

McCarty Ranch Preserve: Camping Feasibility Report

Presented by: Brad Keen, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation

City Council Winter Retreat
March 3rd & 4th, 2016





***Port St. Lucie Strategic Plan
Goal 5: Expanded Leisure Activities
Policy Action 2015-2016***

Campground at McCarty Ranch Preserve

Today's presentation will:

- 1. Identify an area at McCarty Ranch Preserve that is suitable for development as a camping area.***
- 2. Discuss the feasibility of developing camping at the Ranch, and the regulations recommended for camping operations.***
- 3. Seek direction from City Council.***

Proposed Camping Area at McCarty Ranch Preserve



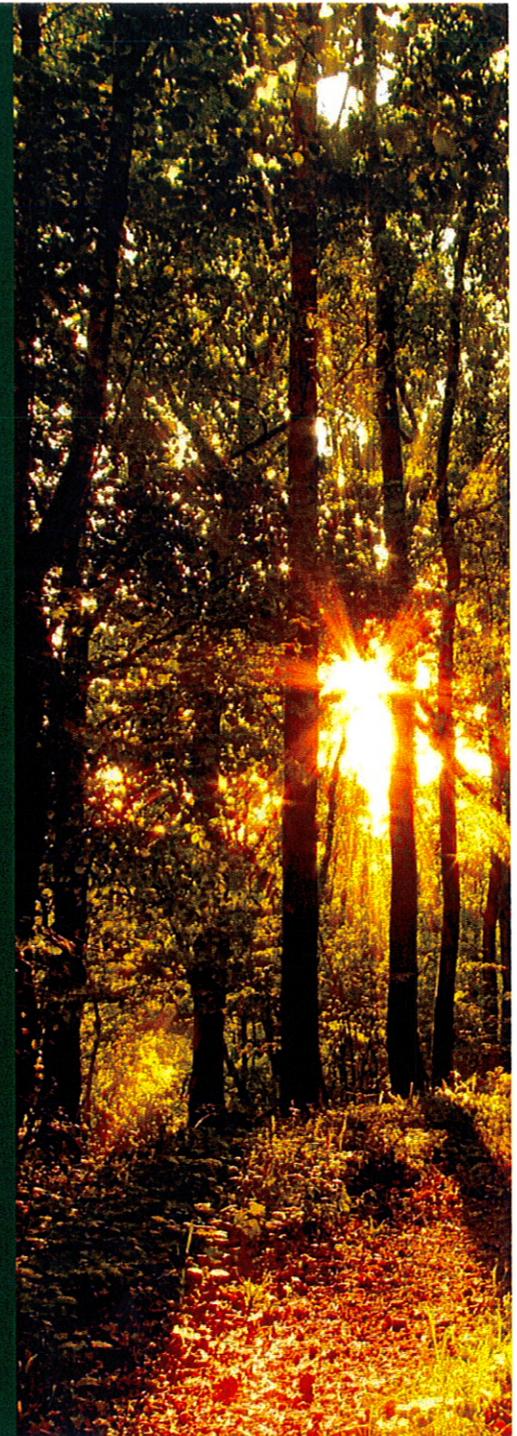
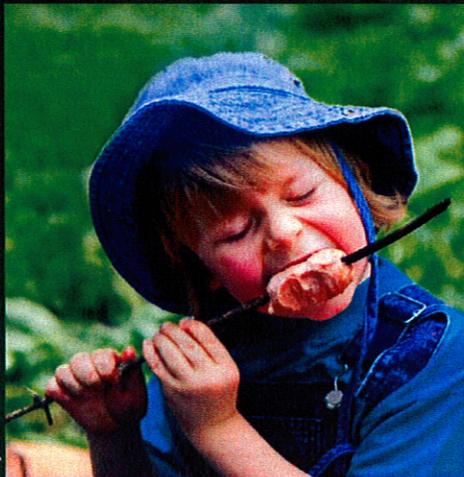
New Restrooms



+/- 25 Acres

The 2014 American Camper Report, presented by the Coleman Company and the Outdoor Foundation, shows that:

- 40.1 million Americans, or 14% of the U.S. population over age six, participated in camping in 2013.
- Among current camping participants, 85% took their first trip between birth and age 15. After the age of 15, the chances of being introduced to camping were slim.
- All indications are that camping is here to stay as one of America's favorite pastimes.
- 99% of camping participants said they were "likely" or "very likely" to camp in the future.



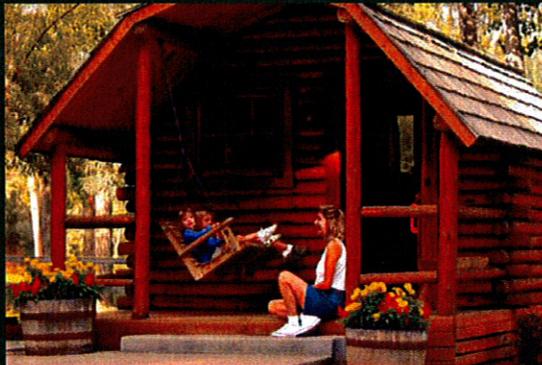
Camping Options



#1- Glamping



#2- RV/Trailer
Camping

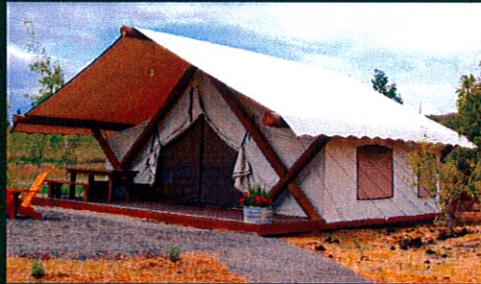


#3- Camping Cabins



#4- Rustic/Primitive
Camping for Youth
Groups

Glamping



Pros

- New destination point for area visitors and tourists.
- Creates new leisure opportunities for an active lifestyle (PSL Vision 2030).
- Revenue generating.

Cons

- Large upfront development costs.
- Large investment in property amenities.
- Hardened underground infrastructure required (water, sewer, electric).
- Heavy guest support services (significant staffing levels required).



RV/Trailer Campground

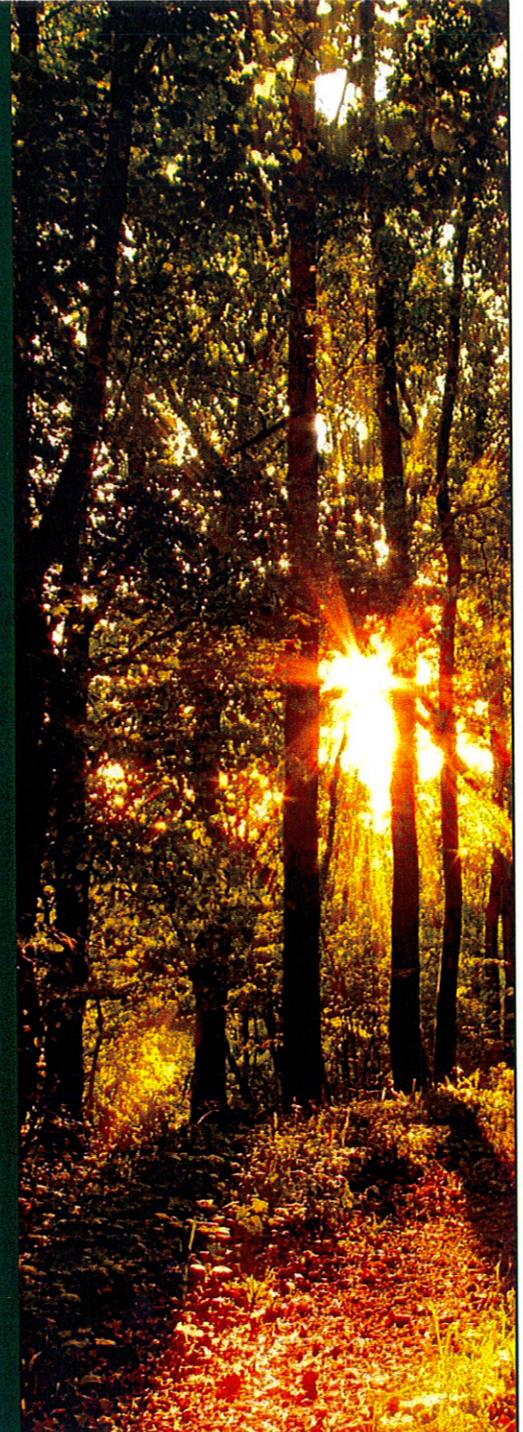


Pros

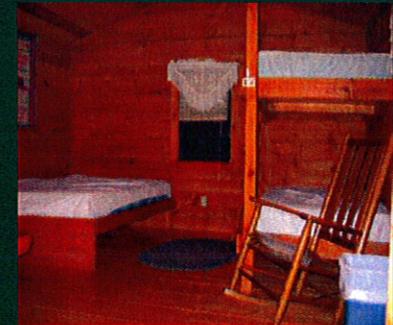
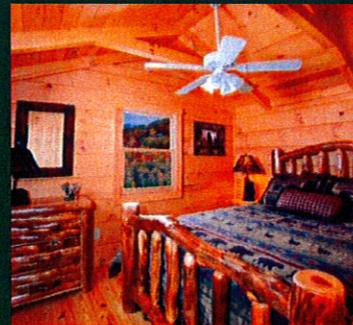
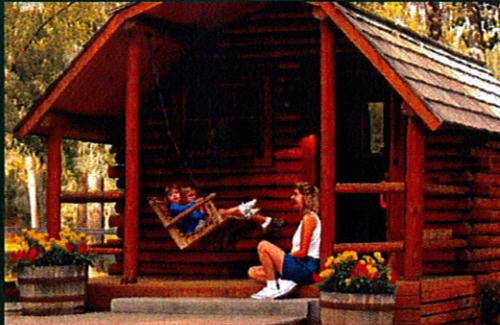
- New destination point for area visitors and tourists.
- Creates new leisure opportunities for an active lifestyle (PSL Vision 2030).
- Revenue generating.

Cons

- Large upfront development costs.
- Moderate investment in property amenities.
- Hardened underground infrastructure required (water, sewer, electric).
- Moderate guest support services (moderate staffing services required).



Camping Cabins



Pros

- New destination point for area visitors and tourists.
- Creates new leisure opportunities for an active lifestyle (PSL Vision 2030).
- Individuals can enjoy a camping experience without having to provide their own shelter.
- Revenue generating.



Cons

- Costs per unit are moderate to expensive depending on size and amenities.
- Moderate site development costs, moderate investment in site amenities.
- Some hardened infrastructure required.
- Some guest support services (moderate staffing levels required for house cleaning & maintenance).



Rustic/Primitive Camping for Youth Groups



Pros

- New local experience for residents, area visitors and tourists.
- Creates new leisure opportunities for an active lifestyle (PSL Vision 2030).
- Minimal to low capital investment for development.
- Minimal hardened infrastructure required.
- Minimal staffing required.
- Use can be controlled by permit.
- Minimal to low impact on natural environment.



Cons

- Initially limited to organized/supervised youth groups.
- Minimal revenue generated.
- Availability can be impacted by adverse weather conditions.





Proposed
**Rules &
Regulations**

- Federal, state & local laws apply.
- Campers must check in with Parks & Recreation and/or have a valid camping permit.
- Individuals must be 18 years or older to rent a campsite. Parent or guardian must be on site with minor age children and are responsible for their conduct.
- Campers are responsible for keeping their campsites orderly at all times.
- Maximum length of stay - to be determined based on camp level.
- Off road vehicles, motorcycles and ATV's are prohibited.
- No ground fires. Campfires are allowed in enclosed fire rings or grills only. Campfires are not to be left unattended.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.



Proposed
**Rules &
Regulations**
(cont'd)

- City is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property.
- The City reserves the right to remove anyone violating the campground rules, destroying or defacing property, or creating a disturbance.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- All garbage and trash must be disposed at a provided dumpster.
- Washing boats, RV's, or vehicles on property is prohibited.
- Pets - to be determined based on camping level.



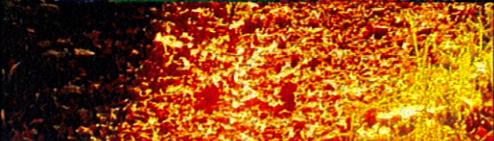


Summary

- The feasibility of developing camping opportunities at McCarty Ranch Preserve can easily be justified both by the millions of people who call themselves “campers”, and by the fact that camping continues to be one of America’s favorite pastimes.
- To what level, and subsequently, at what cost, should camping facilities be developed at McCarty Ranch?
- Caution must be exercised when planning any recreational facilities at McCarty Ranch Preserve as the future needs of the City’s Utility Systems Department are not fully known.
- While staff does recognize the value and recreational enjoyment of Options 1, 2 & 3, it is far less costly to develop and maintain a rustic/primitive camping area.

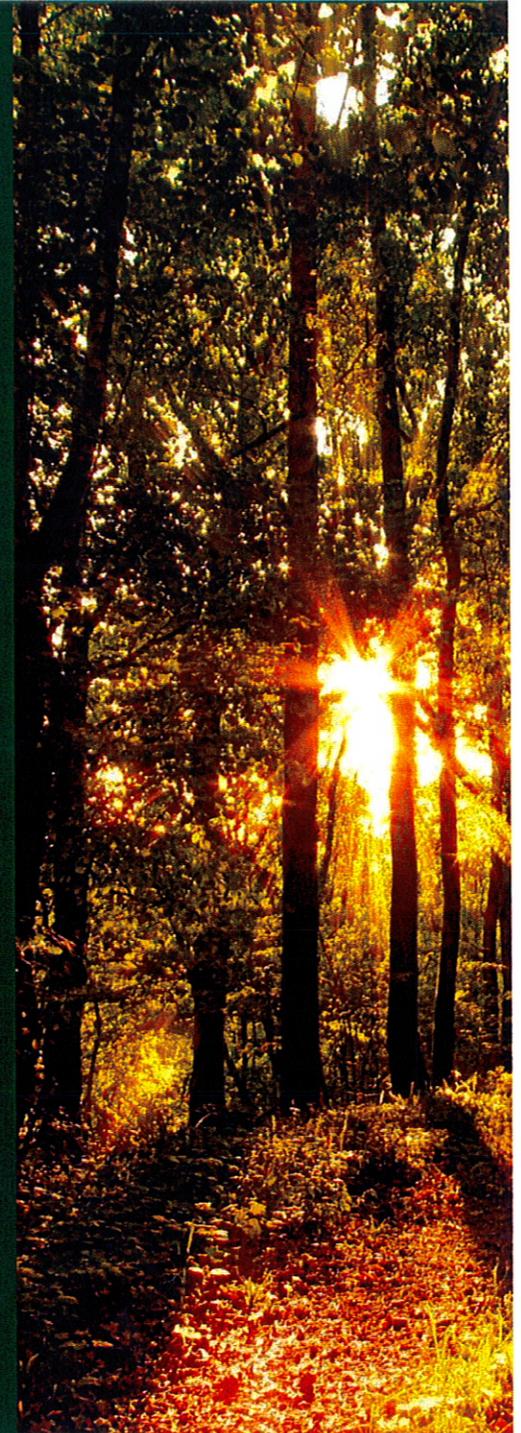
Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends Option 4, which is the more conservative and less costly to plan, design and construct a rustic/primitive camping area available for youth/group camping at McCarty Ranch Preserve.
- If the rustic camping area is well-used by youth groups, the possibility of expanding the rustic camping experience to the general public can be explored in the future.



Option 4: Phase 1- Initial Project Elements

- Survey the selected camping area.
- Layout/design a rustic camping area.
- Clear several small “camping pods” where groups can pitch 4-5 tents in each pod.
- Construct several “community” potable water spigots to be located within the camping area.
- Clear a larger common area and construct a center fire pit and outdoor seating.
- Eradicate existing invasive exotic vegetation within the camping area that falls outside the responsibilities of the current cattle lease.
- Construct and/or repair fencing around the selected camping area.
- If required by code, budget for the development of a vault toilet building.
- Construct large group pavilion with picnic tables.





Budget Needs:

- No funding is available in FY 2015-2016 for any option.
- Proposed FY 2016-2017 could include funds needed for any option directed by City Council.
- Initial costs to develop Phase 4 recommendation for a rustic/primitive camping area are estimated to be \$300,000 - \$400,000.
- Staffing- One FTE to maintain camping area, disc golf area, service restrooms, maintain trails, address garbage, and interact with public.
- Personnel services estimated to be \$47,500 annually (1 FTE).

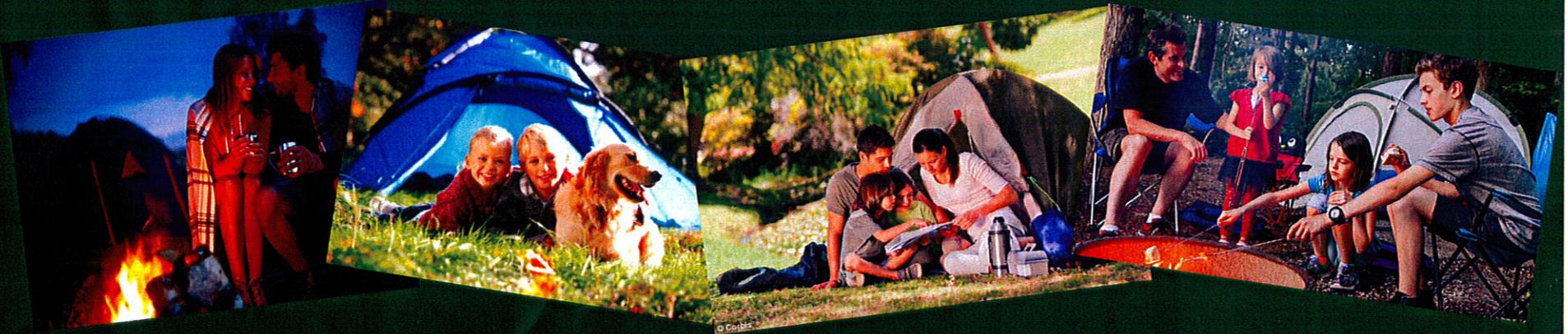
Future Development

Phase 2: Expand Rustic Camping Area to the General Public

- Development of camping facilities beyond rustic/primitive camping is not recommended until such time that the Utility Systems Department's future infrastructure needs are identified and planned.
- Future expansion of camping facilities must take into consideration the staffing and operational needs required for a successful operation.



City Council
DISCUSSION
& Direction



IT STARTS IN
PARKS  **PORT ST. LUCIE**
PARKS & RECREATION