



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: February 2, 2017
To: Recreation & Park Commission
Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
From: Dennis Kern, Director of Operations
Re: Camp Mather

Agenda Item Wording: Discussion and possible action to approve the allocation of \$291,600 from the Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve – Undesignated Reserve to fund relocation of the Ropes Challenge Course at Camp Mather and to acquire and install two pre-fabricated cabins for expanded staff housing at Camp Mather

Strategic Plan

Strategy 1. Inspire Public Space: Keep today's parks safe, clean, and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow

Objective 1.2: Strengthen the quality of existing parks and facilities

Background

In 2014, the Department requested and the Commission approved an allocation of \$200,000 from the Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve – Commissioners' Reserve to fund facility improvements at Camp Mather. One of the key improvements that was funded in that 2014 allocation was the design and installation of a Ropes Challenge Course. Working with a nationally renowned Ropes Course designer – Project Adventure – we designed an exciting Ropes Course that is installed in a stand of tall trees near Birch Lake. It has proven to be one of our most popular camp features. Every week of the camp season there are far more campers that want to participate in the Ropes Course experience than we have the capacity to provide (*i.e.*, we have Wait Lists every week).

Two years ago, partially as a natural outcome of the devastating Rim Fire, the conifer trees at Camp Mather (as all the Sierra Nevada) come under attack by the Pine Bark Beetle – a tiny but voracious insect that bores into conifer trees and quickly kills them. This beetle infestation has decimated over 66 million trees all along the Sierra Nevada range. There is no measure to combat or slow the vector, other than below freezing Winter temperatures to kill the egg masses deposited in the trees' cambium layers. Our existing Ropes Course – installed by Project Adventure in the camp trees – is now a casualty of this beetle infestation. The trees used for course apparatus and the trees immediately surrounding the course have all been infested and have died over the last



two years. Consequently, this tree condition makes our current Ropes Course unsafe for continued use.

Discussion

The Department has consulted with Project Adventure on relocating the Ropes Course and we have jointly decided upon a course design to be installed on 50-foot poles instead of trees. Project Adventure has provided us an attractive and challenging design for such a course, and we have identified a site at camp that can offer the same wilderness 'feel' that our current tree-installed course offered participants.

The projected cost for this project is \$240,000, which includes a cost premium to construct the course using the PUC Job Order Contract authority. The estimated cost is a result of the following factors:

- ✚ This course design will require the acquisition of tall poles and installation by footing and guy wires, which was not the original course design which utilized trees
- ✚ The course elements in the design are somewhat more complex, challenging, and interesting than our original course design; thus, more expensive
- ✚ Salvaging elements from our current tree course design for reuse in the new pole course design is only minimally possible.
- ✚ As with the previous Rope course construction, we are proposing to use the Job Order Contracting authority of the PUC which is already in place for the PUC's ongoing work at Hetch Hetchy.

The projected cost from Project Adventure is a 'worst case' scenario. They have not completed their design drawings yet and are still completing project cost estimating. It is very likely that the entire project cost will be less than the projected \$240,000 and, if so, any balance will be returned to the Undesignated Reserve. The Department is making this allocation request now so that funds are identified and available for Project Adventure to proceed with their work to have the new Ropes Course installed and ready for the 2017 camp season.

Additionally – and linked operationally to the Ropes Course – our camp staff component has increased over the last few years as we have offered more recreation options to our weekly campers. Our Ropes Course staff is certainly part of this staffing increase, as are increased number of lifeguards, custodians, and other summer employees who work to deliver a great summer camp experience for San Francisco families. This staffing increase has overstressed our ability to house staff for the summer. Rather than convert existing cabins for staff use (which would reduce the number of families that could be at Camp Mather each week), the Department has identified a prefabricated cabin built in California that can augment our existing staff housing. The cabin design is a rustic, log cabin-type design and is appropriate to the overall Camp Mather look and feel. See Attachment A for depiction. If approved, the Department would acquire 2 of these 2-person cabins and install them in the vicinity of the 2 existing staff dorms at Camp Mather (the "Shangs"). Each cabin is \$21,500, assembled and delivered. Our Maintenance Crew would finish the installation (electrical hook-up and

footing into a crushed rock base), once delivered. This acquisition would also be completed using the PUC's Job Order Contracting authority which incurs a premium.

Summary of the requested allocation from the Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve – Undesignated Reserve:

✚ Ropes Challenge Course design and relocation installation	\$200,000
○ JOC Premium estimated at 20%	\$ 40,000
✚ Two pre-fabricated 2-person cabins @ \$21,500 each	\$ 43,000
○ JOC Premium estimated at 20%	\$ 8,600
Total Request	\$291,600

There is an adequate fund balance in the Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve – Undesignated Reserve to fund this request (\$909,050). See Attachment B for the current account status of the three sub-funds of the Contingency Reserve.

Staff Recommendation

Approval of an allocation of \$291,600 from the Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve – Undesignated Reserve to fund design and relocation of the Ropes Challenge Course at Camp Mather and to acquire and install two pre-fabricated cabins for expanded staff housing at Camp Mather.

Attachment A: Trophy Amish Cabins 10'x18' Hunter Deluxe Cabin

Attachment B: Open Space Fund Contingency Reserve Tracking Status of Uses for FY16-17

In Support: Friends of Camp Mather

In Opposition: None known