

# EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

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## NEGATIVE DECLARATION

**LEAD AGENCY:** East Bay Regional Park District

**NAME OF PROJECT:** 1994 Amendment of the Briones Regional Park Land Use-Development Plan

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Northwest portion of Contra Costa County; upland open space between Lafayette and Martinez.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The 1981 Land Use-Development Plan (LUDP) is amended to zone new parcels added to park boundaries; to add a new recreation unit in the Lafayette Ridge area where an equestrian camp will be established; to provide a fire/maintenance trail connection at Vista Bella Road in Lafayette; and to relocate a camporee site into the Coyote Valley area with access on Bear Creek Road.

**MITIGATION MEASURES:** None

### DETERMINATION:

An Initial Study has been prepared under the direction of the East Bay Regional Park District's Planning/Stewardship Department in which the environmental effects of the proposed project have been evaluated. On the basis of this Initial Study, a copy of which is attached, the EBRPD has found that the proposed project (including any mitigation measures which will be incorporated in the project) would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require an Environmental Impact Report.

ATTEST:

  
Chief, Planning/Stewardship

DATE:

12/6/94

## **SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST/INITIAL STUDY**

**PROJECT TITLE:** 1994 Amendment of the Briones Regional Park Land Use-Development Plan

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Northwest portion of Contra Costa County; upland open space between Lafayette and Martinez.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The 1981 Land Use-Development Plan (LUDP) is amended to zone new parcels added to park boundaries and zone major creeks; to add a new recreation unit in the Lafayette Ridge area where an equestrian camp will be established; to connect the Lafayette Ridge multi-purpose trail at Vista Bella Road in Lafayette; and to add a new staging unit/camporee site in the Coyote Valley area with access on Bear Creek Road.

### **PROJECT SITE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

A description of natural resources in the Briones Regional Park and adjacent areas is found in the 1981 Resource Analysis/Management Plan.

The project sites were visited by Jill Singleton and Karen Parsons during the spring, summer and fall of 1993. Ray Budzinski, Range Management Specialist; Nancy Brownfield, Integrated Pest Management Specialist; Joe DiDonato, Wildlife Specialist and Ken Burger, Water Management Specialist evaluated the park on site visits during numerous dates in 1993 and in years previous.

**Topography:** Lafayette Ridge runs northwest-southeast, with exposed aspects at the southeast end. The recreation unit is located around the 650' elevation on a level site. Coyote Valley is a small, open valley with a southwest aspect upslope of Bear Creek Road.

**Geology:** Lafayette Ridge is typically Briones Formation - Tertiary Sandstone; Coyote Valley typically Tertiary siltstone and medium-grained Holocene alluvium.

**Soil:** Lafayette Ridge is typically Lodo clay loam with 30-50% slopes. Coyote Valley is typically Los Osos clay loam, 30-50% slopes.

**Slope Stability:** Both Lafayette Ridge and Coyote Valley are highly susceptible to both erosion and landslides. The depth to bedrock is typically 1-2 feet.

**Earthquake Fault Proximity:** Potentially active fault zones occur in the park; the park is approximately 10 miles from the nearest Alquist-Priolo Study Zone.

**Water Bodies:** Seasonal creek flows in Coyote Valley drain to Briones Reservoir

**Prevailing Wind:** The typical prevailing wind is from the west.

Vegetation/Wildlife: Lafayette Ridge and Coyote Valley are typically grassland subjected to grazing the past century and a half. Oak woodland is found in the draws adjacent to the Lafayette Ridge Recreation Unit and through the center of the Coyote Valley area.

Special Status Species (plants or animals): The potential for supporting habitat for *Fritillaria liliacea*, *Helianthella castanea* and *Calochortus pulchellus* exists in the project vicinities, however no sightings in these grazed areas have occurred despite the frequency of spring site visits by District staff. Chaparral habitat in central portions of the park is known to support Alameda Whipsnake.

Cultural Artifacts/Sites: The creek and valley bottom area of Coyote Valley has a moderately high probability of containing pre-historic hunting and food gathering sites.

Archaeological Literature Search: A 1981 literature search described no known archaeologic sites in the vicinity of the park.

Site Utilities: Lafayette Ridge is served by telephone and electricity. The Lafayette Ridge site requires replacement of an existing water supply connection and existing water tanks. The Coyote Valley site requires importing of water for group camp use. Both sites require installation of storage vaults for restrooms and access for pumping of sewage. Any use of a leach line at Lafayette Ridge would require an engineering study.

## PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION

An impact level has been assigned to each question below, assuming no mitigation. The impact category levels are: SIGNIFICANT; UNDETERMINED; NEGLIGIBLE; OR CUMULATIVE. Locations and descriptions of impacts, and feasible mitigations are explained below each question.

Would The PROJECT result in:	Impact Level
1. Hazard because of geologic, hydrologic, or soil conditions (seismic risk, flooding, landslides)? see attached	Negligible
2. Grading, excavation, fill, or change topsoil? see attached	Negligible
3. Altered stream, lake, pond, aquifer, bay, or marsh? see attached	Negligible
4. Changed site runoff rate or drainage pattern?	Negligible
5. Degraded water quality or increased erosion and sedimentation affecting any water body? see attached	Negligible

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| 6.  | Air quality deterioration or objectionable odors?<br>see attached   | Negligible |
| 7.  | Increased average noise levels or intrusive noise from equipment or traffic on or off site?   | Negligible |
| 8.  | Disturbance or removal of valuable vegetation or wildlife habitat (especially marsh or riparian)?<br>see attached   | Negligible |
| 9.  | Reduction of number or habitat of any rare, unique, or endangered plant or animal?  | Negligible |
| 10. | Barrier to animal migration or species eliminated from the parkland?  | Negligible |
| 11. | New species of plants or animals introduced to the detriment of the native flora and fauna?   | Negligible |
| 12. | Effects on mosquito abatement program?  | Negligible |
| 13. | Changes to wildfire conditions (intensity, frequency or hazard)?  | Negligible |
| 14. | Damage to known or probable prehistoric or historic archaeological resources?<br>see attached   | Negligible |
| 15. | Change or restrict unique ethnic cultural or religious uses?  | Negligible |
| 16. | A change to land use inconsistent with: city or county zoning; District parkland classification, Master Plan Units, Land Use-Development Plan; or adjacent land uses?<br>see attached | Negligible |
| 17. | Effects to human population distribution, growth rate or density, or quality/quantity of housing?   | Negligible |
| 18. | A reduction in any type of recreational opportunity reduced parkland acreage, access, or facilities)?   | Negligible |
| 19. | Altered views from surrounding communities or within the parkland (because of grading, construction, structures, vehicle encroachment)?<br>see attached                               | Negligible |
| 20. | Changes to vehicular, equestrian, bicycle, or pedestrian circulation or access?<br>see attached   | Negligible |

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| 21. | Changes to on or off site parking?<br>see attached  | Negligible |
| 22. | Increased traffic?<br>see attached  | Negligible |
| 23. | Hazard to pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists, or motorists on trails or roads, or at intersections?<br>see attached                                     | Negligible |
| 24. | A change in utility facilities or service levels?<br>see attached   | Negligible |
| 25. | A change in levels of police or fire protection?  | Negligible |
| 26. | Increased vandalism, trespass, or arson?  | Negligible |
| 27. | Exposure of people to natural or man-made health hazard emergency medical precautions; or increased risk of explosion or release of hazardous substances? | Negligible |
| 28. | Increased use or decreased availability of energy or any resource?  | Negligible |

**Mandatory Findings of Significance**

**Yes or No**

Does the PROJECT have the potential to:

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|-----|--|----|
| 29. | Degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal; or have a significant effect upon unique archaeological resources? | No |
| 30. | Achieve immediate, not long-term, environmental goals?   | No |
| 31. | Cause impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?   | No |
| 32. | Have direct or indirect environmental effects which will cause substantially adverse effects on human beings?  | No |

Public Agency Consultation and Possible Public Controversy

Yes or No

Have other agencies been consulted about the project?

Yes

Contra Costa County Public Works, City of Lafayette (Planning),  
East Bay Municipal Utility District

Does the project have identified public controversy?

No

CEQA DETERMINATION: PREPARE A

- (X) NEGATIVE DECLARATION - Project would have NO significant impact.
- ( ) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT - Project needs further evaluation to determine impacts. Identified areas of focus are:

If you have any questions please contact Jill Singleton, Park Planner at (510) 635-0135, ext. 2325

Date: September 15, 1994



Maxine Turner  
Chief Planning/Stewardship Department

**ATTACHMENT TO PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION - 1994 Amendment to the Briones Regional Park Land Use-Development Plan.**

Would the PROJECT result in:

**1. Hazard because of geologic, hydrologic, or soil conditions?**

The potential for such hazards increases with levels of use, particularly during the wet season when soils become saturated. The equestrian day camp concessionaire will have seasonal day camp use (DRY SEASON ACCESS ONLY) to the Lafayette Ridge Recreation Unit on the Lafayette Ridge Trail except for possible year round access for a security resident. Access to a security residence would be year round. Limited access during the wet season is intended to minimize road use impacts (ie., rutting, gulying, slumping, etc.) and maintenance requirements on the existing road. Any major road widening would require engineering of steep slopes and geotechnical evaluation of slope stability and is not a part of this project.

**2. Grading, excavation or change topsoil?**

Camporee site development for group tent camping and parking uses relatively level ground and will involve minimal or no grading. The Lafayette Ridge Trail access grading to Vista Bella Road was determined not to be a significant impact in an evaluation by a geotechnical engineer in 1991. Cut and fill is estimated to be less than 700 cubic yards for the driveway access. Fill will be spread on parkland adjacent to the cut.

**3. Altered stream, lake, pond, aquifer, bay, or marsh?**

The plan amendment includes a footbridge and a stream ford in Coyote Valley. The site is immediately north of Bear Creek Road. The intermittent creek drains towards the east end of Briones Reservoir. The District shall apply for a Stream Alteration Agreement for the bridge and the ford under Section 1601 with the California Department of Fish and Game.

A STREAM FORD using a combination of geotextile overlaid with appropriate, clean aggregate and similar to a ford design used by the USFS is proposed for crossing the creek in the Coyote Valley area. The portion of the riparian corridor affected is 50' - 75' across. The stream ford design allows water flow over and through the aggregate during the wet season, and may be closed to vehicle access by the park supervisor during the wet season when there are high stream flows.

The intent of the stream ford is to allow trail user access between Fire Trail 19-19 and the valley bottom entrance to Coyote Valley during much of the year, but not during the wet season when aggregates may become destabilized. Camporee vehicle access across the ford is to be limited to equipment vehicles during dry conditions only. Camporee equipment vehicles could use the Pereira Trail/Fire Trail 19-19 access route to the camporee site during wet conditions.

Camporee campers will hike to the camporee site from the parking area adjacent to Bear Creek Road. The stream ford is not intended for intensive recreational use during the wet season, and may be closed to use by the park supervisor during wet season camporee events when there are high stream flows.

A MINIMUM CREEK SETBACK ZONE of 50' from the creek bank in Coyote Valley is closed to activities such as cattle and horse holding areas, intensive recreation use, cooking areas, multi-use trails. A single track trail may be permitted a minimum 20' from the creek bank.

Enclosure fencing will be constructed to protect wetlands associated with springs in the former Rosa/Pereira properties.

5. Degraded water quality or increased erosion and sedimentation affecting any water body?

The use of the stream ford (upstream of Briones Reservoir) during dry conditions only will not significantly affect water quality in the Coyote Valley creek. Fencing of the camporee area to exclude cattle during the camporee season should reduce the level of sedimentation in the riparian corridor.

6. Air quality deterioration or objectionable odors?

While the Lafayette Ridge Recreation Unit provides for the confinement of horses between April 15 and October 15, manure will not be disposed of onsite. No manure, cleaned from stalls and corrals, will be stockpiled longer than 14 days unless composted. All manure and compost will be removed by October 15 of each operating season.

8. Disturbance or removal of valuable vegetation or wildlife habitat?

Beneficial impact. The fencing of the camporee area to exclude cattle during the camporee season should provide the opportunity for riparian vegetation to re-establish itself in the Coyote Valley riparian corridor.

14. Damage to known or probable prehistoric or historic archaeological resources?

Should any cultural resources be unearthed during camporee site development at Coyote Valley, all earth disturbing activities will be halted until the site is evaluated by a qualified archaeologist.

16. A change to land use inconsistent with local designations or adjacent land use?

All parkland uses are consistent with general plan designations within the City of Lafayette and of Contra Costa County.

**19. Alteration of views?**

Visibility of a maximum 200 parked vehicles in Coyote Valley from Bear Creek Road will occur several times a year for camporee events and as a staging area for bicycle or running events. The parking area is visible for a brief interval to east and west bound traffic on Bear Creek Road.

Visibility of the equestrian day camp on Lafayette Ridge will be similar to or less visible than previous equestrian facilities on the site present since the 1950's. The recreation unit will be managed to maintain vegetative cover similar in character to adjacent grazed grasslands on the ridge.

**20. Changes to vehicular, equestrian, bicycle, or pedestrian circulation or access?**

Hiking, bicycling and equestrian access is maintained through the Lafayette Ridge recreation unit on the existing Lafayette Ridge Trail. Adjacent equestrian use areas in the recreation unit will be fenced and set back a reasonable distance from the trail.

Fire vehicle access on the Lafayette Ridge Trail in the vicinity of Vista Bella Road will be re-opened. This is a beneficial effect.

The Bear Creek Road access to the Coyote Valley area will receive increased use during the camporee season and the occasional staging of bicycle/running events. Camporees and other reserved events will not overlap. Each event will include the staged arrival and departure of a maximum 200 vehicles. Use will be on a limited basis, not a regular weekend basis. The District will work with Contra Costa County Public Works to eliminate stacking of vehicles on the roadway, signage, visibility and to address other criteria as established by the county for the encroachment permit.

**21. Changes to on or off site parking?**

Onsite parking is increased at Coyote Valley from no capacity to 200 vehicles at peak use events such as camporees. Onsite parking at Lafayette Ridge is established at the lower elevation staging area for 46 vehicles. New total parking capacity for 15 vehicles will be provided in the Lafayette Ridge Recreation Unit, a maximum of 6 vehicles adjacent to the barn and a maximum of 9 vehicles at the former resident site #2.

**22. Increased traffic?**

The Lafayette Ridge staging area will receive a maximum increase of 50 trips per weekday and Saturday during the day camp season April 15 to October 15 each year. These shuttlebus/staff/service trips are phased throughout the day and include access and egress. The staging area is served by Pleasant Hill Road, a four lane arterial.

Bear Creek Road is a two-lane arterial receiving weekday commuter use and is posted for 50 mile per hour traffic. It will receive an increase of a maximum 200 vehicles per event, held on a limited basis, on weekends during the April to September period. The vehicle arrival and departure will be staged as part of site reservation conditions. There will be minimal or no overlap between peak weekday use and peak weekend event use.

23. Hazards to road and trail users?

The access and egress for the Coyote Valley driveway at Bear Creek Road was evaluated. Sightline visibility at Bear Creek Road is 800 feet to the north and 845 feet to the south, evaluated as adequate by R. Faraone of Contra Costa Public Works, 1993.

24. A change in utility facilities or service levels?

The previous stable operation used a septic field on Lafayette Ridge. Any leach line use or re-use in the Lafayette Ridge area will be subject to appropriate engineering approvals, particularly in regard to subsurface water movement in areas of fill or slope instability. A small water tank (typical 5,000 gallons) may be added at the Coyote Valley locations. Two water storage tanks may be replaced at the Lafayette Ridge location. Minor trenching will be required for new water lines. Chemical toilets only are proposed for Coyote Valley.