

December 17, 2013

County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Works
Water Resources Division
ATTN: Reservoir Cleanouts Program
PO Box 1460
Alhambra, CA 91802-1460
reservoircleanouts@dpw.lacounty.gov

RE: DEVIL'S GATE RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Dear Department of Public Works, Water Resource Division,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EIR for the DEVIL'S GATE RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT. I can't imagine what a herculean task you have ahead deciding how best to assess and implement the sediment removal project.

While we support the sediment clean up in general, we are concerned about the impact as defined in the dEIR on our camp families and our business and are requesting the following modifications: 1) No sediment removal in the willow forest and alluvial scrub areas during the months of June, July, and August; 2) A phased approach that allows for places within the project area that can continue to be used for recreational purposes; 3) A longer timeline for the project to help minimize impact on those who use the park; and, 4) Preservation of the willow forest and the alluvial scrub area from denuding and/or from being used as permanent maintenance zones.

Tom Sawyer Camps is our family business and has been in operation since 1926. We have been using Hahamongna Watershed Park as our campsite for the last 70 years (since 1944). Approximately 1250 of our campers and 150 staff use this site each summer, which now includes three generations of campers. This park is critical to our day camp programs and heavy truck traffic during the summer months and denuding the willow forest and alluvial scrub areas would have a critical negative impact on our business as well as the children and families that have come to rely on our programs.

Camp is an antidote to bullying, isolation, over reliance on technology and many other challenges facing our youth. At Hahamongna, campers age 3-14 have critical exposure to wilderness adventure. During the summer, they hike, ride

horses, build secret forts, observe wildlife, play games, sing songs, build self reliance and self esteem, and develop friendships that last a lifetime. We rely heavily on the access, peace and beauty of the willow forest and the alluvial scrub areas for these experiences, along with other areas of the park. Hahamonga is home to generations of staff and campers whose lives have been directly and dramatically enriched by this natural refuge.

We are a small business and our request could easily go unnoticed but we believe the impact we have on the children of tomorrow is significant. Summer in the watershed is a rare and unique opportunity for children to be away from noise and disruption and engage with nature and outdoor adventure in a safe, peaceful, and joyful manner. We hope you will see the value of camp and make every attempt to minimize the impact the sediment clean up will have during the summer months and for the generations of children to use the park in the years to come.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our concerns and needs. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael Horner
President
Tom Sawyer Camps
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