



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2021-0081, **Version:** 1

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**To:** The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Regional Parks  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Jim Piercy 565-3955  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Consolidated Fee Hearing: Regional Park Fee Package FY21-22

**Recommended Action:**

Approval of Resolution of the Board of Supervisors authorizing fee adjustments for peak season and non-peak season camping, new fees for document copies, and a County Resident Discount for Community Engagement Programs effective on July 1, 2021.

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County manages 56 parks, trails, beaches and other facilities covering more than 12,600 acres and hosts more than 5.2 million visitors annually. In FY19-20 fees paid by park visitors provided 25% of the Regional Parks operating budget. Fee revenue is critical in operating and maintaining the growing system of parks for residents and visitors. Regional Parks proposes changes to its fees to recover the reasonable costs of maintaining parks for public use, for providing park services, and for consistency with prior fee adjustments. Details are included in the Fee Package Cover Sheet attached to the Resolutions accompanying this Agenda Report and summarized here.

**Discussion:**

Changes to Current Fees and Rates

Regional Parks proposes changes to individual camping fees in FY21-22. Peak season Individual Campsite Fees will increase by \$2 per night for Regular (\$37), Resident (\$35) and Access (\$33) camping. Non-peak season fees will increase by \$3 per night for Regular (\$35), Resident (\$33), and Access (\$31). Camping fees were last increased on July 1, 2015, and utilization is high and campground maintenance and operation costs have increased.

New Fees

Regional Parks proposes two new fees for FY21-22: a document copy fee and a County Resident Discount for Community Engagement Programs.

Regional Parks has been receiving a significant increase in public records acts requests for documents. To offset the cost of providing these documents, Regional Parks proposes a \$.10 per page copy fee starting on July 1, 2021 to recover the direct cost of duplicating public records. This would offset part of the materials cost of providing this service.

Regional Parks would like to offer a \$2 discount to County Residents for Community Engagement Programs. This discount would reduce the fee for School Field Trips, Outreach Programs, Educational Programs, Park Program Fees, Tier 1 Programs for General Registrants and Member Registrants, Tier 2 Programs for General Registrants and Member Registrants, Tier 3 Programs for General Registrants and Member Registrants, Tier 4 Programs for General Registrants and Member Registrants, Summer Camp Fees including Basic Jr. Lifeguard, Environmental Jr. Lifeguard, Surf Camp, River Camp, Open Water Lifeguard Training, Drop-in Lifeguard Training, Enhanced Recreational Programs, Multi-day Excursions, and Trainings for Partner Agencies.

A discount for residents has been implemented in other Park and Recreation Districts, including East Bay Regional Parks, Huron Metro Parks (MI), Nova Parks (VA), and Cleveland Metro Parks (OH). The proposed County Resident Discount is consistent with these other Park and Recreation Districts.

Justification to Changes to Current Fees:

The primary purpose of the proposed increases to Regional Park Fees is to maintain core services that provide park users with a safe experience in our parks. The proposed fees also comply with Proposition 26 criteria because the fees reflect the reasonable cost of maintaining the parks for public use and recovering the reasonable costs of the services provided. Fee amounts cover only a portion of the Department's overall costs as the park system receives over \$12.5M per year in support from the General Fund, sales taxes, and Transit and Occupancy Taxes. Therefore, the proposed increases do not exceed the reasonable cost of maintaining the parks for public use and for providing for these public services.

The proposed increase elevates camping fees to match state-operated Sonoma and Mendocino County campgrounds, which are currently priced at \$35 per night, which locally include Bodega Dunes and Wrights Beach. Most nearby operators charge at least 20 percent more and in some cases double for tent or RV camping (Riverbend Campground and Porto Bodega or Casini Ranch).

While not keeping pace with labor and utility expense increases since the last fee adjustment in 2015, the proposed increases are commensurate with Consumer Price index (CPI) inflation rates. From 2016-2020, total CPI growth totaled 9.74 percent. Applying that rate to the existing \$32 per night fee, we arrive at \$35 per night.

The proposed fees are reasonably allocated since they are applied equally based on use or service provided either to the public at large. While partial cost recovery is the key driver necessitating parks fees, Regional Parks seeks to ensure that its fees are not prohibitive to users even at the expense of cost recovery.

Summary of Expected Results:

With revenue from user fees the Department expects to keep all Regional Parks open with a satisfactory level of maintenance and enhanced visitor services and experiences.

**Prior Board Actions:**

May 9, 2017 BOS adopted Regional Parks Fee Adjustments

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		\$82,100	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>\$82,100</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$82,100	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>		<b>\$82,100</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Fees collected for Peak Season Camping, Non-Peak Season Camping, Document Copy, and County Resident Discount for Community Engagement Programs.

<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 existing staffing levels.

**Attachments:**

- Fees Cover Sheet
- Concurrent Resolution 1

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

None