

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Department of Recreation and Parks

October 1, 2020

TO: Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners
FROM: Michael A. Shull, General Manager 
SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS CAMPS LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

SUMMARY

The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) is the steward to over 16,000 acres of parkland, offering extensive recreational, social and cultural programs at over 400 park sites located in every Los Angeles neighborhood from the valley to the sea. RAP also owns or operates five (5) camp sites located outside the City, with the farthest camp located over 300 miles away in the high Sierra Nevada Mountains.

RAP's history with camps spans nearly an entire century, one that began with the opening of Camp Seeley in the San Bernardino National Forest circa 1917. RAP camps have traditionally offered a wide variety of accommodations, site features, and recreational opportunities. Of the five (5) camp sites located outside the City, two (2) are owned by RAP and three (3) are operated by RAP via permits with the US Forest Service.

Descriptions of each camp and their current status follow.

RAP owns the following Camp properties located outside the City boundaries:

- **Camp High Sierra**, a 41.5-acre camp located at 869 Lake Mary Rd, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. Camp High Sierra is located in the town of Mammoth Lakes in Mono County. Camp High Sierra currently includes over 40 individual tent camping sites, 10 small cabins, plus a main lodge building and a small dining hall/kitchen building.

RAP has a concession agreement with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, LLC (MMSA) for the operation and maintenance of Camp High Sierra (Report No. 12-265 and Council File No. 13-0691). Under that Agreement, MMSA is fully responsible for the development, operation, and maintenance of Camp High Sierra. The agreement has been in effect since September 2013 and has a term of 40 years, with an option to renew for 10 years.

- **Camp Decker**, an 18.46-acre camp located 3133 S. Decker Canyon Road, Malibu, CA 90265. Camp Decker is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Camp Decker has been closed since June 2010 due to concerns about water quality and sewer issues. In addition, last year, the camp sustained extensive damage from the Woolsey Fire that swept through Malibu and many existing structures and infrastructure at Camp Decker were either completely destroyed and/or need major restoration. Prior to the Woolsey Fire, this facility included individual and group tent camping sites, with an amphitheater style campfire area and restroom building, and was used for group camping (overnight) for children, overnights for Camp Hollywoodland Girls Camp, and other groups.

RAP is currently planning to rebuild/replace some of the damaged structures and infrastructure at Camp Decker with funding provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The scope of that work includes the (1) replacement of site fencing and bollards, (2) replacement of a retaining wall and stairway, (3) repairs to a small vehicle and pedestrian bridge, (4) repairs to multiple pedestrian footbridges. As Camp Decker is located within the jurisdiction of the County, and is within a mile of the coastal zone, RAP will need to secure the necessary permits and approvals from appropriate County and State agencies, including the California Coastal Commission.

Additionally, an assessment of the water and wastewater system was recently completed by one of RAP's on-call consultants. That assessment recommended that a new water well be drilled according to updated standards, upgrades to the water distribution system, and that the bath house and the septic tank be relocated. These water and wastewater system improvements will need to be addressed before Camp Decker could be reopened.

RAP operates the following Camp properties located outside the City boundaries via permits with the US Forest Service:

- **Camp Radford**, an 83.69-acre camp located at 3250 Radford River Rd, Angelus Oaks, CA 92305. Camp Radford is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and within the San Bernardino National Forest. Camp Radford has been closed since 1992 after sustaining significant seismic damage from the Landers Earthquake. The facility includes of a large main lodge, small cabins throughout the property, a dining hall/kitchen building, a small caretakers house and a workshop. In the past, Camp Radford was utilized to give children and families a mountain camping experience where they could enjoy the great outdoors.

The main lodge building suffered extensive earthquake damage in the Landers Earthquake and will need seismic retrofitting, hazardous material abatement, and significant upgrades. The swimming pool and bathhouse will also require significant renovation as well as equipment upgrades.

Recently RAP has completed various improvements to facility, including the repair of the roof of the dining hall building, the boarding up of windows and doors through the camp, and the installation of a new front entrance gates in order to help secure the facility from vandalism.

Camp Radford is currently in the mandatory evacuation area of the El Dorado Fire.

- **Camp Valcrest**, a 10.00-acre park located at Angeles National Forest H C 01 Box 18, La Canada, CA 91011. Camp Valcrest is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and within the Angeles National Forest. Camp Valcrest has been closed since June 2000 due to water and well issues. This facility consists of a main building that includes a kitchen and dining hall, plus dormitory style cabins and restroom buildings. Prior to closing, Camp Valcrest was used to bring children to the mountains, without travelling far to get there. Overnights were conducted for Recreation Center Summer Camp groups, and hosted the Wonderful Outdoor World (WOW) Program. For many, this was their first experience camping overnight, visiting the snow, etc.

Recently, a volunteer group (GOALS) has been doing some restoration work to the outside of the buildings and fencing (woodwork repairs, painting, replacing portions of fencing).

Camp Valcrest is currently in the mandatory evacuation area of the Bobcat Fire.

- **Camp Seely**, a 12.9-acre camp located at 250 N Hwy 138, Crestline, CA 92325. Camp Seely is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and within the San Bernardino National Forest.

Camp Seely is staffed, operated and regularly maintained by RAP under a permit from the US Forest Service. Camp Seely consists of 65 small cabins (holding 4-5 people), a dining hall/kitchen, historic general store and lodge, campfire area, swimming pool, and more. RAP conducts Family Outings during the Spring and Fall, run by Recreation Staff from the in-town camps and on-site staff at the location, as well as hosting the WOW Program and Senior Citizen Outings throughout the years. The site also hosts rental groups throughout portions of the year. It is closed during the winter due to heavy snow.

Camp Seely is currently closed due to COVID-19.