

June 16, 2001

The Honorable Rodney S. Melville, Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

William L. Cathey
Grand Jury Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Planning and Development Department Response to Santa Barbara County 2000-2001
Grand Jury Final Report on Juvenile Probation

Dear Judge Melville and Mr. Cathey:

Planning and Development offers the following responses as directed. This department has had limited involvement with the Los Prietos Camp issue, other than to prepare the 1996 environmental document at the request of Probation. We are pleased to join the Treasurer-Tax Collector in confirming the need to conserve employee housing whenever possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this 2000-2001 Grand Jury Report.

Very truly yours,

John Patton
Director of Planning and Development

xc: Ms. Joni Gray, Chair Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Ms. Naomi Schwartz, Supervisor, First District
Ms. Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District
Ms. Gail Marshall, Supervisor, Third District
Mr. Tom Urbanske, Supervisor, Fifth District
Mr. Michael Brown, County Administrator
Ms. Doreen Farr, Chair, Planning Commission

**Planning and Development
Responses to
2000-2001 Grand Jury Report on Juvenile Probation**

FINDING 13: The November 1996 NEPA/CEQA report noted a loss of water from the supply loop serving the five housing units at the Los Prietos Boys' Camp site.

Response to Finding 13: Agree.

FINDING 15a: The Forest Service plans to begin construction bidding of the expanded project at the First Crossing site on July 1, 2001.

Response to Finding 15a: Agree, based on advice by Probation.

FINDING 15e: The Forest Service's July 1998 signed Environmental Assessment for the First Crossing picnic area was based on a maximum of 12 picnic sites serving 16 to 24 people each.

Response to Finding 15e: Agree. The description of the "proposed action" on page two of the 1998 Environmental Assessment reads as described in the finding.

FINDING 15f: Subsequently, the Forest Service has repeatedly stated that they plan for 15 sites, an increase of 25% over the maximum number of sites evaluated in the Environmental Assessment, apparently without further environmental assessment.

Response to Finding 15f: P&D has no information about the Forest Service's intentions.

FINDING 15g: The additional motor traffic destined for the First Crossing picnic area and the additional commuting that would be needed by the five relocated probation staff has not been factored into the 1995 Environmental Assessment.

Response to Finding 15g: P&D is not in possession of a 1995 Environmental Assessment. The 1998 Environmental Assessment did not analyze motor traffic. The 1996 joint Environmental Assessment and Negative Declaration found that traffic volumes and traffic safety were not above threshold of significant levels.

FINDING 15h: No air quality assessments were done, nor were mitigation concerns formulated, for the additional traffic and the new barbecues planned for the First Crossing site.

Response to Finding 15h: Agree. The 1998 Environmental Assessment did not address air quality. The 1995 combined document did not contemplate the picnic area.

FINDING 15i: Under the original 1973 agreement, as amended, between the Forest Service and the County, the five staff houses are slated for demolition and the area cleared and returned to “near natural state” prior to December 31, 2003.

Response to Finding 15i: Agree, based on advice by Probation.

FINDING 15l: Eliminating the three proposed picnic sites not evaluated in the Environmental Assessment would obviate the need to demolish the five houses and still provide sufficient numbers of picnic sites at that location.

Response to Finding 15l: P&D has no information on the configuration of proposed picnic area.

FINDING 15m: The demolition and cartage of staff housing mandated by the Forest Service would be at County expense, estimated at \$36,000 to \$76,000, a range based in part on an estimate of tippage costs. These funds would have to be allocated well before the December 31, 2003 deadline for completion.

Response to Finding 15m: P&D has no information on who would bear the cost burden of demolition.

FINDING 15n: The loss of any housing within the County is regrettable.

Response to Finding 15n: Agree. P&D concurs with the Treasurer-Tax Collector that the loss of any housing, particularly affordable employee housing, can only contribute to making an existing bad situation worse.

FINDING 15o: The demolition of these houses would be an unfortunate loss of valuable and scarce County resources under the control of the Forest Service.

Response to Finding 15o: Agree. P&D concurs with the Treasurer-Tax Collector that in addition to the general need to preserve affordable housing, these housing units serve to reduce long-distance commuting by staff working at Los Prietos.

FINDING 15p: The buffer provided by the presence of the five staff families from the Probation Department in the existing houses enhances security in the area and also inhibits access between the proposed recreation area and the Camps.

Response to Finding 15p: Agree. While P&D has no expertise on this issue, the finding certainly makes sense.

Recommendation 14: The Camps should immediately carry out their proposed plan to relieve the existing water lines.

Response to Recommendation 14: The recommendation requires further analysis. P&D agrees the leaks should be fixed. The manner of repairs will be determined by Probation and General services.

Recommendation 15c: The Probation Department should encourage the Board of Supervisors to request that the Forest Service stay within the (environmentally assessed) original number of 12 picnic sites.

Response to Recommendation 15c: The recommendation will not be implemented by P&D. While P&D is listed as a respondent, the recommendation is directed to Probation. P&D has no information about the Forest Service's intentions. P&D concurs that federal actions requiring review under NEPA should be limited to that which was analyzed in an approved environmental document.