

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
July 12, 2018**

**County Administration Center - First Floor Hearing Room
675 Texas Street, Fairfield
10:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Commissioners Leong, Alvarez, Riddle and Chairman Whited
Members Excused: Hermsmeyer
Staff Present: Chris Drake, Parks Services Manager, Resource Management, Nancy Grimaldy-Carpenter Resource Management

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Whited called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of April 12, 2018 were approved (motion by Commissioner Leong, second by Commissioner Alvarez).

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved (motion by Commissioner Riddle, second by Commissioner Leong).

4. Chair and Commissioner Comments and Outreach Reports

There were no Commissioner comments

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Staff Report (Updates: Information and Possible Discussions)

A. Regional Parks Update:

There is currently a submission for an administrative plan, staff has a meeting with consultants next week to go over first impressions of draft and try to make a complete document.

B. Attendance and Revenue Summary

Mr. Drake noted it has been a busy year. Attendance is high at approximately 217,000; it is a large difference between prior fiscal years. Data was input as of June 14, and still finishing up final totals and tallies; each year there are refunds that need to be done and everything needs to be balanced out. June's unofficial numbers are approximately \$4,000 higher than previous years. Will bring updated numbers to next meeting. Revenue showing received today is approximately \$612K on document; its probably closer to \$630k. Goal of \$542k was reached. There is a conservative increase in budget for the new fiscal year to remain under \$600k. It is supported by the last 5 years of revenue data. A lot of activity at Belden's Landing maybe due to improvements, activities and assets bringing public in. Sandy Beach is maintaining boat access and filing up to capacity.

Commissioner Leong requested that a bar graph be made going back five years to compare revenues received versus revenue goals. Also noting fee increases, fires, and anything additional.

Mr. Drake mentioned it's been a strain on staff as there has not been seasonal reduction in use. Allocated positions are filled this includes seasonal extra help. Employees have been doing a good job. Challenges experienced in the past with seasonal/extra help are transportation from center of county as the parks are the boundaries of the county. Positions for seasonal and extra help are 999 hours a year, hired to fill peak season which is April 1- September 30. Year around extra help

around the parks still have 999 hours, they have a year to use them and are more part time help. Extra help hours are monitored to prevent exceeding 999 hours. Changes in hiring recruitment made due to a recent drop in high school students applying. Notifications are being posted on county HR Facebook page, Solano College, Sacramento State and craigslist.

Chairman Whited asked if there is an informational package available for working in the Parks & Recreation field.

Mr. Drake replied there is not an informational package specific to the Park Ranger classification. Ranger staff consist of what is called a General Ranger classification, they do a little bit of everything. It's not specific to one area. Park Aide's training is geared towards good customer service skills as they are the first point of contact.

Commissioners wonder with revenue and attendance up if there is a possibility for new positions.

Mr. Drake reported that with revenue increases the cost of operations have also increased. This past year when going into budget cycle there was an increase to the general funds contribution. Some of that had to do with labor negotiations and some of the work to itemize out the amount of work required to maintain portions of the park. In previous years there was not a maintenance management plan program. Now parks are implementing a program to show better track of what operating cost for each maintenance activity.

Chairman Whited asked if Docent's assist with operations.

Mr. Drake replied Docent's and Interns assist with restoration projects, planting, and maintaining previously planted sites.

Commissioner Leong recommended looking for grants to gain additional funds to maintain parks.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if there is any coordination with Solano Land Trust in terms of training volunteers and or possible junior Rangers volunteers. Additionally, if there is any joint training of Docent's.

Mr. Drake responded that they help fund the Docent program. Solano Land Trust had a training last December for wilderness first aid and park staff were able to participate. Park and Recreation department assist at Lake Solano; Ranger staff goes to participate in Docent training when able to.

Chairman Whited advised that Park and Recreation department identify what training is available to other organizations.

Commissioner Leong suggested to get word out to public and voters.

Commissioner Alvarez added using social media is a good way for public to learn about parks and training.

Mr. Drake reported there is currently one staff member getting certified to become a first aid/CPR instructor, therefore training can be performed in house. This will help as all staff must maintain annual training. There is also a first responder level certified employee.

Mr. Drake noted the goal is to get social media presence in the future.

C. Projects Updates

Routine maintenance occurring in all parks.

Belden's Landing- Discussing possible restoration work at Belden's Landing including partnering with Solano Land Trust, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Suisun Resource Conservation

District. Continue with same lines with last grant work to restore habitat in the area between the parking lot and fishing pier. Invasives have grown in area East of the parking lot but still within Belden's Landing. Potential invasive weed removal and native species planting. Working on changing Belden's Landing from being known just as a boat launch and being a periphery site that most people don't know about, make it more of a destination for public to come observe wildlife in an appropriate and respectful way. Provide a place to participate in recreational kayak, birding, and increasing fishing access. Would like to maintain existing visitors and get new park users.

Commissioners inquired how many camp sites could possibly be placed in Belden's Landing. Also, asked about cell phone reception in the area.

Mr. Drake replied the land has a lot of marsh and they must make sure critters have appropriate access to marsh. Also, noted there are certain areas that do not have cell phone reception.

Commissioner Leong encouraged to look for someone for example Benicia Chapter Native Plant Society that is interested in plants to run field trips during the spring time. UC Davis Botany group take field trips and categorize plants.

Mr. Drake noted they work with Solano Community College to have a class come out and do biomonitoring.

Mr. Drake added the restoration they intend on working on is removing non-native species and replacing them with native plants. Goal is to get public to understand why the marsh is so important and what they're looking at. Why it needs to be protected and taken care of. Do restoration, education, and give public opportunity to discover what it is and recreate responsibly. Currently exploring restoration grants with Fish and Wildlife, they have an active grant cycle. Going forward looking to work in conjunction with Suisun Resource Conservation district to help write grants if pursued. They can be one of the subject matter experts.

Commissioners mentioned N.O.A.A. (National Oceanic Atmosphere Administration) has a new office in Rush Ranch and they have studies that go on out there, they have housing for them. This is another possibility for grants.

Lake Solano- routine maintenance, replacement of playground fall surface complete. Repaired youth area drinking and irrigation well, rehabbed the top end of the well connection.

Lynch Canyon- doing staging area maintenance. Repaired main entrance sign with staff members and were able to keep cost at a minimum. Running a non-potable water line to provide water for cleaning to staging area. It will cut down on the amount of work that goes into cleaning single restroom that is there. There is a working group that consist of members of Solano Land Trust, and Park and Recreation division. They get together annually to discuss and prioritize what projects need to be done throughout the year. Decide who will be responsible for which activities and coordinate operational work.

Commissioners wonder who's funding staff for Lynch Canyon. At one point there was a designation for Lynch Canyon budget.

Mr. Drake replied the Ranger staff is funded from Lake Solano budget. After the 2010 division downsizing the shuffle of all staff took away the funding for staffing at Lynch Canyon. Currently one staff member operates Lynch Canyon & Belden's Landing. When there are high occupancy levels at Sandy Beach same staff member is required to go and assist. Responsibilities were higher at Lynch Canyon in the past and now there is a sustainable approach to managing it for the access there is. If access was to be increased it would be a challenge.

Commissioners suggested putting together a package for the next budget to go to board or as an information item to go to director.

Commissioner Alvarez said Sandy Beach is regional park, but also is an urban park for Rio Vista. Believes it is supported by a lot of day use which is walk in traffic. Serving as an urban park for the City of Rio Vista. Recommended looking into getting funding from the City of Rio Vista.

Mr. Drake stated Sandy Beach has 41 camp sites filling up to capacity from day users coming from all areas on weekends. All staff funded from main parks assist in all areas, but resident rangers are assigned to Lake Solano and Sandy Beach. This allows staff to work in different sceneries and experience all parks; idea is to have experienced staff and sufficient coverage.

Sandy Beach- Camp host sewer connection completed, will help with retention of camp host. Installed south boundary fence within property lines a few feet in from existing fence line and running in parallel to it. Will place native restoration in area and prompt willow and cottonwood growth.

D. Park Closures

Belden's Landing had no closures.

Lake Solano had a closure July 1 - 5th due to county fire. Decision was made to close park for public safety after highway 128 was closed. Closure of highway 128 was lifted on July 5th and park re-opened Friday July 6th. Holiday revenues were lost. Lake Solano was not an official staging location but there was incidental access by Cal Fire units and PG&E staging crews as they were going in to cut power.

Lynch Canyon had a wet weather closures in April. If water exceeds ½-inch in a 24-hour period and saturation is to the point where there is trouble accessing trails; park will be closed.

Commissioners wonder if it's a possibility to recover anything due to fire closure that has been declared a disaster area.

Mr. Drake replied they will not for this closure as it was an evacuation advisory and not a mandatory evacuation.

Mr. Drake added there was red flag closure Friday June 29th at Lynch Canyon initiated by N.O.A. A., posted on Cal fire website and confirmed with Cordelia fire who is responding agency. Initially posted to be opened on Sunday July 1st; Cordelia fire requested closure extend until Monday July 2, due to limited resources available.

Sandy Beach has had capacity closure mostly every weekend.

7. Confirm Date of Next Regular Meeting and Adjourn

The Commissioners agreed by consensus that a meeting will be held September 13, 2018 in its regular location, at 10:00 a.m. in the County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Hearing Room. Meeting was adjourned at 11:16am.