



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:** Community Services  
and Office of  
Emergency  
Management  
**Department No.:** 057  
**For Agenda Of:** October 11, 2016  
**Placement:**  
**Estimated Tme:** NA  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department George Chapjian, Community Services Department Director  
Director(s) (805) 568-2467  
Robert Troy, Office of Emergency Management Interim Director  
(805) 681-5508  
Contact Info: Jeff Lindgren, Community Services Department Parks Operations  
Manager (805) 686-5076

**SUBJECT:** Waiver of Camping Fees for Rey Fire Evacuees at Cachuma Lake

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Risk

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Director of the Community Services Department to waive camping fees at the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area in the amount of \$2,200.00 for wildfire evacuees from the Los Padres Forest during the early stages of the Rey Fire that began August 18, 2016, pursuant to Santa Barbara County Code section 26-5; and
- b) Determine that waiving camping fees for wildfire evacuees is not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the action is a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment, and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (Attachment 1).

**Summary Text:**

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

This item is on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors to consider authorizing the Director of the Community Services Department to waive camping fees at the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area for campground hosts from the Paradise Road campgrounds, a Paradise Road resident couple, and campers evacuated from the Los Padres Forest during the outbreak of the Rey Fire on Thursday, August 18, 2016. During the first hours of the Rey Fire, approximately 300 residents, business operators, and campers were evacuated from the Paradise Road area due to the rapid expansion of the fire. State Route 154 was also closed between Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez the first evening of the fire. In the early stages of the Rey Fire some evacuees in the evacuation area evacuated to the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area. The Community Services Department, Parks Division, made vacant camp sites at the park available to these Rey Fire evacuees without cost while the extent of the evacuation could be determined. Two campground hosts from Paradise Road campgrounds and a Paradise Road resident couple were allowed to stay eight nights under authorization from the Interim Director of the Office of Emergency Services and eighteen campers displaced from the evacuation zone were provided accommodation in a vacant, unreserved group camp area for two nights under authorization from the Parks Mid-County Operations Manager. The ability to evacuate people to a campground in close proximity to their location provided a more conducive and less stressful situation for these displaced individuals for the days they were evacuated and eliminated the impact for Red Cross volunteers to supervise them at a facility not designed for campers.

**Background:**

At approximately 3:38 pm on July 18, 2016, it was reported that a wildfire was rapidly spreading in the Paradise Road area of the Los Padres National Forest. An evacuation order for Paradise Road was issued at 4:45 pm with campers and residents told to evacuate immediately and the Santa Barbara County Aware and Prepare Alerts (Everbridge) system began informing the public that State Route 154 was closed in both directions from State Route 246 near Santa Ynez to State Route 192 near Santa Barbara. Concurrently, the Red Cross, at the request of the County, began to mobilize to open two shelters for Paradise area evacuees.

The County Community Services Department, Parks Division, operates the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area in the Santa Ynez Valley, which includes 500 tent camping and RV camping sites, plus cabins and yurts for overnight stays. Cachuma Lake is approximately 11 miles from Paradise Road and typically has vacancies during the middle of the week.

On the evening of Thursday, July 18, 2016, following the evacuation of the Paradise Road area and amongst uncertainty about the size, speed and scope of the Rey Fire, several evacuees from the evacuated area arrived at the Cachuma Lake gate seeking a safe place to stay. This included an area resident couple, two Paradise campground hosts, and 18 campers from Paradise area campgrounds. Recognizing that having them stay at a campground as opposed to the high school facility being used as a Red Cross evacuation center would better accommodate the needs of these displaced individuals, all were provided the opportunity to stay in vacant, unreserved camp sites without charge. The resident and hosts moved into full hook-up sites while the 18 campers moved into an unreserved group camping area.

With the exception of the campers who evacuated to Lake Cachuma, all other evacuees found alternative housing and the Red Cross was able to put both open shelters on “standby” while maintaining the ability to re-open should circumstances change.

In accordance with Chapter 26 of the County Code, the Board of Supervisors may modify or waive required fees on recommendation of the Community Services Director.

Sec. 26-5. - Public use fees.

User fees shall be established by the Board of Supervisors, by ordinance or resolution. When fees are required, it is unlawful for any person to enter a county recreation area or other applicable area without first paying the appropriate fees and/or obtaining the appropriate permits. The Board of Supervisors, upon recommendation by the Community Services Director, may modify or waive required fees.

(Ord. No. 3708, § 1; Ord. No. 4833, § 1, 4-10-2012; Ord. No. 4965, § 1, 5-10-2016)

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:** The camp sites used by the evacuees were unreserved during the period of the evacuation so their use by Rey Fire evacuees did not displace fee paying customers. The Paradise area resident and the two Paradise campground hosts occupied full hook-up sites for eight nights with fees of \$50.00 per night for a total of \$1,200.00 in fees to be waived. The group camping area used by the 18 camping evacuees rents for \$500.00 per night which was used for two nights for a total of \$1,000.00 in fees to be waived. While there was no loss of anticipated revenue to the County, if regular fees were charged for the use of the facilities by those evacuated, they would have totaled \$2,200 in fees; the amount requested to be waived.

**Special Instructions:**

Send a copy of the minute order to the Community Services Department, Attention: Natasha Garduno, Community Services (805) 568-2467.

**Attachments:**

1. CEQA Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

Jeff Lindgren, Community Services Department Parks Operations Manager (805) 686-5076.