

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
March 11, 2021**

**County Administration Center – 1st Floor Multi-Purpose Rooms 1600 & 1610
675 Texas Street, Fairfield
10:00am**

Members Present:	Whited, Leong, Alvarez, Riddle
Members Excused:	Hermesmeier
Staff Present:	Chris Drake and Melissa Catron

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice-Chair Whited called the meeting to order, Chairman Leong was a few minutes late. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of January 14, 2021 were approved as prepared.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

4. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Alvarez asked Chris for clarification regarding item #8 from the January 14, 2021 meeting minutes; creation of an ad-hoc committee to assist with the Maintenance Management Program for Parks Staff. Commissioner Alvarez asked when the formation of that particular committee would be brought before the Commissioners for discussion/action. Chris responded that he anticipated bringing that before the Commission in either the May or July meetings. Chris then asked the Commissioners if they had a preference for which meeting, the Commissioners responded that they did not have a preference.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Fish and Wildlife Propagation Recommendation for Award (Action Item)

Chairman Leong asked the sub-committee members what their recommendations were for the 2020/2021 Fish & Wildlife Propagation Awards. Staff prepared a document from the Committee recommendations, detailing the award applicant and recommended award amount, which was provided to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Vice Chair Whited made a motion to accept the Committee award recommendations and amounts, Commissioner Alvarez seconded; all Commissioners approved. Chris Drake commented that from this point, it will go before the Board of Supervisors for final approval. Chairman Leong recused himself from voting for Grant Applicant #2, and #3, as he is a member of both organizations.

7. Staff Report (Informational & Discussion)

A. Attendance and Revenue Summary

From the beginning of the 2020/2021 fiscal year, Lake Solano was open from July 1 through August 17th at a maximum 60% occupancy rate, then was closed due to the LNU fire and has remained closed. The campground at Sandy Beach was open at 75% occupancy from November 2, 2020 through December 16, 2020 due to the CA Regional Stay at Home order and Solano County's return to the "purple tier". Day-use and Boat launch were operating at a reduced capacity as well due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The campground re-opened in February 2021 at 75% maximum occupancy.

Year to date revenues for Parks is at \$91,000; this is approximately one-third of normal revenues for this time of year. Projections from Staff as far as what revenues during the upcoming peak season may look like are not available due to COVID-19 restrictions; i.e. Solano County may enter the "red tier" very soon, when will Solano enter the "orange tier"? Chris stated that they will not begin making any changes to operations resulting from Solano County moving into less restrictive tiers until peak season begins, April 1st. Any changes or accommodations made must adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols for the safety of all guests and parks staff.

One change that will be implemented with the start of the peak season this year is changing the check-out times of the Parks to align with the industry standard of 11am (from 2pm previously). Continued enforcement of the number of vehicles allowed per campground space will continue, as well as the total number of people allowed per campsite; reduced to 8 people from 10 people. Solano Parks are also operating with a Reservation-only system, there is no longer a "first come, first served" access to the campgrounds; this allows time for staff to clean and sanitize the spaces properly between guests.

Lynch Canyon has seen a dramatic increase in park visitor-traffic, some months have seen a doubling of revenues, December 2020 saw a tripling of revenues, perhaps due to the dry winter weather we have had. Belden's Landing has had consistent visitor levels.

Vice Chair Whited asked if the fire repairs had been made at Belden's Landing from the Branscombe Fire in 2018. Chris responded that the repairs had not yet been made, there had been an issue with the contract being executed. Risk Management has now stepped in to assist with the contract bid for the repairs and getting those repairs completed. Chairman Leong inquired if the fire-repairs needed at Belden's Landing were covered by insurance, Chris responded that they were insured.

Vice Chair Whited inquired about the equipment used to sanitize the campground equipment between guests. Chris described and explained the equipment currently in use, the mobility of the equipment, and how the chemicals work in conjunction with UV exposure to maximize sanitization. The restrooms are sanitized regularly and receive increased cleanings with additional chemicals to ensure adequate sanitization has taken place.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if Parks Staff could update the Parks website to include the changes that will go into effect as Solano County moves from the "purple tier" to the "red tier". Chris responded that the website was up to date as of February 2021 and there wouldn't need to be further updates to the website until Solano Parks moves into peak season. The current focus for Parks Staff is to get the Extra Help positions filled that are currently vacant (3 positions); two vacancies at Lake Solano and one vacancy at Sandy Beach.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if any work being done at Lake Solano could be reimbursed by FEMA. Chris stated that there were a couple of projects that they were going to request FEMA funding for; retaining wall sections that burned need to be replaced with a material that is less susceptible to fire, such as cinder blocks. Insurance is covering the rest of the asset replacement in Lake Solano such as the Ranger Residence, Shop Building, etc. mentioned in previous meetings.

Jerry Emanuelson (Suisun Marsh Natural History Association) asked if the current reservation-only system in place for Solano Parks has been advertised to the general public via national or regional advertising websites or magazines to increase traffic to Solano Parks and awareness of the reservation system. Chris responded that Solano Parks advertises with Good Sam; he will look into updating the advertisement with them to reach print media as well as their web-based media.

B. Project Updates

At this time, Parks staff are performing work on off-season projects such as maintenance on equipment, identifying equipment in need of replacement or repairs, pre-peak season maintenance on the mowers, tractors, etc. This is also the time of the year where Parks' staff take their voluntary leave.

Parks Staff have been working on the damage recovery at Lake Solano and have been heavily involved in the watershed and erosion protection projects. This project is not only taking place within the Lake Solano Park but also throughout the burn area of Solano County. These activities involve on-going collaboration with agency partners (Solano Resource Conservation District, Solano County Water Agency, National Resources Conservation Service, FEMA, Cal OES, Solano OES) to coordinate and determine damages and associated risks the fire created to the watershed areas. Hillside stabilization is key.

Parks staff, including Chris and some of the Ranger-staff, have been involved in the coordination efforts as well as some of the on-site work at the Parks and other identified high-risk areas within Solano County. They are helping Conservation Core Crew and Cal OES with erosion control by spreading the rice straw and other materials where needed.

C. Park Closures

Lake Solano is still closed. Chris is actively working with contractors to move the recovery forward; there is no date at this time for re-opening the park. When there is a date, Chris will send a memo out to the Commissioners. Sandy Beach was closed on December 17, 2020 through January 31, 2021 as a result of the Regional Stay at Home Order. On February 1st, 2021, the campground was re-opened at 75% occupancy.

8. Confirm date of next regular meeting and adjournment

The next Commission meeting was confirmed for May 13, 2021. Since there was no further business the meeting was adjourned.