



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 3/26/2024

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 - Spring Lake Park

Recommended Action:

- A. Approval of 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, and residence maintenance fees.
- B. Review and approval of new fees for additional summer camp offerings, and additional new rates for Spring Lake waterpark use.
- C. Review and approval of the removal of obsolete fees for 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 the current approved fees for Spring Lake Park. 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 propose increases and changes 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
- 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
- Individual camping (peak) - individual, individual resident, individual access
- Individual camping - individual, individual resident, individual access
- 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
- Spring Lake Water Park use reservation fee, up to 25 people
- Spring Lake Water Park season pass
- Trainings provided for partner agencies
- Spring Lake cabin fees - peak Sun-Thurs, peak Fri-Sun, peak holidays

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 fees for services has remained unchanged. The Department is recommending, in most instances, up to a 4% increase to the fees listed in this report.

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. 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 a utilities or vendors who have increased rates. The annual cost for electrical services, water, sanitation, and waste disposal has increased 2%-6% over the last three years for electricity 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 on site are typically for 24-hour periods and are utilizing parking spaces 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.

Proposed Changes to Existing Fees

Two existing fees are being recommended for a description change to increase flexibility with operational issues running the Spring Lake Water Park. Currently, the Community Engagement Division runs three daily sessions of Water Park use - morning, mid-day, and afternoon. The fee for each of the three sessions is \$10.00. The Department recommends leaving the fee of \$10.00 for the morning and afternoon sessions for both adults and children to help encourage more people to use the Wubit when it is more available earlier and later in the day. The change would be in the description adding additional information on the sessions: *Adult - per session, morning and afternoon sessions & Children - per session, morning and afternoon sessions.*

New fees are being recommended for the mid-session time slot detailed in the next paragraph.

New Proposed Fees

Water Park Mid-Day Use: As stated above the Department is recommending a new fee for the Water Park mid-day use for both adults and children. The recommended fee is \$12.00.

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:

The new Water Park Mid-Day Use fee will encourage users to visit the Water Park during non-peak hours, lessening the burden of having larger crowds at mid-day which will help the Department with staffing

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 a broader audience focusing on nature and educational programming. The courses will offer another camp option to the public 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.

- 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

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.

There is only one group site currently at Spring Lake with a maximum capacity of 75. The cost to set up and clean up remains the same and the Department recommends just one rate for the site for up to 75 people and removing the tier for up to 50 people.

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:

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:

March 23, 2021 - Board of Supervisors adopted Regional Park Fee Adjustments for Spring Lake Park

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$168,121	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$168,121	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$168,121	
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			

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Total Sources		\$168,121	
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Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Budgeted expenses are based on additional fee revenue collected to perform the corresponding services. The 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 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.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The proposed 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