



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PARKS

File #: 23-629

Board Meeting Date: 7/25/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director
Subject: Amendment to the San Mateo County Parks Department Fee Schedule to establish a fee for dog-friendly camping facilities

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution:

- A) Authorizing an amendment to the Parks Department's fee schedule to establish a fee for dog-friendly camping facilities within the San Mateo County parks system; and
- B) Finding that the Huckleberry Flat Campground project qualifies for a California Environmental Quality Act Exemption as a Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2) and New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3).

BACKGROUND:

In 1924, the County of San Mateo opened its first park - Memorial County Park ("Memorial Park"). Situated among the redwood trees in unincorporated Loma Mar, Memorial Park serves as the primary campground for the San Mateo County parks system. The park has 130 campsites, including family, youth group, and large group sites. Dogs are currently not allowed in the campgrounds at Memorial Park but are allowed on-leash on the trails at the Loma Mar Redwood section of the park.

Based on its understanding that many people enjoy camping with their dog(s), as well as the County's recent efforts to make its parks system more accessible to dogs, the Department analyzed the feasibility of constructing a dog-friendly campground in Memorial Park. In 2022, it was determined that the Huckleberry Flat Picnic Area is underutilized and that converting it to the parks system's first dog-friendly campground would be a higher and better use. The Department hired a consultant to review this project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and determined that this project qualifies for a CEQA Exemption as a Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2) and New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3), consistent with the provisions of CEQA guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. Sections 15302, 15303, and 15300.2).

Huckleberry Flat Campground will consist of eight tent-only sites. Seven sites will be family

campsites that can accommodate up to 12 people and three dogs. Each site will include two tables, one barbeque, one fire pit, and one hitching post for the dog(s). One of these seven sites will be ADA accessible. The eighth site will be a hybrid campsite/picnic site that can accommodate up to 30 campers and five dogs or 50 picnickers. The Department intended to commence construction on the campground in early 2023 and open the new campsites to the public on the July 4th weekend; however, winter storms saturated soils to the extent that no construction can occur until the ground dries. The Department will commence construction once conditions permit.

DISCUSSION:

The Department's fee schedule does not have a fee for dog-friendly camping facilities, and thus, one must be established. Memorial Park utilizes a resident/non-resident rate structure for family campsites; county residents pay \$40 per night for a tent campsite and non-county residents pay \$45 per night for a tent campsite. The Department proposes to charge an extra \$5 per night for use of all dog-friendly campsites. Therefore, for the family campsites, a county resident would pay \$45 per night and a non-county resident would pay \$50 per night.

The additional revenue generated will pay for restocking of dog waste stations, restocking of eco-friendly dog shampoo, and increased administrative costs generated by the new use.

Upon adoption of the proposed recommendations, the Department would add Huckleberry Flat Campground to its reservation system. The Department anticipates Huckleberry Flat Campground will be open to the public starting September 1, 2023.

All members of the public recreating with dogs within county parks are expected to comply with the rules and regulations in the San Mateo Ordinance Code, including (without limitation) the dog-specific rules in Section 3.68.180. The Department does not intend to authorize off-leash dogs in Memorial Park, and thus dogs must be leashed at all times.

As noted above, the Department determined that this project qualifies for a CEQA Exemption as a Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2) and New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Class 3), consistent with CEQA guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. Sections 15302, 15303, and 15300.2).

The County Attorney's Office has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department proposes to charge an extra \$5 per night for use of all dog-friendly campsites. A county resident would pay \$45 per night for a dog-friendly campsite and a non-county resident would be \$50 per night for a dog friendly campsite. With no historical data, the Department cannot project the revenue that would be generated from the new fee at this time.