



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/26/2024

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Regional Parks  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Robert Gonzalez, 707-565-2041  
**Vote Requirement:** 4/5th  
**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Consolidated Fee Hearing - Regional Parks Fee Package FY 24-25

**Recommended Action:**

- A. Approval of Resolution of the Board of Supervisors authorizing fee adjustments for various fees supporting camping, group use reservations, special events and activities, park operations, community engagement programs, and residence maintenance fees.
- B. Review and approval of new fees including seasonal parking fees, summer camps fees, and new synthetic turf field use rates.
- C. Review and approval of the removal of obsolete fees that include specific facility rentals and community engagement programs no longer being offered to the public.

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County manages 58 parks, trails, beaches, and other facilities covering more than 16,237 acres. In FY 23-24, fees paid by park visitors provided 29% of the Regional Parks operating budget. Fee revenue is critical in operating and maintain the growing system of parks for residents and visitors.

This year, Regional Parks has completed a comprehensive review of their current approved fees. Many of the fees have not been adjusted since their inception, most over 10 years. Regional Parks proposes changes to its fees to recover reasonable costs of maintaining park services provided for public use. The Department's internal review also provided an opportunity to recommend new fees in response to changes and needs in programs and with recommendations for the deletion of fees that are now obsolete. Details are included in the Fee Package Adjustment document and Resolution accompanying this report.

**Discussion:**

Changes to Current Fees and Rates

Regional Parks staff recommends, in most instances, up to a 4% increase to the following fees for FY 24-25.

- Day use parking for vehicles with 10+ passengers
- Group picnic reservations for up to 99 guests; over 100 guests
- 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

- Non-league athletic field use (1-7 days) for 25-99 guests; 100-199 guests; 200-299 guests; over 300 guests
- Non-league athletic field use (1 wk.-1 yr.) for 25-99 guests; 100-199 guests; 200-299 guests; over 300 guests
- Still Film/Photo permit fees for 5 vehicles with up to 8 people; 6-8 vehicles with up to 15 people; 9-15 vehicles and no more than 25 people; 16 or more vehicles and no more than 90 people
- Motion Picture photography fees for up to 5 vehicles with no more than 10 people; 11-15 vehicles and no more than 25 people; 16 to 20 vehicles and no more than 50 people; 21-25 vehicles with no more than 100 people; 25 or more vehicles and no more than 150 people
- Tolay/Environmental Discovery Center field trip fees resident/non-resident
- Tolay/Environmental Discovery Center Outreach Program fees resident/non-resident
- Tolay Lake Education Program fees resident/non-resident
- Athletic Facilities permit for organized adult and youth non-profit leagues, 12-wk. or less
- Individual camping (peak) - individual, individual resident, individual access
- Individual camping - individual, individual resident, individual access
- Environmental campsites (peak)
- Environmental campsites
- Group camping - max 75 people
- Group camping vehicle fee, extra vehicles per night
- Electrical service, selected campsites
- Dump station fee
- Camping sites additional vehicle fee, per night
- Major events special use permits
- Minor commercial events - with and without set schedules
- Minor commercial events, commercial guides
- Summer Camp fees
- Summer Camp transportation fee
- Special Use permit fee, enhanced special events
- Resident Maintenance fee
- Trainings provided for partner agencies

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. The attached Fee Package Adjustment document details that most of the fees recommended for increases have not been increased since their inceptions ten or more years ago. Many of the fees are service oriented, where Department staff performs daily services - environmental education, custodial and maintenance for field, campground, event coordination, and recreation use. Over the past several years, there have been negotiated increases to salary and benefit costs, many in the 3-4% range, but the Department's fees for services have remained unchanged. The Department is recommending, in most instances, up to a 4% increase to the fees listed in this report, and nearly three-quarters of increases are less than 10%. There are some fees recommended where a flat rate increase is proposed and the percentage increase exceeds 4%. These fees typically are for larger, more labor-intensive services such as large group picnic events, large group educational programs, and multi-week field use events.

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These types of events typically utilize 2-3 employees for set up and clean up along with additional waste services and a larger percentage (25-40%) increase is recommended.

Larger percentage increases are also being recommended for services where the Department experiences increased costs for utilities or vendors who have increased rates. The annual cost for electrical services, water, sanitation, and waste disposal have all increased. For electrical service, 2%-6% over the last three years, and 31%-39% over the last three years for waste services. Increasing fees for electrical hook-ups at selected campsites and sewer dump station fees helps offset the costs for providing the service.

Lastly, some increases are being recommended for vehicle allowance for large group events and for group camping. Additional vehicles are typically on site for 24-hour periods and are utilizing parking spaces that would otherwise be available to other day use park visitors, thus limiting parking and revenue the Department would receive from several vehicles utilizing a single spot while visiting that day.

New Proposed Fees

River Park Seasonal Day Use Parking: The Department is also recommending a Seasonal Day Use Parking fee of \$10 from Memorial Day to Labor Day in locations that are impacted during peak season at specific parks: Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach, Riverfront Regional Park, Del Rio Woods, Cloverdale River Park, Sunset Beach River Park, and Guerneville River Park. For the remaining portion of the year outside of Memorial Day to Labor Day, the general parking fee of \$7 will remain the same.

Synthetic Turf Field Use: The Department has recently installed 2 new synthetic turf fields at Maxwell Farms Regional Park and has developed field use prioritization and fees for the use of those fields in FY24-25. Group A is for Local Non-Profits, Group B is for Sonoma County residents, Group C is for non-residents and Group D is for Commercial (for-profit) events. Hourly fee information and similar agency fees are show below.

Group	Proposed Fee	Median Similar Agency Fee
A	\$50 per hour	\$60 per hour
B	\$55 per hour	\$75 per hour
C	\$60 per hour	\$95 per hour
D	\$75 per hour	\$98 per hour

Summer Camp: The Community Engagement Division is recommending adding a new series of Recreation/Discovery/Environmental camps. The fee recommended for these camps is \$350 per session.

Justification for New Fees:

With the implementation of a new low-cost (\$5 per person) Russian River shuttle service, the Department is recommending an increased River Park Seasonal Day Use Parking fee to encourage visitors to park offsite and provide additional options for river access where parking is limited, particularly during the summer months. The fee for parking during this period will increase to \$10 daily at the following parks, Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach, Riverfront Regional Park, Del Rio Woods, Cloverdale River Park, Sunset Beach River Park, and Guerneville River Park and will be used to offset the additional staffing for river patrols and lifeguards at these locations during these busy months.

The Department currently offers a variety of Summer Camps primarily focused on aquatics. The recommended

new camps would be recreation and environmental focused aimed at reaching another audience. The courses will offer another camp option to the public who are looking for summer programs for their children.

Deletion of Fees

The Department is recommending the following fees be deleted due to them no longer being offered as a service.

- Kenwood Gazebo Special Use Permit
- Gualala Visitors Center rental
- Youth Birthday Parties - basic package and deluxe packages, additional children fees
- Group Camping, max 50 people
- Park Program Fees - Tier 1 general and member, Tier 2 general and member, Tier 3 general and member and Tier 4 general and member
- Professional Development Seminars

Justification for the Deletion of Fees

Both the Kenwood Gazebo and Gualala Visitors Center were listed as separate physical sites for rental. The Department would remove them from the fee schedule and rent them as we would any other park location based on proposed attendance.

The Youth Birthday party packages were developed as a fee item many years ago. The Community Engagement Division is focusing on providing educational classes and opportunities and recommends deleting these fees.

Park Program Fees by Tiers program was developed many years ago and is no longer being offered. The program was replaced with a new sliding fee that was implemented in July 2011.

Professional Development seminars on Pest Management are no longer being offered by the Divisions.

Summary of Expected Results:

This year, the Department did not propose fee increases to the annual parks pass - general, senior, access or vehicle entry passes. Fees being proposed in this report 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:**

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

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY23-24 Adopted</b>	<b>FY24-25 Projected</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		\$393,029	\$393,029
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>\$393,029</b>	<b>\$393,029</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$393,029	\$393,029
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>		<b>\$393,029</b>	<b>\$393,029</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Fee revenue shown is an estimate of revenue based on the increased fees and reflect the reasonable cost of operating park facilities, supporting community events and activities, educational opportunities, and services. Where possible, the Department has recommended a 4% increase to the fees shown in this report. In most cases, fees have not been adjusted since their inception with many fees not seeing an increase in 10+ years. 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):**

The proposed new fees will not impact current staffing levels.

**Attachments:**

- Fee Resolution
- Regional Parks Fee Package Adjustment

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

None