

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF March 13, 2014**

**County Administration Center - First Floor Hearing Room
675 Texas Street, Fairfield
5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Commissioners Riddle, Leong, Alvarez and
Chairman Hermsmeyer
Members Absent: Commissioner Whited
Staff Present: Dan Sykes and Diane Gilliland

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Hermsmeyer called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of February 13, 2014 were approved as prepared (motion by Commissioner, Riddle second by Commissioner Alvarez).

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Riddle commented that the California Fire Delta Camp has a sign making shop. He suggested the possibility of signage for the parks being made there. Mr. Sykes noted that they had recently had some signed made but would consider using Delta Camp for the next order.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Staff Presentation: Off-season Park Improvements (Informational)

Mr. Sykes introduced Diana Paradis, Park Ranger Assistant, who gave a presentation to the Commission on off season park improvements that have been done over the winter. The improvements include facility replacements, deferred maintenance and safety issues. There are two full time rangers and two full time ranger assistants. A ranger and an assistant are at Sandy Beach and Lake Solano Park respectively. She gave a brief description of Sandy Beach Park and noted that winter storms and high tides bring large logs and other debris up onto the beach. This material is cleaned off the beach nearly every day. The logs are cut up and dragged off the beach with a tractor. The day use and campground areas get a lot of wind. Recently new wind breaks were installed in the day use area. Also the aging irrigation system for the lawn area was repaired by replacing the wiring in the automatic watering system. Other improvements were a new bilge pump recycling station, a fish line disposal receptacle and an aluminum display case showing safety information and the types of local fish in the river.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if the fish line disposal container was purchased or made. Ms. Paradis replied that it was made by park staff and more will be made for Lake Solano. Commissioner Alvarez suggested that the fish line containers be located close to where the fishing is done.

Improvements to Belden's Landing will include weed control by spreading recycled tire mulch over a recently weeded area. The mulch was provided by a grant. The site has had a credit card payment machine for about two years.

Ms. Paradis noted that Solano County has a partnership with the Solano Land Trust to maintain the parking lot and provide some security and road and trail maintenance at Lynch Canyon. She and other staff have been working on clearing poison oak and other brush off the road. Every second Saturday of the month Park staff and a crew of volunteers work on trail maintenance. Some of the volunteers are runners that enjoy working out in Lynch Canyon.

Lake Solano is where the majority of her work hours are spent. When staffing for the day use toll booth was cut the decision was made to replace it with a payment kiosk (honor system). Using a payment machine is not an option yet because of poor cellular reception. In the day use area a lot of the wood work had not been replaced for years and was rotting out. Ms. Paradis came across a Park Service webpage that displayed parking barriers that looked like they were made from telephone poles. She and staff made new parking barriers from some poles they had on hand. It turned out so well that they were given funds to buy more poles so they could finish the project in the day use parking areas. The stairs from the parking area above the day use area were also rotting and becoming unsafe. These were also replaced. In the play area old worn plastic slides were replaced with a climbing rock. The docks in the fishing area were painted using Solano County Jail inmates and free recycled paint. The inmates also cleaned out the fishing pond. Commissioner Leong asked if they had considered a once a month volunteer work day. Mr. Sykes noted that they were doing that a couple of years ago but the volunteer program has fallen off. They are working with the Putah Creek Council to get another volunteer coordinator. Ms. Paradis commented that giving volunteers a project gives them a sense of ownership and connection to the park. New fire rings and tables were installed in the campground area including some ADA fire rings and benches. They also have been inspecting the park for fire safety. The water tank for the Nature Center fire system now has a guard to prevent people from climbing up the ladder. They have been working on the Nature Center with Proposition money. They are getting ready to put in new displays as well as two interactive interpretative panels. Fish tanks are awaiting fish. They have installed a hanging system for pictures. Informational signs about aquatic life have been ordered from California State Park. Fish and Wildlife provided a stuffed golden eagle and a black bear skin thru a permanent loan. They are also planning to have short videos of points of interest that can be found at Lake Solano. Mr. Sykes noted that some of the improvements to the Nature Center were provided by a grant from the Department of Parks and Recreation. It was suggested that Ms. Paradis give a short Parks presentation to each city's park and recreation commission and the Board of Supervisors.

7. Review and Approval of Work Plan (Action Item)

Mr. Sykes briefly summarized the Work Plan. The plan is the product of a lot of discussion about issues and priorities that the Commission would like to be working and what issues were appropriate within the terms of the Commission's authority and in terms of the Park and Recreation Element and master plans. From that discussion the ad hoc committee identified that there were four or five general areas that should be addressed in the work plan. The draft work plan is broken down into five categories. They are (1) Outreach and Networking, (2) Natural Resource Management, (3) Planning for the Countywide "Park and Recreation Element" Update, (4) Improving Financial Sustainability of County Parks and (5)

Prioritizing New Park Improvement Projects (See Attachment A). The categories were prioritized by identifying tasks that the Commission could begin working on right away. The time frame for the draft Work Plan will include the next two fiscal years beginning in July with FY14/15.

The work plan was discussed and it was noted that the Commission should be able to make modifications to the work plan as they work thru it. Updates on the progress of the work plan will be a regular item on the meeting agendas. It was also asked if it was possible to make some small quick changes right away to the Countywide Park and Recreation Element such as updating names. Mr. Sykes stated that he would look into the matter and report back to the Commission. Chairman Hermsmeyer motioned to approve the draft work plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Alvarez. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Assignments of Commissioner Outreach Efforts (Discussion/Possible Action)

Chairman Hermsmeyer read a preliminary list of outside groups that deal with park related issues and the commissioners who were assigned to each group. The Commission discussed meeting attendance and Brown Act compliance. Mr. Sykes stated that he would provide the meeting dates, times and locations of the groups.

9. Discussion of New regular Meeting Time of 10:00 a.m. (Discussion/Possible Action)

The Commission noted that having the regular meeting during the day would allow more flexibility for Commissioners to attend meetings of outside groups; accessibility to facilities, County and outside agency staff and daylight hours for working site visits. Mr. Sykes stated that changing the regular meeting time of the Park and Recreation Commission would require Board approval. An alternative way to change the time would be for the Commission to submit revised by laws for Board approval by motion. Mr. Sykes stated that he would follow up further with County Counsel to get the process started. He also stated that based on the reasons discussed above he thought that it would be appropriate for the Commission to make a recommendation that the regular meeting time be changed to 10:00 a.m. On a motion by Commissioner Leong and a second by Commissioner Riddle the Commission unanimously agreed to recommend that the regular meeting time for the Park and Recreation Commission be changed to 10:00 a.m.

10. Parks and Recreation Division Staff Report (Informational/Possible Action)

A. Attendance and Revenue Report

The January attendance and revenue was double that of past years due to the good weather and fees from advance reservations coming in through the camping reservation system which is beginning its second full year of operation. Sixty five percent of the revenue goal has been reached to date. Park attendance has been fairly level over the last few years. Attendance at Sandy Beach has come up quite a bit over the last 10 years. Whereas Lake Solano has seen some dips in attendance. One factor that has not come into play is increased promotion of park facilities. This will be addressed with a new marketing plan as the new Work Plan is implemented. Revenue trends over time show an increase in revenue over the last three years. Increased revenue is due to a steady increase in the day use attendance at Sandy Beach. At Lake Solano it looks like there are more people using the camping facilities. Between FY10/11 and FY12/13 park revenue increased by 70,000. Continuing improvements to park facilities over the past few years may be part of the reason for increased revenue. Mr. Sykes noted that the overall message is that they should continue to do what they are doing.

B. Update on Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) projects.

Mr. Sykes gave an update on the status of the Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund projects FY2012/13 cycle. The expiration date for the grants is May 31, 2014. Notices were sent out to the awardees to finish up their projects.

11. Change Date and Location of Next Regular Meeting on May 8, 2014, to 10:00 am at the Lynch Canyon Open Space parking lot, 3100 Lynch Rd, Vallejo, and Adjourn (Action Item)

On a motion by Commissioner Alvarez and a second by Commissioner Riddle the change of date and location of the next regular meeting to 10:00 a.m. at Lynch Canyon Open Space parking lot was unanimously approved.