



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/25/2025

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Regional Parks

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Robert Gonzalez, 707-565-6032

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Consolidated Fee Hearing - Regional Parks Fee Package FY 2025-2026 - Spring Lake Park

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt a Resolution of the Board of Supervisors and the Directors of the Sonoma Water Agency authorizing fee adjustments for various fees supporting camping, group use reservations, special events and activities, park operations, community engagement programs, camp cancellation fees and residence maintenance fees.
- B) Review and approve new fees for field trip classroom pre-visits, park program fee discount for community partners, daily camp fees, paddleboard and kayak rentals.
- C) Review and approve the removal of obsolete fees including non-peak camping fee structure, group campsite reservation and change fees, dog per-night fee, various individual camp fees, and various resident/non-resident field trip fees and fee tiers for the inflatable water park.
- D) Review and approve fees requiring description changes without fiscal impact including “additional vehicle” changing to “second vehicle” for group and individual camping and a description change from various individually named camps to the collective “Camps”.

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County manages 60 parks, trails, beaches, and other facilities covering more than 18,078 acres. Fee revenue is critical in operating and maintaining the growing system of parks for residents and visitors.

Spring Lake Regional Park in Santa Rosa is one of the County’s most popular parks and features trails, boating, camping and picnic areas. Other park facilities include the Environmental Discovery Center, seasonal swimming lagoon, water park, and boat, kayak and paddleboard rentals. The park is owned by the Sonoma County Water Agency and operated and staffed by Regional Parks. This fee item was prepared to address fees relevant to this park’s operation. In most cases, the adjustment amounts recommended is in line with the adjustments recommended for the other parks within the county operated by Regional Parks.

Last year, Sonoma County Regional Parks completed a significant review of fee structure. Many of the fees had not been adjusted since their inception, many nearly over 10 years. In most cases, fees were increased on the average of 4% to increase cost recovery. The review also provided an opportunity to recommend new fees in response to changes in programming and deletion of fees that were obsolete. Details are included in the Fee Package Adjustment attachment and the Resolution accompanying this report.

**Discussion:**

Changes to Current Fees and Rates

Regional Parks propose increases and changes to the following fees for FY 25-26.

- Day use parking
- Day use parking for vehicles with 10+ passengers
- Seasonal day use parking (Friday prior to Memorial Day to Sunday following Labor Day)
- Seasonal day use parking (Park locations offering youth sports)
- Non-commercial/non-profit events (1-7 days) for 25-99 guests; 100-199 guests; 200-299 guests; over 300 guests
- Non-commercial/non-profit events (1 wk.-1 yr.) for 25-99 guests; 100-199 guests; 200-299 guests; over 300 guests
- Individual camping - individual, individual resident, individual access
- Individual camping - reservation fee
- Individual camping - reservation change fee
- Group campsite
- Firewood
- Boat wash
- Boat launch
- Park program fees, individual resident
- Residence maintenance fee
- Inflatable water park

Justification for Changes to Current Fees:

The proposed fee increases reflect the reasonable costs of maintaining the parks for public use and recovering costs the services provided. Many of the fees proposed for increase are service oriented, where Department staff performs daily services - environmental education, custodial and maintenance for field, campground, event coordination, and recreation use. The Department is recommending, in most instances, a 3% increase to most of the fees listed in this report. For fees exceeding 3%, the Department is providing information supporting the recommended increases.

- Parking

Day use parking	14%
Day use parking, more than 10 people	7%
Seasonal day use parking (summer)	20%
Seasonal day use parking (youth sports)	17%

For Day use parking (14%) & Day use parking for 10+ passengers (7%) rates are recommended for increase to account for rising maintenance costs at heavily used parking areas, as well as inflation-related cost increases in staff wages, cleaning, and enforcement.

For Seasonal day use parking, Summer (20%) and Youth Sports (17%) rates are recommended to increase to account for peak-season demand and increased staffing costs required for summer operations. For youth sports locations, fees are aligning with the increased maintenance required to keep trails and facilities in useable condition.

- Camping fee increases

Individual camping, regular	11%
Individual camping, resident	11%
Individual camping, access	12%
Individual campsite, reservation fee	5%
Individual campsite, change fee	5%
Group campsite	4%

Maintaining clean, safe camping areas in popular, often full campgrounds is labor-intensive. The increase is to account for rising costs for these heavily used recreational areas, staff costs, cleaning and enforcement. Additionally, services associated with camping, particularly waste disposal service which has seen a 40% increase, continue to rise.

- Firewood 17%

The fee increase is based on vendor increases for product and current market rates.

- Boat wash 67%

This significant percentage increase is due to water conservation efforts and higher utility costs for providing wash stations. The proposed rate encourages more responsible use of wash stations to reduce waste and aligns with Regional Parks Climate Adaptation and Resiliency plan for water reduction.

- Boat launch 25%

These fees have not been updated in seven years. The proposed increases reflect the higher maintenance costs for boat ramps and docks.

- Park Program fee (individual) 25%

Park programs, led by Regional Parks staff, continue to fill up quickly and sell out. Community Engagement continues to add more offerings, requiring additional staff and preparation. The fee increase is primarily driven to support staff costs to for these programs and to help allow for more complex programming.

- Residence maintenance fee 3.50%

The residence maintenance fees will be used to help mitigate some of the costs of repairs and deferred maintenance to these facilities. The percentage increase is based on labor Memorandum of Understanding language.

- Inflatable water park 17%

The inflatable water park is a largely used attraction at Spring Lake. As attendance continues to increase with nearly visitors, an increase is being proposed to offset the cost of operations including additional lifeguards, park staff, waste disposal, maintenance of the lagoon and other associated costs. The new proposed price of \$14 will be the same for adults and children, no matter the time of session.

- Camp deposit, non-refundable 426%

All camps provided by Regional Paks fill up very quickly for families needing childcare activities during summer and breaks and forfeiting the current deposit of \$9.50 fee is not sufficient to deter people from booking camp sessions to later supplant with other plans. Particularly with last minute cancellations, it is almost impossible to fill that vacancy as many parents have already secured other camp opportunities weeks prior. It is recommended increasing the current deposit fee from \$9.50 to a non-refundable \$50 deposit registration fee.

Given the time of this fee item, we anticipate implementing this week in Spring 2026 when new camp sessions are released.

#### New Proposed Fees

Community Engagement staff often are requested to present curriculum at various school sites in preparation for an upcoming field trip or as an enhancement and in conjunction to school curriculum. A new Classroom Pre-Visit fee is proposed at \$4 per student.

Community Engagement works with many community partners and would like to encourage them to participate in activities at our parks. The Department recommends a community partner discount provided on park program activities. The recommended discount is up to 50% dependent on various factors such as size of the group, number of staff required, and facilities being utilized.

Community Engagement proposes providing shorter duration camps ranging from 1-3 days per week. Currently our camp durations are for 4-5 days. The recommended per day camp fee, depending on topics, hours per day and activities, would range from \$60-\$90 daily.

Paddleboard, kayak and tandem kayaks were always offered at Spring Lake and were left off the fee schedule. They are being added on as part of this board item.

#### Deleted items

The following fees are being proposed for deletion

- Discovering Science in the Parks - resident
- Discovering Science in the Parks - non-resident

In previous years, the Department was adding every specific field trip to its fee schedule. Many of the field trips no longer are being offered or the curriculum has changed. The Department is recommending the following field trips be deleted and future field trips just be listed as "Field Trip" in the Regional Parks fee schedule.

- Non-peak regular
- Non-peak resident
- Non-peak access

Currently, the Department has approved peak and non-peak camping rates. At many of our parks with camping facilities, non-peak season is often as busy as peak season and many of our facilities, such as this one, have full campgrounds year around. The Department is recommending removing the non-peak rates and utilizing the rates established for peak use year-around.

- Reservation and change fee, up to 2 nights
- Reservation and change fee, 3-5 nights
- Reservation and change fee, 6-10 nights

Group campsite reservation and change fees were established based on the number of days for the reservation. The Department recommends removing these obsolete tier structures and utilizing the flat rate of \$30 already established for reservations and changes.

- Dogs per night

The Department currently charges a fee to campers who bring their dogs to stay at campsites. To offset the cost of the proposed increase to camping rates, the Department is recommending the removal of this fee.

- Basic Jr. Lifeguard
- Environmental Jr. Lifeguard
- Advanced Jr. Lifeguard
- Surf Camp
- River Camp
- Open Water Lifeguard Training
- Drop-In Jr. Lifeguard
- Transportation

As with the previously mentioned field trips, the Department's practice was to add all summer camp offerings to the fee schedule. Many of the camps have been modified or no longer being offered. The Department wishes to have all camps listed under one title "Camps" and delete all the individual offerings along with the Transportation fee previously charged.

- Adult and youth, first and third session
- Adult and youth, mid-day only

Community Engagement is proposing to restructure the fees for use of the inflatable water park (formally the Wibit) this year and deleted these two tiers.

#### Other Proposed Changes

The Department is requesting to change the current fee titled "Additional Vehicle, per night" used for both Group and Individual camping to "Second Vehicle, per night." This change has no fiscal impact and does not change the current rate of \$10.

As with field trips, Regional Parks would develop and list every camp offering on their fee schedule. Many of the camps are outdated on descriptions or no longer being offered. The Department recommends changing the title to "Camps." This change has no fiscal impact and does not change the current rate of \$250-\$350.

#### Summary of Expected Results:

Fees are only being added to cover ongoing increases or the costs of providing staff services for programs, maintenance and care of facilities and events. While partial cost recovery is the key driver necessitating increases to park fees, Regional Parks seeks to ensure that its fees are not prohibitive to users even at the expense of cost recovery.

#### **Strategic Plan:**

N/A

#### **Racial Equity:**

#### **Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

#### **Prior Board Actions:**

Agenda Date: 3/25/2025

March 21, 2023 - Board of Supervisors adopted Regional Park Fee Adjustments

March 26, 2024 - Board of Supervisors adopted Regional Park Fee Adjustments

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		\$241,566	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>\$241,566</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$241,566	
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>		<b>\$241,566</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Fees reflect the reasonable cost of operating park facilities, supporting community events and activities, educational opportunities, and services. Where possible, the Department has recommended a 3% increase to the fees shown in this report unless other factors such as utility costs, costs of goods purchased for sale, or impact on facilities or staffing performing the function, necessitated a higher rate.

While partial cost recovery is the key driver necessitating increases to park fees, Regional Parks seeks to ensure that its fees are not prohibitive to users even at the expense of cost recovery.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

Fee Resolution

Regional Parks Fee Package Adjustment PDF

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

Regional Parks Fee Package Adjustment EXCEL