

LATE
DIST

#9

Memorandum

DATE: March 6, 2009

TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Santa Barbara County Park Commission

Darlene Chairman

RE: Funding for Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Park and Cuyama Swimming Pool amid county-wide budget cuts

Recommendation from 2/26/2009 meeting

That the Board of Supervisors approve a budget expansion request for operations of Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve, and postpone operation of the Cuyama Swimming Pool post-construction, until long-term operational funding is worked out.

Discussion

Santa Barbara County Parks Director Dan Hernandez briefed the Parks Commission on 2/26/2009 on the 10% budget cut plans requested of parks and all County Departments. With reduced service, unfunding of vacant staff positions, and increased revenue from concessions, staff felt that Parks can operate without lay-off of personnel. However, if additional cuts are needed next year, some parks may need to be closed.

In light of the budget cuts, the Commissioners asked staff about the Cuyama Swimming Pool. Apparently the construction bid has been let, and construction is to begin. However, the expensive operations, estimated at \$180,000 year, has not been secured. Commissioners believe this is an unrealistic expenditure for the county General Fund at this time, and is unavailable in the Parks budget. Commitments of Cuyama agencies/donors to assist with operations into the future should be secured before the pool is opened.

The Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Park operation has been funded by an "endowment" since 2000, but in recent years the capital has been utilized to pay the contract of The Center for Natural Lands Management, now about \$260,000/year. The endowment will be exhausted, and for FY 2009-10, the Commission supports \$86,700 to supplement these dedicated funds, as an expansion request. In future years, the entire \$260,000 would be needed. This Park is well-utilized by the entire county, with 70,000 visitors each year. The Center for Natural Lands Management has the expertise to manage the natural resources at the park. The Park Commission recommends that the Board ask Parks to explore funding options, including the revitalized County Parks Foundation, and provide available county assistance to address cost savings/funding for the future to maintain this valuable county recreational and biological resource for County residents.

2009 MAR 16 PM 2:10
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY CLERK