

**SOLANO COUNTY GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION**

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**AGENDA -- Park and Recreation Commission  
Thursday, November 13, 2008 - 5:30 PM, Hearing Room - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
675 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Minutes for the September 11, 2008 Meeting (Action Item)**
- 3. Approval of Agenda (Action item)**
- 4. Chair Announcements and Commissioner Comments (Informational Only)**
- 5. Parks and Recreation Division Staff Reports (Informational Only)**
  - A. Parks Activities Report
  - B. Status of Previous Commission Recommendations
    - 1) Status Report on Smoking Restrictions in Parks
    - 2) Status Report on Study of Park Incident Data
    - 3) Status Report, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007/08 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund Awards
- 6. Presentations from FY 2008/09 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) Grant Applicants (Informational Only)**
  - Chair Hermsmeyer will call up each applicant in turn
  - Please limit presentations to 5 minutes per project application

***BREAK: There will be a 15-minute break following the last presentation.***

- 7. Committee Report with Recommendations (Action Item)**
  - A. FWPF Evaluation Committee, Recommendations for FY 2008/09 Awards
- 8. Public Comments**
- 9. Confirm next regular meeting of January 8, 2009 at 5:30 pm, and Adjourn**

*The County of Solano does not discriminate against persons with disabilities and is an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and you will require assistance in order to participate, please call (707) 784-7905 at least 24 hours in advance of the event to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.*

*If you wish to address any item listed on the Agenda, please submit a Speaker Card before the Commission considers the specific item. If you wish to address an item not on the agenda, please submit a Speaker Card before the first speaker is called for Public Comments. Cards are available at the entrance to the hearing room.*

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER - FIRST FLOOR HEARING ROOM,  
675 TEXAS STREET FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA**

**Commission Members Present:** Riddle, Alvarez, Hermsmeyer, and Leong  
**Commissioner Members Excused:** None.

**Staff Present:** Sykes, Tanner-Linné

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Hermsmeyer called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. Tanner-Linne called roll. A quorum was confirmed.

**2. Approval of Minutes for July 10, 2008 Meeting**

Motion to approve (Riddle), seconded (Leong). July 10 minutes approved unanimously.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve agenda (Leong), seconded (Hermsmeyer). Agenda approved unanimously.

**4. Chair Announcements and Commissioner Comments**

The Chair had no announcements.

**5. Parks and Recreation Division Staff Report**

Staff Sykes presented the attached staff report (See attached.). The Commissioners had the following comments:

Leong asked who came to the FWPF Grant workshop. Sykes said only one person, a representative from the Solano Land Trust.

Hermsmeyer approved of the letter to Supervisor Spering from Board of Supervisors' District 3. Riddle requested it be mailed as soon as possible, and asked whether the commissioner has to be from Supervisor District 3. Sykes stated he understood the commissioner would not have to live in District 3.

**6. Status of Past Commission Recommendations**

A list of past recommendations made by the Park and Recreation Commission was included on the September 11, 2008 Agenda.

Hermesmeyer reviewed the list and asked whether the past Commission recommendations had gone before the Board of Supervisors. Sykes said, yes for the most part they have gone to the board. However, on the issue of establishing smoke-free areas in the County Parks, the issue went to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), but the BOS left it to the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Division to propose these zones and return to the BOS for approval. In addition, the County already requires smoking be prohibited within a specified distance of County buildings. There are also legal restrictions on smoking near children's play areas. For the County Parks the BOS guidelines state that any prohibitions should consider such factors as fire danger, the effect of second hand smoke, and the impact of smoke on wildlife, plant life, and the environment. The BOS approved a set of guidelines for setting proposed, smoke-free areas.

Staff Sykes suggested that we could look at areas of high fire danger in the parks, but the primary focus should be on complying with existing legal mandates that address indoor areas, such as restrooms, offices and the new Nature Center, and play areas, of which there is one at Lake Solano Park. Alvarez clarified that Staff does not have administrative authority and will have to go back to the board for the authority. Sykes said this was correct.

Hermesmeyer mentioned that there are some parks in the Bay Area that had ordinances against smoking and drinking in their parks. He thought the process would evolve instead of waiting for data to be produced, compiled and reviewed. He thought there would be a pro-active approach to tobacco and alcohol restrictions. We have a situation where alcohol use is condoned but abuse is not. Smoking should be something we look at more since it is an issue that would draw more attention from the citizens of Solano County.

Riddle stated he had been on the smoke-free ad-hoc committee and spent a lot of time on the subject. After 3 ½ years on this issue, and being a non-smoker, he would like the smoking issue to go forth as a safety issue. Please keep the Commission posted and tell us if we could be useful in assisting with this issue.

Alvarez recommended that at the next meeting we look at the criteria and have an open discussion and say if there is a problem. Rather than wait, it should be looked at. Alvarez suggested maybe smoking could be evaluated on trails due to the risk of fire.

## **7. Public Comments**

Sean McDowell, Park Ranger Supervisor stated that, at the Commission meeting in June they voted to return the firearms to the rangers and provide needed training. McDowell stated that, as a Park Ranger and now as a Park Ranger Supervisor, he feels it is still unsafe. The firearms were not returned. There was an incident around a month ago during an enforcement action where he was surrounded by 30 people. When he made a call for cover, no one was available, and he was requested to call the City of Winters Police Department. Fortunately the incident worked itself out. Ranger Kim had a similar

incident a week later at Sandy Beach. McDowell stated the rangers either need more staffing or need the firearms back.

Hermesmeyer noted there were over 15,000 visitors to Sandy Beach Park in July; what is the ratio of park visitors to rangers? Sykes said there are two rangers assigned to that park.

Dae Kim, Park Ranger, stated that a majority of the people at Sandy Beach, 90% of the time, respect the peace officer badge and rangers as professionals. Most of the time it is the people that have been drinking and treat us like security guards, and feel they don't have to listen to what you say. If the Sheriff's Office cannot respond, the Sheriff makes a contact with the local authorities to request backup. Staff Sykes noted that on the Labor Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Weekends, Sheriff Deputies were assigned at Lake Solano and Sandy Beach Parks.

Riddle stated there was a desk at Rio Vista for someone from the Sheriff's Office if they needed it. So they could have a deputy assigned to this area.

Hermesmeyer said that if the Park Rangers are relying on support from the Sheriff, and the Sheriff cannot provide support, this is not an acceptable answer.

Sykes stated he has instructed staff that if they have questions about the MOU with the Sheriff's Office, and are not getting response, they are to report it to their Supervisor so it can be discussed in the bi-monthly Ranger Supervisor's Meeting, and we can come up with needed changes to the MOU. Collecting more data on park incidents will also help in this ongoing discussion.

Alvarez suggested that in restricting alcohol in the parks, it could take away some of the safety problems. And if you take away the problem then some of the safety liability might also go away. That may be something the Commission should look at sometime. Alvarez stated that the City of Benicia was looking at having alcohol allowed only in certain areas or restricted altogether.

Leong asked if alcohol was a problem when there were fights in the park. Staff Sykes said yes, and noted that the rangers at Lake Solano Park had had some success in monitoring those who were drinking in the park and contacting them early. The camp hosts also help by being proactive in reporting the start of problems.

- 8. The next regular meeting of the Commission was confirmed to be on November 13, 2008 at 5:30 pm. Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.**

## Parks Division Staff Report, for September 11, 2008 PRC meeting

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### A. Parks Activities Report

Belden's Landing: In July 2008, attendance was 2,037 people and revenue was \$2,273. Staff has noted park usage is slowing down due to end of fishing season, hot weather. Ranger Sup Armstrong will participate in California Coastal Cleanup (Sat., Sept. 20) with Fairfield/Suisun Sewer District.

Lynch Canyon Open Space: In July 2008, attendance was 285 people (overwhelmingly hikers – 219); and revenue was \$868. The park was closed Aug 28-29 due to red flag conditions

Sandy Beach Park: In July 2008, attendance was 15,276 people, and revenues of \$25,201 (very good 4<sup>th</sup> of July). Had a sewage pump station go out at restroom 2, and staff from the County's Facilities Operations Division is heading up replacement of it. Facilities Operations Division is also leading effort to repair boat dock this week and next, prior to the Rio Vista Bass Derby (weekend of Oct. 11).

Lake Solano: Attendance in July was 8,568 people with \$26,779 in revenue. Staff did maintenance on the Bonifacio fishing pond -- aquatic weeds removed on July 26-27.

### B. Lake Solano Nature Center

The Nature Center construction is on schedule and within budget. The building pad has been poured, steel framing is up, next is repaving of entry road. We hope to have an enclosed building by end of October, and construction finished by March 2009.

### C. Parks Division Hiring

A new Ranger Assistant started 9/7: David Bane, at Lynch Canyon. I am also checking references on a 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Assistant for Lake Solano. Hope to make an offer next week. Ranger Asst. Chris Drake was promoted to Park Ranger, and Ranger Sean McDowell was chosen as acting Ranger Supervisor at Lake Solano. Human Resources continues to recruit for permanent Ranger Supervisor position, and a Park Ranger, Limited Term.

### D. Study of Park Incident Data

In response to the Commission's request to study the issue of Ranger's law enforcement duties, Staff will be compiling data on law enforcement incidents that are occurring in the parks, and past data that is available in the files (partial data available within the last 1-3 years). Hopefully this will help in having an objective discussion of this issue, and then we can come back to the issue of revising County Code or not, and needed modifications to the MOU with the Sheriff's Office. A *Microsoft Access* database will be created, and then accounting staff from the General Services Department will systematically enter data on past incident reports, crime reports, park logs, and the parks' monthly reports. Previous

data is limited because past record-keeping has not been thorough. However, using the past data we do have, plus adding in current data, which Staff is keeping better track of now, should give us a good picture. We hope to better document what the law enforcement needs are at the parks, what kinds of contacts the rangers are dealing with, and compare these data *before* and *after* the MOU with Sheriff Office was implemented, as well as before and after the rangers stopped wearing firearms and instead were issued a new set of Use Of Force policies, received additional training, and started carrying baton and pepper spray. We hope to make some progress on this data-compiling effort by November.

E. Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund Grant Workshop

Staff held a question/answer workshop on Aug. 19 at 9-12 noon. One applicant attended. Staff has also received 2 or 3 phone calls. We are aware of at least 6 potential applications.

F. Letter Regarding Filling of Commission Vacancy

Staff has drafted a letter that can go to Supervisor Spering from Chair Hermsmeyer requesting that the vacancy for District 3 be filled, and offering the Commission's help if desired.