



MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Entitlement: Major Modification (Case No. PL18-0052) to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3048

Applicant: Camp Ramah in California, Inc.

Location: 385 Fairview Road, approximately 0.32 miles west of the City of Ojai in the unincorporated area of Ventura County

Assessor's Parcel Nos.: 010-0-110-130, 010-0-110-120, 010-0-120-040, 010-0-070-310, 010-0-060-070, 010-0-060-030, 010-0-070-300, and 010-0-070-030

Parcel Size: The subject property is comprised of approximately 431.45 acres. The Camp Ramah CUP boundary encompasses 83.45 acres

General Plan Designation: Rural (APNs 010-0-110-130, 010-0-110-120, and 010-0-120-040) and Open Space (APNs 10-0-070-310, 010-0-060-070, 010-0-060-030, 010-0-070-300 and 010-0-070-030)

Zoning Designation:

APN	Zoning
010-0-070-310 010-0-070-300 010-0-070-030	OS-80 acres/TRU/DKS (Open Space 80 acres minimum lot size / Temporary Rental Unit Overlay / Dark Skies Overlay zones)
010-0-110-130 010-0-110-120 010-0-120-040	RE-20 ac TRU/DKS (Rural Exclusive 20 acres minimum lot size)
010-0-060-070	OS-80 acres/TRU/DKS and OS 80 acres SRP (Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone)/TRU/DKS
010-0-060-030	OS-80 acres / TRU/DKS and OS 40 acres SRP/TRU/DKS

Responsible and/or Trustee Agencies: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Forest Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ventura County Local Action Formation Commission (Responsible Agency).

Project Description: The applicant requests a Major Modification to CUP No. 3048 for a 20-year term. The CUP boundary will be expanded, and construction of new structures and the legalization of existing structures is proposed, as described below.

CUP Boundary Adjustment

The current CUP boundary will be modified to include APNs 010-0-060-030, 010-0-060-070 and 010-0-070-310, increasing the camp from 83.45 acres to 348 acres (for a total of 431.45 acres). These parcels are undeveloped. APN 010-0-060-030 and APN 010-0-060-070 are vacant open space land with public trails that are part of the United States Los Padres National trail system¹. No structures or vegetation removal is proposed on these parcels. Approximately one acre on APN 010-0-070-310 will be developed with a new cabin area known as the “Machon Village” (discussed below).

New Structures and Improvements

The following structures and site improvements are proposed:

- Machon Village: The camp expansion includes the construction of “Machon Village,” (10,609 sq. ft.) over one acre of land to accommodate the existing Machon program. The village would serve as the new location of the existing leadership training program for campers entering the 11th grade. The village would consist of: six new cabins, four of the cabins would have a second story, (4,320 sq. ft.) and a central gathering structure (the “Machon”) that includes counselor sleeping quarters, a prep kitchen, meeting spaces, storage, and restrooms (6,289 sq. ft.). Machon Village provides additional space to accommodate existing campers. The village complex will be nestled into the adjacent hillside with stepped retaining walls that vary between six feet and eight feet in height.
- The existing secondary access road located along the western property line would be extended, with a fire access turnaround, to provide emergency vehicle access to Machon Village.
- A new 1,436 sq. ft. reception, meeting, and storage area will be added to the Dining Hall.
- A 240 sq. ft. trellis would be constructed adjacent to the proposed reception area; and,
- The drop off area (adjacent to the existing Dining Hall) would be reconfigured to reduce bus traffic around the Camp.
- The existing driveway to Machon Village will be widened and will result in the removal of four protected Coast Live Oak trees (Tree Nos. 437, 438,

¹ GIS information on public trails was provided by the (1) U.S. Forest Service: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails>; (2) Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area: <https://www.nps.gov/state/ca/index.htm>; and, (3) Ventura County Day Hikes Around, 3rd Edition, Robert Stone

478, and 480) and encroachment into the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of four protected Coast Live Oak trees (Tree Nos. 481, 482, 598 and 599) (Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan, prepared by Kenneth A. Knight Consulting, LLC., February 7, 2019).

Legalization of Existing Structures:

The applicant requests the legalization of the following unpermitted accessory structures:

- Sport court (2 tennis courts,) located on APN 010-0-110-130, adjacent to the western property line.
- Outdoor sanctuary trellis located on APN 010-0-110-130, adjacent to the existing pool.
- A 1,250 sq. ft. meditation deck and shade structure located on APN 010-0-110-120 adjacent to the reservoir.
- A total of 2,352 sq. ft. of shade structures located adjacent to the Dining Hall on APN 010-0-110-130.

Estimated earthwork includes 1,190 cubic yards of cut and 322 cubic yards of fill, with excess cut being balanced onsite. Table 2 below includes a list of existing structures.

Existing Structures

Name	Size (in square feet)	Use
Dining Hall	14,800	Meals
Fingehut Chapel	1,156	Chapel
Old Library	1,020	Library
Friedman Library	2,070	Library
Office Complex	4,727	Office/staff housing/kindergarten
Laundry	1,050	Laundry
Director's House	970	lodging
Staff Lounge	1,375	Staff Lounge
Arts Building	2,237	Art
Bassan Heiser	5,600	Adult Housing
Friedland	5,600	Adult Housing
Whizin	10,356	Adult Housing
Infirmery (Kaye building)	4,400	Medical
Caretaker's house	613	lodging
Cabins	10,500	lodging

Boys' tents	4,800	lodging
Boys' tents	2,048	lodging
Boys' Bathroom	1,035	bathroom
Girls' Tents	3,600	lodging
Girls' Tents	4,096	lodging
Girls' Bathroom	836	bathroom
Staff Housing	898	lodging
Camp Manager's House and Garage	1,715	lodging
Sheds/Storage (7)	3,767	Sheds/Storage
Cabins	6,348	lodging
Bakery Addition to Dining	710	Bakery
2nd story to Kaye Building	4,400	Infirmery/lodging
Amphitheater	N/A	Outdoor theater
Trellis and Pool Deck	N/A	Trellis and Pool Deck
Outdoor Sanctuary Trellis	1,700	Outdoor Sanctuary Trellis
Swimming pool bathrooms	744	Swimming pool bathrooms
Gazebos	2,760	Gazebos
Swimming Pool/Slides	N/A	Swimming Pool/Slides
Parking	N/A	134 spaces
Reservoir	N/A	N/A
TOTAL		
100,727 sq. ft.		

Camp Ramah Youth Summer Camp

Camp Ramah is an American Camp Association (ACA) accredited camp that has been operating onsite since 1969. The Camp Ramah youth summer camp operates for nine weeks (June to August) and consists of one week of training for Counselors/Staff and then two, four-week sessions for campers. Within the four-week sessions, there are two 2-week sessions available for campers that need or desire a shorter stay. During the summer months, Camp Ramah hosts 600 - 650 campers over each four-week session.² Camp Ramah summer session includes 93 daytime and 255 overnight employees (Camp counselors, kitchen, housekeeping, maintenance, administrative, and security staff, and 6 residents who live on-site). One family visitation day is scheduled per camp session where families are invited to visit the camp during the day only. Camp Ramah youth summer camp is a 24-hour program. Generally, the camp outdoor programs occur between 7:45 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Sunday through Friday, and between 7:45 a.m.

² In accordance with the Ventura County NCZO Section 8107-17.2.2, the maximum number of overnight guests that could be allowed at Camp Ramah is 942. This number is based on the size of the property.

and 10:00 p.m. on Saturdays. One exception to those general hours is an outdoor café-like gathering (Café Ezra) on Thursday nights for staff throughout the summer and hosted by special needs counselors. Café Ezra ends at approximately 11:00 p.m.

Non-Summer Programs and Activities

Camp Ramah hosts approximately 90 programs and activities per year for adult and youth campers. During the non-summer months, Camp Ramah is staffed by 37 daytime employees and two residents who live on-site. The non-summer camp activities generally occur Monday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Outdoor Amplified Sound and Music

All activities occurring at Camp Ramah may use a hand-held, acoustic speech amplifier to direct campers to programs and locations. Other activities and programs may use microphones and amplified music. Camp Ramah's amplification system will be equipped with an automatic system to limit volume so that noise does not exceed 50 dBA after 7:00 p.m. All amplified equipment will be turned off by 10:00 p.m., except during Café Ezra (which has low level ambient music). Campers and staff may only use outdoor amplification equipment provided by Camp Ramah for both day and nighttime use. The use of amplification equipment would generally occur at the following locations: inside Girl's gazebo for use during summer camp and non-summer camp programs of activities (e.g. dance classes, occasional outdoor dining); Basketball Court/Tennis Court (requires sound blankets); Main Dining Room Lawn; amphitheater; and, Fire Pit at Boy's Tent Area. Camp Ramah Staff remain on-site and are available for monitoring and to respond to complaints.

The majority of meals are prepared and served in the dining hall. However, catering services throughout the year may be provided by food trucks licensed in Ventura County.

Security and Earthquake/Disaster Procedures

Access to the Camp is restricted by a gate and security kiosk. Security cameras are used throughout the camp to monitor operations and to hinder criminal activity. Adult supervision of youth campers will be provided throughout the year. Camp Ramah maintains a handbook, which includes procedures for the staff to follow to protect the campers and on-site personnel in the event of a disaster. There are warning alarms located in the center of the camp, which are tested monthly during the summer camp program. Security personnel will be provided by Camp Ramah staff as needed.

Access

Access to the project site is available from Fairview Road (a paved public road) to Camp Ramah Road (a paved private road). Non-summer month campers and visitors would be bussed to the project site or arrive in personal vehicles. Summer month campers re bussed in. The on-site parking area and bus drop off point is located more than 100 feet from Fairview Road, south of the softball field.

Water and Wastewater Services

Water service is provided by the Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD). A Conditional Water Will Serve Letter (dated November 12, 2020) has been provided to extend water service to Machon Village. Wastewater service is provided by the Ojai Valley Sanitary District (OVSD) or the existing camp.

Machon Village will be located on APN 010-0-070-310. This parcel is outside the OVSD Sphere of Influence. To provide wastewater service, OVSD will need to request annexation of all or some of APN 010-0-070-310 from the Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission or negotiate an Out of Area Service Agreement with the Camp.

B. STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS:

State law requires the Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, as the lead agency for the proposed project, to prepare an Initial Study (environmental analysis) to determine if the proposed project could significantly affect the environment. Based on the findings contained in the attached Initial Study, it has been determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment; however, mitigation measures are available that would reduce the impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and the applicant has agreed to implement the mitigation measures.

C. LISTING OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IDENTIFIED:

1. Item 4A: Biological Resources, Species: The initial study found that the proposed project would have significant impacts to special status wildlife species. Impacts will be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, which require the preparation and implementation of a Tree Protection Plan to offset the impacts to protected oak trees that would result from the proposed widening of the existing driveway adjacent to the northwestern property line to access Machon Village, and the submittal annual arborist monitoring reports, which address the success of the tree protection measures and the overall condition of encroached-upon trees relative to their condition prior to the widening of the access road.

The Initial Study also found that the proposed project would have significant impacts to scrub habitat and oak woodland communities from proposed development. Impacts will be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, which requires installation of temporary protective fencing a minimum of 100 feet from the edge of the scrub habitat and oak woodland community boundary during construction of the Machon Village.

2. Item 4E: Habitat Connectivity: Section 4E, Biological Resources, Habitat Connectivity: The Initial Study found that the proposed project would have significant impacts to habitat connectivity. To avoid future barriers to wildlife movement, Mitigation Measure BIO-4 requires the submittal of a lighting plan.
3. Item 7A: Cultural Resources, Archaeological: The Initial Study found that the proposed project would have significant impacts to archaeological resources. To avoid potential impacts, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 requires a qualified Archaeologist and Native American to monitor the site during ground disturbance and provide monthly reports to the Planning Division.
4. Item 21: Noise and Vibration: The Initial Study found that the proposed project would have significant impacts to noise and vibration. To avoid potential impacts, Mitigation Measures N-1 through N-4 require the applicant to position the speakers to the northwest at the amphitheater, the installation of noise attenuation devices at the basketball courts, installation of a sound monitoring system on the amplification systems, and a designated contact person that shall be available, via telecommunication, 24 hours a day during which an event is taking place at the subject property.

D. PUBLIC REVIEW:

Legal Notice Method: Direct mailing to property owners within 300 feet of the property on which the proposed project is located, and a legal notice in the *Ventura County Star*.

Document Posting Period: April 25, 2022 through May 25, 2022

Public Review: The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for public review online at <https://vcrma.org/divisions/planning> (select "CEQA Environmental Review") or at the County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, California, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Comments: The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day

of the document posting period to Kristina Boero, the case planner, at the County of Ventura Resource Management Agency, Planning Division, 800 South Victoria Avenue L#1740, Ventura, CA 93009. You may also e-mail the case planner at kristina.boero@ventura.org.

D. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION:

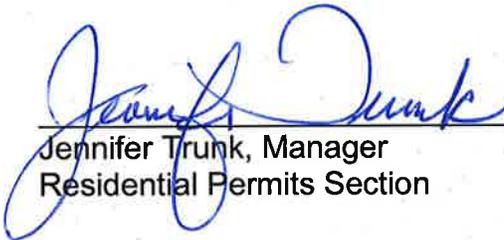
Prior to approving the project, the decision-making body of the Lead Agency must consider this Mitigated Negative Declaration and all comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration. That body may approve the Mitigated Negative Declaration if it finds that all the significant effects have been identified and that the proposed mitigation measures will reduce those effects to less than significant levels.

Prepared by:



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Reviewed for Release to the Public by:



Jennifer Trunk, Manager
Residential Permits Section