

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 11, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Regional Parks

Subject: Report Back On Regional Parks Final Budget For Fiscal Year 2009-10

Supervisorial
District: All

Contact: Janet Baker, Director 875-6132

BACKGROUND

During the Final Budget Hearing on September 8, 2009, the Board requested additional information regarding various operations in Regional Parks. The following discussion addresses these questions.

DISCUSSION

Gibson Ranch

Gibson Ranch Park will remain partially open through November 7th. A specific schedule will be posted by Parks soon. Parks will work with the Office of County Counsel on a report back to the Board of Supervisors regarding 71-J contract issues and the existing concession agreement. Parks will be meeting with the adjacent Park Districts to discuss opportunities for partnerships to operate the park and/or maintain the asset. The report back to the Board will occur in October.

TOT Funds

What would be the impact if \$36,000 in TOT funds were diverted to Parks?

\$36,000 would contribute to preserving a position that is scheduled for lay-off in the Regional Parks Dept.

Volunteers

Report on the expanded use of volunteers in all parks including legal opinions on 71J issues involved.

Volunteers can and are being used to supplement park maintenance staff, but they do not replace park maintenance staff. Volunteers are typically seniors and youth, and not a reliable or stable

source of workers to provide routine park maintenance services. Conditions of park facilities, especially with a reduced maintenance budget, will be offensive. Park maintenance staff is trained to protect themselves when lifting heavy garbage cans (50 lbs or more), cleaning unsanitary restrooms, and removing drug paraphernalia (especially needles) from picnic areas and restrooms.

All Regional Parks employees must have a background check before beginning employment, per state law since they work in an environment with children. Expanding background checks to include all volunteers would need to be addressed. Background checks take from one week to up to six months, and cost \$45 each.

Volunteers must be supervised and supported by permanent, skilled park maintenance workers. Volunteers are best used (and are being used) for picking up litter, removing invasive weeds, trail maintenance, planting trees and leading nature hikes. For the 2008 Annual Volunteer Report to the Board of Supervisors, Regional Parks documented 31,756 hours of volunteerism from individuals and groups who donated their time to the Department.

The Office of County Counsel advises that the Board not base its budgetary decision(s) on an assumption that volunteer workers will be (a) available or (b) legally “employable”, particularly if the use of volunteers is tied to the displacement of existing County employees. Regional Parks has for many years maximized the use of DHA Calworks work training program, alternative sentencing and sheriff bus crews to augment Department staff resources.

Revenue Enhancement

Report on the ways to pursue additional revenue; extend marketing for purchase of passes, charge fees for activities such as windsurfing, ATVs, rafting, charging fees for non-profit fund raising activities.

Annual Passes

Regional Parks total expenditure appropriation for FY 08/09 was approximately \$12.8million, offset by \$2.3 million in Solid Waste Authority funds, \$4.6 million in General Fund, and the remaining \$5.9 million in revenues generated by the Department. Parks generates 33% of its revenues with fees established in the Parks Fee Schedule for park users.

Passport sales currently make up 6% of revenues generated by the Department; 3% of the total revenues (General Fund, Solid Waste Authority and Department revenues) contained in the Parks 08/09 final budget. Parks sells approximately 7,000 passports each year, generating \$360,000. In 2005, Parks initiated an enhanced marketing strategy for annual pass sales, and increased sales by 66%. In 2007, a Parks Supporter pass was initiated for cyclist and pedestrians who did not drive into the park system. 2.6% of the total annual pass sales are Parks Supporter passes. Parks is seeking ways to increase annual pass sales with target marketing strategies.

54,000 annual passes would need to be sold to make up for the General Fund reduction proposed for FY 09/10. In addition, if the Solid Waste Authority funds currently allocated to Parks were eliminated, and additional 46,000 passes would need to be sold. While annual pass sales provide critically needed support to the department, these revenues in no way make up a significant

portion of the revenue stream, nor generate enough revenue to fully support park operations. See attachment for a breakdown of Regional Parks revenues.

Charges for Activities/User Fees

The Board of Supervisors routinely adopts a Parks' Annual Fee Schedule, which was recently updated on February 10, 2009. A variety of fees are approved including water craft launch fees; park entry fees for vehicles, oversized vehicles and vehicles with trailers; annual passes; camping fees; special event fees and picnic area reservation fees. This fee schedule allows Parks to charge fees to a variety of users including boaters, rafters, campers, special event holders and picnickers. Fees are established based upon industry standards, as compared to other park districts and state parks. The attachment lists the daily and annual fees outlined in Parks' Fee Schedule.

The fee schedule allows Regional Parks to charge special event holders fees to offset Parks' costs for supporting special events or fund raising events. Special Event permits are issued routinely to event holders, charging fees to capture all of Parks additional costs to support the event.

Raft concessions are charged: 1) per fee schedule, daily \$2 launch fee for every raft launched in the American River; and 2) 15% of gross revenues generated from the shuttle bus services provided to the rafters. For example, American River Raft Rental charges a \$4/person shuttle bus fee, and Parks receives 15% of that fee.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
JANET BAKER, Director
Department of Regional Parks

Attachment

Parks' Fee Schedule - Daily and Annual fees

(Excerpt from 2009 Fee Schedule)

Daily Parking Permit Fees

The daily parking permit fees for all County parks are as follows:

Description	Fee
Vehicle under 22 feet in length	\$ 5.00
Trailer or vehicle 22 or more feet in length in addition to applicable vehicle entrance fees	\$ 5.00
Bus (seating capacity of 10 or more)	\$20.00
Raft/small watercraft fee, daily permit, per craft (American River Parkway only) This fee will be discounted up to \$4.00 if the trailer/oversized vehicle fee is paid.	\$ 2.50

Standard daily parking fees apply at sites with "iron rangers" (self-operated fee collection)

Annual Fees

The annual vehicle parking permit fees for all County parks are as follows:

Vehicle (private or commercial)	\$50.00
Oversized vehicle <i>or</i> vehicle with trailer (private or commercial)	\$100.00
Vehicle with horse trailer (trailer allowed in equestrian staging areas only)	\$75.00
Low-income family/Low-income senior vehicle (50% of standard)	\$10.00
Low-income senior oversized vehicle <i>or</i> vehicle with trailer	\$50.00
Raft/small watercraft fee, annual permit. (<i>American River Parkway only</i>)	\$75.00

Parks' Revenues FY 09/10

The table below provides a summary of the different sources of department revenue:

Type of Revenue (in order of amount of revenues generated)	Approx. Amount
Charges to other depts. For landscape and security services (Cont. Maint, Ranger Patrol,)	1,960,000
Fees generated - Park entry , Picnic services, Special Events, etc	1,372,000
Measure A	1,000,000
Miscellaneous funding (grants, one-time funds, etc)	588,000
Passport Sales	360,000
Educational programs, classes	300,000
Leases/concessions from all non-golf sources	174,000
Contributions/Donations	125,000
	6,107,000