



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Parks
Department No.: 052
For Agenda Of: September 4, 2007
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Daniel C. Hernandez (568-2461)
Director
Contact Info: Mike Gibson, Business Manager (568-2477)

SUBJECT: Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of Resolutions Adjusting Fees at Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach County Parks, and for Group Picnic Areas in the Day Use Parks

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve, at the conclusion of the public hearing, the attached Notice of Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. (Post)
2. Adopt, at the conclusion of the public hearing, the attached resolution adjusting fees at Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach camping parks.
3. Adopt, at the conclusion of the public hearing, the attached resolution adjusting fees for the group picnic areas in the day use parks.

Summary Text:

Staff recently completed a comprehensive market study of user fees for Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach County Parks, as well as the group picnic areas in the day use parks. The analysis showed that many of the day use and overnight camping fees at Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach were below those of the agencies included in the survey. Staff is therefore recommending adjustments to user fees at both Cachuma and Jalama to bring them into closer alignment with current market rates.

In addition to the camping fees, a market study of group picnic area reservation fees showed that many of these fees were also below those of the agencies surveyed. Adjustments are therefore recommended in some of these fee categories as well.

Camping and group picnic area reservation fees were last adjusted in May 2003 (over four years ago). The recommended fee adjustments will ensure that the County Parks Department's fees and charges are consistent with fees charged by similar jurisdictions in the same market area that offer camping opportunities and group picnic area reservations.

The proposed fee adjustments are in conformance with Section 50402 of the State Government Code, which states, in part, that, to the extent feasible, charges for similar uses or services imposed by a governing body shall be uniform throughout its area of jurisdiction. The proposed fee adjustments have statutory exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15273 (a), (1), (2), (3) and (4), since the increased revenue resulting from the fee adjustments will not be used for the expansion of existing capital facilities.

The County Park Commission approved the fee adjustments, with some modifications, at its July 26, 2007 meeting. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, the fee adjustments will be effective on October 1, 2007.

Background:

Staff recently completed a comprehensive market study of user fees for Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach County Parks, as well as the group picnic areas in the day use parks. The analysis revealed that many of the day use and overnight camping fees at Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach, including basic camping and hook-up rates, were below those of the agencies included in the market study. Staff is therefore recommending adjustments to user fees at both Cachuma and Jalama (see Attachment 1) to bring them into closer alignment with current market rates. The recommended changes are based primarily on the market comparison of current fees at these two campgrounds with other comparably sized jurisdictions with similar customer profiles, including beach camping parks in the Channel Coast District of the State Parks system (Carpinteria, El Capitan, Gaviota, and Refugio), Lake Casitas, Lake Lopez, Santa Margarita Lake, Lake Nacimiento, and Lake San Antonio (see Attachment 2).

In addition to the camping fees, a review of group picnic area reservation fees from nine other park jurisdictions revealed that some adjustments in the Parks Department's current fee structure for group picnic areas are warranted. Adjustments are therefore recommended in these fee categories (see Attachment 3). The proposed fee adjustments were based primarily on a market comparison with the following jurisdictions: Monterey County, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Cruz County, Solano County, Sonoma County, Stanislaus County, Ventura County, the City of Santa Barbara, and the City of Santa Maria (see Attachment 4). Camping fees and group picnic area reservation fees were last adjusted in May 2003 (over four years ago).

It is estimated that the proposed fee adjustments will result in a total of \$285,000 in additional annual revenue for the Parks Department in FY 2007-08 and a total of \$380,000 on an annualized basis, starting in FY 2008-09. Some of this additional ongoing revenue is proposed to be used to offset the ongoing costs (\$105,600) of a new advance reservations/call center system, which will be reconsidered by the Board in October 2007 as part of the first quarter budget review. The ongoing costs for this system include support staffing, IT technical support, and hardware and software maintenance. In addition to the ongoing costs of this new system, there is also a one-time, start-up cost of \$140,500 for the purchase of computer hardware and software and installation of the communications network (\$70,500), as well as remodeling of existing office space to house advance reservation staff, supplies, and records

(\$70,000). Because of the possible conflict with CEQA of using the fee revenue for expansion of existing capital facilities, it is recommended that other funding alternatives be explored for the one-time costs (e.g., General Fund allocation, Quimby and development fee funds, etc.).

This new system will provide enhanced customer service by providing the public with the ability to instantly and easily conduct business with the Parks Department at their convenience. This system will enable the Parks Department to provide information and advance reservation services to the public anytime and anyplace via the Internet. The system will provide a secure and customer-friendly program for park users to complete electronic transactions, such as camping and day use reservation payments. Parks customers will also be able to run their own queries for site and date availability as well as having the ability to print their own confirmations and receipts. This program is currently being used successfully by San Diego County.

In addition to covering the ongoing costs of the new reservation system (\$105,600), revenue from the fee adjustments will also help mitigate the Department's rising annual costs of doing business (salaries and benefits, workers' compensation insurance, liability insurance, vehicle fuel costs, utility cost, etc.). These costs increased by over \$500,000 for the Department between FY 2006-07 and FY 2007-08.

In a review of Cachuma Lake's daily deposit process and cash handling procedures by staff from the Auditor-Controller's Office during the summer of 2006, one of the key recommendations from this review was that the Parks Department consider moving toward an advance reservation/credit card system at Cachuma Lake. The Auditor-Controller's staff felt that a system such as this would strengthen internal controls significantly for the processing of daily cash deposits by making cash accountability and handling a more streamlined and secure process. The Auditor-Controller also expressed support for moving forward with this new system at the budget hearings in June.

The County Park Commission considered the proposed fee adjustments at its regular meeting on July 26, 2007. The Park Commission recommended that the following modifications be made to the proposal presented by Parks staff at that time:

1. Due to demographic differences between Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach users, the Park Commission had expressed some concerns about increasing the day use entry fee at Cachuma from \$6 to \$8, as recommended by staff. The Commission had instead recommended increasing the day use fee from \$6 to \$7 at Cachuma while increasing this fee from \$6 to \$8 at Jalama.
2. In order to remain consistent with other jurisdictions, the Commission recommended retaining the off-season (September 15th – March 31st) discounted rates for weekly overnight camping fees at Cachuma Lake and Jalama Beach. Staff had recommended eliminating the off-season discounted rates.
3. As a more fair and equitable method for evaluating fees, the Commission recommended that staff review fees every three years and utilize the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a basis for adjusting the fees, where appropriate, along with the market comparison data.

Regarding the first recommendation, staff recommends that the day use entry fee at Cachuma be set at \$8, rather than the \$7 fee favored by the Park Commission. This would maintain the parity that exists between the user fees at Cachuma and Jalama, which, if the \$7 day use entry fee was adopted for Cachuma, would make this the only fee that was not consistent between the two campgrounds.

Staff agrees with the other two changes requested by the Park Commission and these have been incorporated into the proposed fee schedule that is before the Board for adoption.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees	\$ 285,000.00	\$ 380,000.00	
Other:			
Total	\$ 285,000.00	\$ 380,000.00	\$ -

Narrative: For FY 2007-08, it is estimated that the proposed fee adjustments will result in a total of \$285,000 in additional annual revenue for the Parks Department (\$192,000 at Cachuma Lake, \$78,000 at Jalama Beach, and \$15,000 at the day use group picnic areas). On an annualized ongoing basis, it is estimated that the fee adjustments will result in a total of \$380,000 in additional revenue for the Parks Department (\$256,000 at Cachuma Lake, \$104,000 at Jalama Beach, and \$20,000 at the picnic areas).

It is proposed that the increased annual revenue generated by the fee adjustments be used to offset the annual ongoing costs of an advance reservation system (\$105,600), which will be considered by the Board at the first quarter budget review, as well as to offset some of the Parks Department’s increased annual costs of doing business (i.e., salaries and benefits, workers’ compensation insurance, liability insurance, vehicle fuel costs, utility costs, etc.).

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:
N/A

FTEs:
N/A

Special Instructions:

1. Clerk of the Board to date stamp and post Notice of Exemption (with attachments) and forward a copy to the Parks Department/Administrative Office, Attn: Mike Gibson
2. Clerk of the Board to forward an executed copy of each fee resolution to the Parks Department/Administrative Office, Attn: Mike Gibson

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Proposed Fee Adjustments at Cachuma Lake Park and Jalama Beach Park
- Attachment 2 – Market Comparison of Campground Fees
- Attachment 3 – Proposed Fee Adjustments at County Parks Group Picnic Areas
- Attachment 4 – Market Comparison of Group Picnic Area Reservation Fees

Authored by:

Mike Gibson, Business Manager (568-2477)

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Subject: Public Hearing to Consider Fee Adjustments for Cachuma Lake, Jalama Beach, and Group Areas in the Day Use Parks

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