



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
P.O. Box 942896 • Sacramento, CA 94296-0001  
(916) 657-4042

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Acting Director

September 2, 2014

Peggy and Bernie Martin  
11190 Highway 79  
Descanso, California 91916

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Martin:

Your letter dated August 2, 2014 to Director Lisa Mangat regarding equestrian camping at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park has been referred to my office for review and response. I appreciate your concerns and am glad to have the opportunity to address them.

Your letter states that the Colorado Desert District of California State Parks has changed practices concerning the reservation or use of campsites with equestrian amenities, including the equestrian family and group camping areas. To clarify, the District has not changed any policies or practices concerning equestrian campsites. In addition, there has been no change to the language regarding the equestrian group camping facilities on ReserveAmerica's website.

As a public agency, we must ensure equal access for all members of the public to all public facilities. Thus, there is no statewide policy that ensures exclusivity for a specific user group such as equestrians. Instead, we provide "preferred" access to equestrian amenities by requiring persons who make a reservation to acknowledge that they will be travelling with a horse. If an equestrian site remains available after 5 pm on the day of arrival, it is District policy to open that site up to all campers. These practices are consistent with a majority of other state park units.

As your letter astutely points out, non-equestrians camping among horses can create safety concerns. However, these concerns are not limited to the campground. As with any recreational activity, there is always an inherent risk to the user and innocent regardless of the location or activity. The departments' policies and procedures attempt to minimize those potential risks while maintaining a fair and equitable balance of used by all visitors. In the examples your letter provided it appears most maybe appropriately mitigated through etiquette interpretation and education in various forms and when necessary, the presence and the action of our state park peace officers.

Peggy and Bernie Martin  
September 2, 2014  
Page 2

I appreciate your concern for and support of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Should you have any other concerns please feel free to contact me, Acting Southern Division Chief Brian Ketterer, at (916) 657-4042 or [brian.ketterer@parks.ca.gov](mailto:brian.ketterer@parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Ketterer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Ketterer, Acting Chief  
Southern Division

cc: Lisa Mangat, Acting Director  
Stephen R. Lehman, Deputy Director