



Rim of the World Recreation and Park District

P.O. Box 8 - 26577 State Highway 18

Rimforest, California 92378

(909)337-7275

Fax:(909)336-5239

www.rim-rec.org

November 1, 2017

Subject: Re-imagining the Rim of the World Recreation and Park District

Dear Residents, Businesses, and Visitors:

Over the last few years your local Rim of the World Recreation and Park District (ROWRPD) has taken extraordinary steps to improve oversight and accountability to ensure the District's future continues to sustain a quality of life desired in the San Bernardino Mountain Communities. The following are a few of the necessary steps that the ROWRPD has taken to ensure we maintain the ability to provide quality recreation and parkland opportunities to the entire service area:

1. We continue to develop and adopt balanced annual budgets on time and with a healthy fiscal reserve to cover emergency facility repairs and other expenditures as needed.
2. We have adopted estimated five-year projections for revenues and expenditures as part of the annual budgeting process.
3. We have adopted new procedural policies related to public finance and auditing practices, and user fees.
4. We refined personnel and contractor regulations and policies.
5. We developed and approved a five-year capital improvement plan to ensure important maintenance and upgrades to ROWRPD facilities are not deferred to the detriment of the District taxpayers.

A "pay as we go" fiscal philosophy continues to serve the District well. Avoiding taking on additional debt service up to this point has been a major factor in the District's current financial health. Highlighting the District's steps as outlined above is important to better appreciate why your ROWRPD is now planning to reshape its future by embracing new recreation and park projects and reestablishing its joint collaborations with other local districts and stakeholders. This grand initiative is intended to implement a recreation and park district as it was envisioned when it was established in December 1985.

I encourage you to visit the District's website at www.rim-rec.org to learn more about all the activities offered and the facilities available today to all District residents, businesses, and visitors in the 110-square-mile service area (from Green Valley Lake on the east to Crest Forest/Valley of Enchantment on the west). Also take time to read a brief history about the District on the website.

Most recently the ROWRPD was approached by some local residents and business owners asking the District to explore the acquisition and development of parkland facilities in and around the Crestline communities. As a result of this request, the District began a comprehensive evaluation of five (5) potential sites which included a surplus property owned by the Rim of the World Unified School District, two (2) properties owned by the United States Forest Service, the abandoned Lake Gregory Education Center school property located contiguous with Lake Gregory, and an exploration of the potential acquisition of the County's Lake Gregory Regional Park.

All of these sites were evaluated not just from a fiscal impact analysis perspective but also from the District's Mission Statement perspective. In other words, could these potential sites be acquired, developed into parks, and maintained by the District with no or at least very little fiscal impact to the District's budget? As of the date of this open letter to our District residents and businesses, all the potential sites listed above are still in play, and no formal determination has been made by the full ROWRPD Board.

ROWRPD Mission Statement:

"To help enrich and fulfill the lives of the citizens through the provisions of facilities and programs that will provide and enhance creative, wholesome, and imaginative leisure time living patterns"

Getting to this point of discussing new park facilities in the District could not have been possible without the generous time commitment and input from local residents and businesses who participated during a handful of meetings with the District's Planning and Facilities Subcommittee and our General Manager. The District anticipates more public meetings in the near future to discuss park planning.

One of the major concerns the District heard from the public relates to the impacts caused by the closing of the Lake Gregory Ball Fields due to the County's efforts to construct a new dam for Lake Gregory – among other important lake facility improvements. The ROWRPD was ready and eager to take a greater leadership role in locating a replacement for the loss of the Lake Gregory Ball Fields.

An interim solution involved a collaborated effort between the ROWRPD and the Rim of the World School District. Mrs. Karen Reams, our Park District General Manager, and the Board of Directors rolled up their sleeves and sharpened their pencils and began meetings with the Rim School District team to find a solution to the loss of the Lake Gregory Ball Fields. During those meetings the ROWRPD put its sights on the abandoned Lake Gregory Education Center located at the eastern shores of Lake Gregory. That school site had been vacant for many years and it appeared to have all the right components for a new Recreation and Park District Community Center, and most importantly it has flat land (something hard to find in the San Bernardino Mountains) to accommodate a new state-of-the-art ball field. The Rim School District agreed with the ROWRPD vision for the Lake Gregory Education Center and soon thereafter approved a new Joint Use Agreement with the ROWRPD. Our District's General Manager is

currently making plans to host an open house at the Lake Gregory Education Center to solicit design ideas for our new Community Center on the shores of the beautiful Lake Gregory. Stay tuned for more information on the future open house event.

With the new Community Center now in the works, the District can now focus its attention on another unique recreation opportunity – which is to explore the potential acquisition of the County's Lake Gregory Regional Park located in the Crestline communities. Although speculative at this time, the potential acquisition of the Lake Gregory Regional Park facility may only include the land around the Lake, and the water and Dam would continue to be maintained by the County. The ROWRPD visualizes the aging Lake Gregory Regional Park facility as another great opportunity for the District to provide improved recreational services for all District residents, businesses, and visitors. This potential opportunity to acquire and revitalize the existing Lake Gregory Regional Park will also help revitalize the Crestline communities. The Lake Gregory Regional Park was one of the first regional parks created in the County of San Bernardino – which was purchased from a private company in 1985. Taking a quick visit to the site you can easily see that the Lake Gregory Regional Park has reached its lifespan and is in need of a facelift and significant modernization upgrades.

Coincidentally the ROWRPD was also established in 1985 as an independent special district authorized to provide *“local park development, operation, maintenance, recreation, and child care.”* This service directive makes the ROWRPD the logical governance body to potentially acquire and manage in perpetuity the County's Lake Gregory Regional Park facilities as a new community park. Converting the aging Regional Park into a new state-of-the-art Community Park & Sports Complex for the entire 110-square-mile District to enjoy should be something everyone can get excited about.

In addition to embracing our role of providing recreation and park services for the San Bernardino Mountain communities, the District has in place an effective local governance infrastructure which includes an elected Board of Directors, a functioning support staff, and a stable budget. This local governance infrastructure is a critical component that gives the San Bernardino Mountain communities a platform to participate in the planning and implementation process. That being the case, there are several things the ROWRPD can do better than other local agencies to ensure the Lake Gregory Regional Park facility is managed and revitalized (after potential acquisition) into a public facility that will improve the quality of life in the San Bernardino Mountain communities. First, the District Board of Directors could consider establishing a new Rim of the World Community Park/Sports Complex Subcommittee made up of local stakeholders in the ROWRPD to help the elected Board and its staff manage the necessary short-term and long-term facility improvements. Second, the District could collaborate and create partnerships with other local districts through Joint Powers Agreements or other similar arrangements to ensure the large Rim of the World Community Park/Sports Complex could be managed and improved in a fiscally sustainable manner (both in the short term and long term). Third, and something the District Board is investigating, is whether the District residents and businesses would be willing to increase their current \$22.00 property tax assessment or at least include an escalator to help pay for a portion of the District's long-range maintenance of its current and future facilities (inclusive of the potential Lake Gregory Regional Park acquisition and conversion into a Community Park). The potential tax assessment will help offset the normal progressive increases in future expenditures related

to providing park services. Finally, the District's governance infrastructure and fiscal stability puts the District in a position to effectively compete for state and federal park grants that could be used to offset the cost of constructing new recreation and park facilities in the ROWRPD.

I hope this open letter was helpful in shining the light on some of the exciting future park projects and the vision the Rim of the World Recreation and Park District is initiating to further improve recreational opportunities available in your community.

If you find this information as exciting as your District Board and our support staff do, we encourage you to send a support letter to the ROWRPD's Corporate Office at P.O. Box 8, Rimforest, CA 92378, or email your support to Karen Reams, our General Manager, at kreams@rim-rec.org. Your support for the potential acquisition of the County's Lake Gregory Regional Park facility and converting it into a Community Park/Sports Complex is also appreciated. We encourage you to send an email to Janice Rutherford, San Bernardino County Supervisor for the Second District, and let her know you support the District's opportunity to acquire, manage, and convert the Lake Gregory Regional Park facility into a new Community Park/Sports Complex. Ms. Rutherford's email is supervisorrrutherford@sbcountry.gov, and her office phone number is (909) 387-4833.

On behalf of the entire Rim of the World Recreation and Park District Board and dedicated staff and the many recreation service contractors (i.e, coaches, instructors, teachers, parents, students, and other leaders) who are offering unique District programs to the community, thank you for your positive input and support.

Sincerely,



Lawrence A. Mainez

Board Chair, Rim of the World Recreation and Park District

Cc: Rim of the World Recreation and Park District Board of Directors
Karen Reams, ROWRPD General Manager
Janice Rutherford, San Bernardino County Supervisor, Second District

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."

Helen Keller