Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0550, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): District 5 and Regional Parks
Staff Name and Phone Number: Supervisor Lynda Hopkins and Bert Whitaker
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Second, Fifth

Title:
Sonoma County Coastal Leave No Trace Initiative

Recommended Action:

A) Adopt a resolution to enhance visitor education, outreach and increased regional collaborations to reduce the amount of trash in coastal watersheds in collaboration with Marin and Mendocino Counties, and in coordination with other agencies, jurisdictions and local partners, including Sonoma County Tourism, the Federal Indians of Graton Rancheria and the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians.

B) Authorize the Chair to execute a memorandum of understanding with Marin and Mendocino Counties for the cooperation in promotion of a sustainable outdoor visitation and recreation message.

(Second and Fifth Districts)

Executive Summary:
Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino Counties wish to implement a coordinated coastal trash reduction and "Leave No Trace" education and environmental stewardship campaign. Leave No Trace is an educational framework, led by a nonprofit of the same name, which provides education, skills, research and science to promote responsible recreation. Leave No Trace focuses on educating people as the most effective solution to protect public lands. County of Sonoma proposes joining this multi-county effort to work with other jurisdictions, landowners and nonprofit partners to develop Leave No Trace education programs that fit their missions.

This item seeks your Board's adoption of a resolution to enhance visitor education, outreach and increased regional collaborations to reduce the amount of trash in coastal watersheds in collaboration with Marin and Mendocino Counties and in coordination with other agencies, jurisdictions and local partners, including Sonoma County Tourism, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians. This item also seeks authority for the Board of Supervisor Chair to execute a memorandum of understanding with Marin and Mendocino Counties for cooperation in promotion of a sustainable outdoor visitation and recreation message.

Discussion:
The region's coast is a popular recreation and tourism destination, with the county and state parks on the Sonoma Coast hosting more than 5 million annual visits. Visitation to coastal parks jumped significantly during the pandemic, and park managers continue to see sustained visitor interest in day use and camping. Visitation at Doran Regional Park, for example, increased approximately 30 percent in 2020 as both residents and out-of-area visitors discovered or renewed their enjoyment of outdoor recreation.

Through discussions among Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino County representatives, the three counties have identified similar visitor trends and a shared desire to promote a consistent message of sustainable outdoor recreation along their adjoining coastlines. The goal is to reduce trash and other visitor impacts in coastal parks and enhance the stewardship of natural areas for both residents and visitors.

The County of Sonoma (CR) Regional Parks staff had already begun working on a visitor stewardship campaign in 2021 at the invitation of the Sonoma County Tourism <https://www.sonomacounty.com/> (SCT). Tourism asked Sonoma County Regional Parks to be a key stakeholder in an education initiative it launched with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics that year. Since then, Regional Parks has been collaborating closely with SCT and Leave No Trace to develop messaging and outreach strategies that will promote responsible recreation on public lands throughout Sonoma County. According to Leave No Trace, the ideal opportunity for influencing attitudes and behaviors around sustainable outdoor recreation and visitation practices occurs during the trip planning phase, which is an optimal time for a county's marketing groups and park managers to influence the decisions visitors and residents make when they enjoy outdoor spaces.

Through its existing collaboration with SCT and Leave No Trace, the County of Sonoma will also participate in this three-county coastal initiative facilitated by Leave No Trace. Both Marin and Mendocino County Board of Supervisors have adopted a resolution in support of the Leave No Trace initiative on May 17, 2022. The initiative is also supported by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians. By adopting this resolution, the Board expresses its desire to collaborate with its neighbors to address the shared issue of coastal trash and other visitor impacts and to promote responsible recreation through a Leave No Trace framework. The counties believe they can achieve greater messaging consistency and visitor engagement with coordinated outreach strategies along the three coastlines.

This item also seeks Board authorization for the Chair to sign the attached three-county memorandum of understanding for the coastal initiative. The memorandum is a voluntary agreement that defines the purpose, benefits, and roles of the coastal Leave No Trace initiative. The memorandum was presented to Marin and Mendocino County Board of Supervisors on May 17, 2022.

Strategic Plan:
N/A

Prior Board Actions:
None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	**FY 21-22 Adopted**	**FY22-23 Projected**	**FY 23-24 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses	$10,000	$10,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	**$10,000**	**$10,000**	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			

State/Federal			
Fees/Other	$10,000	$10,000	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	**$10,000**	**$10,000**	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
Regional Parks has budgeted for Leave No Trace outreach within the department's annual advertising budget and is not requesting additional appropriations to represent the county in this initiative.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):
N/A

Attachments:
Resolution
Three Counties Memorandum of Understanding

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
N/A