and a Reclamation archaeologist would be consulted on how to proceed.

In addition to these potentially significant effects, the Mitigated Negative Declaration reported some concern regarding the availability of adequate groundwater to meet the needs of the Camp at full build-out, which will not occur in the initial development proposed under the Conservancy-funded project. An existing on-site well was identified as the source of Camp Berryessa's water supply and the Mitigated Negative Declaration noted that further pump testing would be necessary to ensure that well would be able to meet the water demands of the Camp at full build-out. In response to concerns about this information, the District and its hydrologist have provided the following clarification which satisfactorily addresses this possible concern:

Minimizing water use is a criteria in the general design guidelines for Camp Berryessa and the facility's water consumption would be relatively small. In addition, there are no facilities with competing groundwater uses on adjacent lands. Further pump testing would be conducted to ensure the proposed project does not substantially deplete groundwater supplies, and ensure there would be less than significant impacts involving groundwater supplies. If necessary based on water availability, some facilities could be eliminated from the proposed build-out to reduce water use needs.

Conservancy Staff has independently reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by the District. Based on that review, staff concurs that the project to be funded by the Conservancy, as mitigated, does not have the potential for a significant effect on the environment. Staff, therefore, recommends that the Conservancy find that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will result in a significant effect on the environment as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination for the project.