



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Stanislaus National Forest
Summit Ranger District

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File Code: 1950
Date: May 10, 2012

To all interested parties:

The Stanislaus National Forest, Summit Ranger District is seeking initial scoping comments on the Pinecrest Campground Improvements proposed action which would rehabilitate facilities, within Pinecrest Campground. The enclosed scoping package provides information related to the proposed action, the scoping process and how to submit comments.

You are receiving this scoping notice either because you have expressed interest in this project or because the Forest Service believes you may be directly or indirectly affected by this project. If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of or you have issues (points of dispute or disagreement) regarding potential effects of this proposal, this is your opportunity to comment.

Your scoping comments would be most helpful if submitted by June 11, 2012. The Forest Service will use your scoping comments to help identify issues and alternatives while preparing an Environmental Assessment, which I expect to be available for a 30-day opportunity to comment in September 2012.

Comments may be submitted to: Summit Ranger District; Attn: **Pinecrest Campground**; #1 Pinecrest Lake Road, Pinecrest, CA 95364. Comments may be submitted by FAX [209-965-3372] or by hand-delivery to the Summit Ranger District office address shown above, during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm). Oral comments must be provided at the Summit Ranger District office, in person or via telephone at (209) 965-3434 during normal business hours. Electronic comments, in acceptable [plain text (.txt), portable document format (.pdf), rich text (.rtf) or Word (.doc)] formats, may be submitted to: comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus-summit@fs.fed.us with Subject: **Pinecrest Campground**. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgment from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgment of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means [36 CFR 215.6(a)(4)(iii)]. Names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action, and will be available for public inspection.

For additional information regarding this project, contact Kathy Burnett at the Summit Ranger District, #1 Pinecrest Lake Road, Pinecrest, CA 95364; or, call (209) 965-3434 ext. 5313.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Summit Ranger District.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kevin Larkin
KEVIN LARKIN
Acting District Ranger



Pinecrest Campground Improvements (33840) Scoping Package

Stanislaus National Forest
Summit Ranger District
Tuolumne County, California

The Stanislaus National Forest is seeking initial scoping comments on the Pinecrest Campground Improvements proposed action which would rehabilitate all facilities, site amenities, roads, trails and infrastructure within the existing boundaries of the Pinecrest Campground in Pinecrest, California (Sec 21-22, T4N R18E, MDBM). This scoping package provides information related to the proposed action, the scoping process and how to submit comments.

Background

Pinecrest Campground has not been significantly modified or updated since originally constructed in the 1960s. The campground is a popular overnight destination with 80-100 percent occupancy from Memorial Day through Labor Day and less use in the spring and fall. The campground is closed during the winter. Operated under special use permit since 1986, Granger/Thye fee off-set agreements contribute to facility maintenance, but are not designed to retrofit or upgrade sites. Due to the age and use of the campground, the structural integrity of the facilities varies with increasing maintenance challenges and costs.

In addition, the Forest Service and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) entered into a Settlement Agreement in June 2006. Terms of the Settlement Agreement set forth requirements for the Forest Service and PG&E to jointly rehabilitate recreation facilities in Pinecrest associated with the Stanislaus Spring-Gap Hydroelectric Project. One element of the Settlement Agreement includes rehabilitation of the Pinecrest Campground and associated infrastructure.

Purpose and Need

The Stanislaus National Forest Plan Direction (USDA 2010)¹ provides goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction that apply to Pinecrest Campground. The Campground is situated within the Developed Recreation Site management area (p. 165-167) and the Pinecrest Basin public camping zone (p.174).

The purpose of this project is to reconstruct the facilities within the Pinecrest Campground to meet current laws and standards for accessibility, health and safety, and to better meet the needs of the recreating public visiting the Pinecrest area. Facilities need continual maintenance and repair to minimally meet customer service standards. These facilities do not meet current standards to improve health and safety and visitor experiences. Some facilities within the campground meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but most do not. Federal agencies are required to meet ADA standards at public facilities, and the proposed re-designs for the campground would meet these requirements.

Specific goals for the Pinecrest Campground Improvements project include:

1. Provide universally accessible campground facilities in the Pinecrest Basin.
2. Provide facilities that minimize resource consumption.
3. Provide camping opportunities that meet the experience needs of users now and into the future.
4. Minimize impacts to natural resource functions including meadow and drainage areas.
5. Improve roads, trails and parking spurs.

¹ USDA 2010. Stanislaus National Forest, Forest Plan Direction. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Stanislaus National Forest. Sonora, CA. April 2010. 196 p.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would rehabilitate all facilities, site amenities, roads, trails and infrastructure within the existing boundaries of the Pinecrest Campground. Specific improvements at the entrance station and within the campground would include:

1. Remove and rebuild the entrance station including electricity and phone utilities. Repave the entrance road between Pinecrest Lake Road and the loop access roads. Install new information/entrance kiosk.
2. Maintain the same approximate number of campsites (200) while incorporating accessibility design standards. In order to meet accessibility standards, it is anticipated that there may be a slight reduction in the number of sites. Sites will be located in consideration topographic features and potential resource impacts.
3. Remove and replace campsite amenities. Install new site amenities including site markers, tent pads, picnic tables, parking spurs with barriers and animal resistant food storage lockers.
4. Remove and replace existing barriers and parking spurs to create longer and/or wider spurs as needed. Consideration will be given to developing double sites and small group sites to accommodate the growing demand for group camping opportunities.
5. Remove all existing restroom facilities and construct new facilities with low flow fixtures to meet ADA and current health and safety standards.
6. Provide RV hookup at some sites. Consideration would be given to capacity at the Pinecrest sewer treatment facility. Sewer hookups, if provided, would not result in a net gain to the treatment facility which is currently at capacity (reference project design criteria).
7. Provide one host site per camp loop with bulletin/information board, water, sewer, and electrical hookup.
8. Resurface and/or reconstruct and/or realign the loop access roads and install directional signs and barriers. Install one gate at the loop entrance. Turning radii would be widened in some locations to accommodate longer vehicle lengths and longer towing lengths.
9. Replace existing restrooms with unisex flush restrooms with showers. Replace existing water and sewer lines within the campground. Replace water spigots.
10. Replace trash/recycle bins (including pads) with wildlife resistant bins and containers.

Project Design Criteria

The interdisciplinary team (IDT) identified the following design criteria, to minimize environmental effects that would be implemented with the proposed action.

1. **Botany:** protect, flag and avoid any occurrences of sensitive plants found before or during implementation.
2. **Cultural Resources:** design structures keeping with historic era of the Pinecrest Historic District.
3. **Facilities:** conduct engineering analysis prior to the development of RV hookups and shower facilities to determine whether these facilities can result in no net gain to the sewer treatment facility.
4. **Hydrology:** avoid and/or modify sites to restrict expansion into drainages/meadows.
5. **Vegetation:** protect all healthy sugar pines and trees during all operations; protect all healthy native vegetation where feasible.

Scoping Process

Public participation is important at numerous points during the analysis. The Forest Service seeks information, comments, and assistance from the federal, state, and local agencies and individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

Scoping identifies issues which are a point of discussion, dispute, or debate with the Proposed Action. An issue is an effect on a physical, biological, social, or economic resource. An issue is not an activity; instead, the predicted effects of the activity create the issue. Issues are then separated into the two groups shown below.

1. **Relevant Issues** are used to formulate alternatives, prescribe mitigation measures, or analyze environmental effects. Issues are significant because of the extent of their geographic distribution, the duration of their effects, or the intensity of interest or resource conflicts.
2. **Non-Relevant Issues** are: 1) outside of the scope of the proposed action; 2) already determined through law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific fact; 5) a comment, opinion, or position statement; or, 6) a question for clarification or information.

Timeline

The Forest Service intends to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proposal. Your scoping comments would be most helpful if submitted by June 11, 2012. The Forest Service will use your scoping comments to help identify issues and alternatives while preparing the EA, expected to be available for a 30-day opportunity to comment in the September 2012.

How to Comment

Comments may be submitted to: Summit Ranger District; **Attn: Pinecrest Campground**; #1 Pinecrest Lake Road, Pinecrest, CA 95364. Comments may be submitted by FAX [209-965-3372] or by hand-delivery to the Summit Ranger District office address shown above, during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm). Oral comments must be provided at the Summit Ranger District office, in person or via telephone at (209) 965-3434 during normal business hours.

Electronic comments, in acceptable [plain text (.txt), portable document format (.pdf), rich text (.rtf) or Word (.doc)] formats, may be submitted to: comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus-summit@fs.fed.us with Subject: **Pinecrest Campground**. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgment from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgment of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means [36 CFR 215.6(a)(4)(iii)]. Names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action, and will be available for public inspection.

Information Contact

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