

# HIDDEN FALLS REGIONAL PARK TRAIL EXPANSION PROJECT

## FAQ'S

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### **1. Would there be showers at the proposed Twilight Ride property?**

- No. Showers have never been (and will not be) a part of the Project Description for the Twilight Ride property, or any other part of the expansion areas.

### **2. Are large, retail buildings proposed for the Twilight Ride property?**

- No. There are no commercial-style retail buildings proposed. Although a small structure may be constructed for concessions (e.g. bicycle rentals), no other buildings are anticipated besides the restroom and a barn. Any on-site structures are proposed to blend with the rural characteristics of the area.

### **3. Would there be night lighting in the parking areas?**

- Since the trail expansion areas would be closed from dusk to dawn, there is no lighting proposed for the new potential parking areas on the Garden Bar Road parcel, the parking area on the Harvego Bear River Preserve area or at the Twilight Ride property. The only exception to that would be potential low-level lighting for restrooms at each parking area, and for the proposed concession and barn structures on the Twilight Ride property. Any lighting utilized for the proposed structures would meet night sky lighting standards, and as such, would direct light downward and not upwards or out.

### **4. Would all the existing oak trees be removed on the Twilight Ride property?**

- No. Because the proposal is to utilize Tree Preservation funds for a portion of the purchase, the Blue Oak Woodland area in the southern portion of the 40-acre parcel would be preserved in perpetuity. The parking areas are being planned specifically in areas that would require virtually no tree removal.

## **5. Would all 50 acres of the Twilight Ride property look like one big parking lot?**

- No. Of the entire 50 acres, less than 4 acres is proposed to be paved for an access driveway and automobile parking, and the proposed parking areas would be located on the back 40 acres, which are not visible from Bell Road. Although portions of the parking areas could be visible from the adjacent neighbors' homes, the County is committed to working with concerned neighbors on appropriate screening to minimize their views of the proposed project. On the 40-acre parcel, an automobile parking area is being considered within the northwest quadrant, and a gravel parking lot for horse trailers is being considered for the northeast quadrant. There would also be a small number of parking spaces available for the potential horse barn. No parking or structures would be built in the pond areas, located on the west side of the 40-acre parcel. Those areas are to remain in their natural state. Approximately 10 acres of the 40-acre parcel may be used for a horse-boarding facility, with a barn and fenced pasture area.

## **6. Would the trail expansion areas be open during the night?**

- No. Like the portion of the park currently available to the public, the hours of operation would be dusk to dawn, and the gates at each of the parking area locations would be closed and locked every evening.

## **7. Would additional Rangers be added for the new areas?**

- Yes. We find that the current Hidden Falls Ranger program is an effective tool for assisting visitors and enforcing rules. With the expansion, County

staff would propose increasing the number of Rangers to maintain the current proportion of staffing to park acreage levels.

## **8. What would be done to help limit over-crowding on weekends?**

- We have learned a lot from usage at the Mears entrance and would apply that knowledge to the proposed parking areas so that they function smoothly from the outset. The new parking areas would utilize the reservation system for the weekends and other peak usage days in order to limit the amount of traffic on local roadways. Additionally, “No Parking” signs would be placed along the entrance roads in order to confine parking to the designated parking areas.

## **9. How would fire dangers be addressed?**

- Local residents have voiced the concern that visitors to the proposed expansion areas might cause wildfires. Since the opening of the existing park in 2009, there has never been a wildfire started by the public. While we cannot guarantee that there will never be a visitor-related fire, the County has invested more than half a million dollars to reduce the risk of wildfire and provide rapid access to Fire and Emergency Service personnel within the current park area. There are approximately 120 acres of shaded fuel breaks (areas on the tops of the hills where the trees have been trimmed up and the understory thinned) and goats are used annually to maintain those fire break areas. Also, there is a 12,000-gallon water tank on site, 3 helistops, and with the installation of the bridges, the north side of Raccoon Creek is accessible by fire crews. We are planning and evaluating similarly high levels of fire safety maintenance and preparedness within the proposed expansion areas.

## **10. What about public safety, including vandalism and theft?**

- The Parks Division works closely with the Placer County Sheriff’s Office to address public safety at all its facilities, from Roseville to Lake Tahoe. Park

Rangers would be assigned to the proposed expansion areas to help enforce County ordinances and to patrol the areas.

### **11. How would the increased traffic from the expansion affect the Bell Road area?**

- The Traffic Study being prepared for the Subsequent EIR will not only analyze how additional traffic from the project would affect the local roadways, but also will look at any cumulative effects from other known projects.

### **12. Would cattle grazing in the expansion areas still be allowed if the public is allowed on the properties?**

- Yes. We have been informed by the Placer Land Trust (PLT) that it intends to continue cattle grazing on all of the property it owns within the proposed trail expansion areas. For those areas where PLT holds a conservation easement, the property owners may continue to graze cattle if they so desire. Other respected agencies such as the East Bay Regional Park District in the Bay Area have successfully integrated cattle grazing with public trail use. The Twilight Ride property is not proposed for cattle grazing, but horse grazing and boarding might take place on a portion of the property.

### **13. Why were the Placer Legacy Open Space Fund and Tree Preservation Fund approved as partial funding sources for the Twilight Ride property?**

- Placer County manages the Placer Legacy program, which grew out of the County General Plan. As it was being developed in the late 1990's, one of the key goals was to "conserve natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities." The Legacy Program contributed to the purchase of the existing Hidden Falls Park and helped the Placer Land Trust (PLT) fund the acquisition of the

expansion areas. Purchase of the Twilight Ride property would give the public access to the trail expansion areas. The use of the Tree Preservation Fund monies would protect and preserve the existing oak woodland habitat on the property. This area is contiguous to the 4,000 acres of oak woodland preserved by the PLT. Since the Tree Preservation Fund contribution would constitute 33 percent of the total Twilight Ride property acquisition cost, at least 33 percent of the property would be preserved as oak woodland habitat.

#### **14. What is the schedule for the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report, and how can I voice my opinions? (Revised 2/2019)**

- A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was previously issued for the Project, and a public comment period ran from January 31 – March 1, 2017, with 45 comment letters being received. Because the project description was amended to reflect the potential use of the Twilight Ride parcels, a Revised NOP went out on June 4, 2018 and another 30-day public review and comment period ran from June 5 – July 6, 2018. During that review period, the County received over 70 comment letters from the public, both in favor of and against the project. Comments received during both the initial comment period and the subsequent comment period will be addressed in the Draft Subsequent EIR. The following tentative schedule includes multiple opportunities for public comment:
  - a. Early Summer 2019 - Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be available for public review and comment (45 days). Planning Commission will hold a meeting, at which public comment on the draft Subsequent EIR will be accepted.
  - b. June/July 2019 – Staff will seek a recommendation on the proposed project from the North Auburn and Rural Lincoln MACs.

- c. September/October 2019 – Final SEIR to be published. Board of Supervisors hearing on the request for a CUP Modification and certification of the SEIR.