

From: Coloma Lotus Advisory Committee
To: El Dorado County Parks Department, Parks and Recreation Commission, Board of Supervisors
Re: Coloma Lotus Advisory Committee (CLAC) Park & Recreation Recommendations
Date: May 18th, 2021

At the CLAC's May 18th, 2021 meeting, the following recommendations from the CLAC's ad hoc Parks and Trails Committee were presented and agreed upon by the CLAC members.

Cronan Ranch Parking:

It is critical that steps be taken as soon as possible to address both the current and future parking needs at Cronan Ranch. On weekends and some weekdays, demand for parking at Cronan Ranch significantly exceeds the available parking for cars and vehicles towing horse trailers. As a result, as many as 40 to 50 cars park on the shoulder of Pedro Hill Road, leading to potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles while also creating access issues for residents living on Pedro Hill Road. The lack of adequate parking and resultant congestion at the entrance to Cronan Ranch and along Pedro Hill Road creates an additional public safety issue in the event of a wildfire.

After a site visit on May 3, 2021 and a follow-up Zoom meeting to discuss the parking issue on May 11, 2021, the Ad Hoc Parks and Trails Committee identified three potential solutions to create additional parking at Cronan Ranch to meet both current and future demand and to address the public safety and access issues. These are listed in priority order;

1. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) could purchase up to three parcels of private land located immediately adjacent to Cronan Ranch between the north boundary of Cronan Ranch and State Route 49 to provide the necessary additional parking. If the funding is not awarded in the current 2021 LWCF funding cycle for this option, then option 2 below should be executed as soon as possible and hopefully in 2021.
2. El Dorado County and BLM could enter into a formal agreement to be determined by the two parties, which could include the transfer of land necessary for only the parking, in order to give BLM the ability to construct a parking lot on a portion of the County's 64-acre parcel to meet existing and future demand. This agreement would also need to include an easement or some arranged access to the remaining county property.
3. Pending a determination of the size of the parking area needed to meet existing and future demand, El Dorado County could construct a gravel parking lot on a portion of its existing 64-acre parcel located at the entrance to Cronan Ranch.

Use of County's 64 Acres at Cronan Ranch:

Along with the critical priority of creating additional parking at Cronan Ranch listed above, the future use of the remaining county owned property at Cronan Ranch is still undecided. The CLAC will develop a community planning process involving interested stakeholders from across the county to address the potential best uses of the county's parcel located at Cronan Ranch. CLAC will form an ad hoc planning committee that will facilitate a public planning process and coordinate delivery of those findings to the Parks and Rec. Commission in coordination with the development of the Parks Master Plan.

Acquisition of Additional Parcels for County Parks in Coloma-Lotus River Valley:

1. The CLAC's recommended highest priority for land acquisition are the two Dave Thomas parcels, together comprising 25.6 acres, that stretch from highway 49 to the South Fork American River. This prioritization is specifically intended to leverage the extraordinary one-time funding opportunity afforded by the state's Prop 68 grant program:
 - a. These two parcels would create a premier native riverfront recreation destination for the greater Sacramento region.
 - i. A distinctive destination feature that will increase tourism and recreation visitation from outside the immediate rural area is a core goal of the Rural Recreation and Tourism grant.
 - ii. The river itself and its natural beachfront comprise the distinctive destinations of the proposed Park, which we know are compelling from the overcrowded riverfront conditions at HLP.
 - iii. Adding to the appeal of this acquisition is the boundary that it shares with an upstream riverfront BLM parcel that is landlocked and currently inaccessible to the public.
 - iv. This park would provide a more natural riparian counterpoint to the more developed existing HLP lands immediately across the river which are dominated by sports fields.
 - b. The CLAC recognizes that this project would commence ahead of the upcoming Parks Master Plan
 - i. However, this property is too compelling and the funding opportunity too exceptional to not pursue it.
 - ii. The vision for the park would be to minimize maintenance and development costs by preserving most of the natural landscape, creating trails and beach and riverfront access.
 - iii. At the same time, its close proximity to HLP would facilitate integrated Parks management.
 - c. The CLAC's other recommendations and considerations include:
 - i. The highway 49 frontage would be the preferred egress to and from the Park, and would help to minimize any traffic impact on nearby Beach View residential parcels. (All the parcels on Beach Court itself are commercially zoned with the exception of the Mother Lode Church at the end.)
 - ii. **Riverfront parcels are increasingly rare, especially riverfront that is adjacent to existing restaurants and shops.** These parcels would be a huge loss to the community if lost to an incompatible use. This Highway 49 riverfront acquisition is a truly exceptional opportunity that will not come again.
2. The Community and the CLAC remain interested in the Van Noord property located behind the Lotus Fire Station #74, but given funding parameters, believes that our current focus should be on the opportunity to acquire the Thomas property as our highest priority.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendation and look forward to working with you and county staff on pursuing these recommendations.

Warmest Regards,



Howard Penn,
Chairman, Coloma Lotus Advisory Committee