

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, May 12, 2011**

**County Administration Center - First Floor Hearing Room
675 Texas Street, Fairfield**

Members Present: Hermsmeyer, Whited, Leong, Riddle
Members Excused: Alvarez
Staff Present: Sykes, Tanner-Linne

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Hermsmeyer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2011

Motion to approve (Riddle), with second (Leong), and approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve (Leong), with second (Whited), and approved unanimously.

4. Chair and Commissioner Announcements

Hermsmeyer commented that word was getting out about guided tours at Lake Solano, because had read an article in the Sacramento Bee about them.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Receive Presentation on the Putah Creek Trout Organization and Activities at Lake Solano. By Steve Karr, Chair of the Board, Putah Creek Trout

Mr. Karr explained that Putah Creek Trout is a non-profit organization with their focus on the fishery found in the 6-1/2 mile stretch of Putah Creek from the Monticello Dam to Lake Solano. They are both a conservation group and fly-fishing club. They work together with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and other private and public partners, including Solano County Parks (assisting with exhibits and curriculum for the Nature Center).

Historically DFG had planted (stocked) fish in Putah Creek/Lake Solano for decades prior to the termination of the program in 2008. Currently, without fish stocking, the fish population in the creek is down. However, prior to the planting program, there had also been a large wild trout population in the creek. He noted that many large fish, up to 30 pounds, have historically been caught downstream from Monticello Dam. Karr noted the numbers were increasing slowly as native trout reproduced, but would take many years to rebound to populations of past years.

He explained that a lawsuit had stopped DFG's planting programs all over Northern California due to concerns about the effect of hatchery fish on native fish populations (primarily in high mountain lakes). After further evaluation, stocking has been resumed in many creeks and lakes, but not at Lake Solano. Resumption of stocking is further

complicated due to the fact that DFG is evaluating the possibility of designating a portion of Putah Creek upstream of Lake Solano as a Wild Trout waterway.

As an alternative, Mr. Karr said there was a hybrid fish (a “triploid”) now being hatchery raised which is sterile and would not reproduce in the creek. This hybrid is being used for planting in some water bodies, including Lake Berryessa. However, DFG is advising that this stocking alternative will likely not be possible in Lake Solano. There is a concern that the triploids may be able to migrate downstream if they were washed over the Solano Irrigation District diversion dam, and into the lower stretch of Putah Creek. Lower Putah Creek still has occasional runs of steelhead, an endangered species of fish that DFG needs to protect, and they would not want to introduce more non-native fish as competition.

Sykes described another alternative for providing fishing at Lake Solano Park that he and Karr had discussed. The Alvin Bonifacio children’s fishing pond is currently only used for special fishing derbies a few times each year. But it may be possible to utilize the pond year-round as a stocked fishing pond, and to raise revenue through use fees, to support its operation. The pond would need to be modified to alleviate concerns about planted fish swimming out the outflow pipe into Putah Creek. The pond would also need to be fenced so Park Staff could control access to the pond. It could be an attraction geared toward park users bringing their children out to fish at the park. Karr also suggested the pond might need to be deepened if it is to support planted trout, which require cool water temperatures. Karr also suggested that a pump could be installed to provide a water current in the pond which would be beneficial to supporting trout. There is already adequate parking for this attraction, with the large day use parking lot above the pond.

Whited asked how that would affect the people camping. Sykes said they could walk over and pay an additional fee to fish, but it would not otherwise affect campers.

Hermesmeyer and Riddle encouraged the idea, and noted that an attraction such as this could be combined with other tourist destinations in the local area (e.g. wineries) to encourage camping at Lake Solano Park and tourism within Solano County.

Sykes said he and Karr would follow up with further discussion with DFG about needed permits, and Sykes would request funding to pursue the needed modifications to the pond. Sykes will report back to the Commission when progress has been made.

7. Discuss Options to Revive Fishing and the Fishery at Lake Solano.

(Item 7 was addressed in the discussion of the preceding Item 6.)

8. Review and Comment on California State Parks’ “Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh”

Sykes presented the Commissioners with the “Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh” that was prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and was sent to Solano County for review. Sykes had reviewed the proposal and prepared a memorandum to the Commissioners (dated May 12), with comments for the Commissioners’ review. Comments are due to State Parks by May 31. Sykes requested that Commissioners review his comments and contact him with additional comments they may have that could be compiled into a response to State Parks.

Hermesmeyer directed all Commissioners to provide comments to Sykes by May 24th so they could be incorporated into a letter to State Parks by May 31st.

9. Receive “Year 4 Annual Assessment of Operations for Lynch Canyon Open Space Park”

The Commission received the Assessment, which Sykes reported was presented to the Board of Supervisors on May 10. It was received by the Board with several positive Board comments. Funding for Lynch Canyon in fiscal year 2011/12 will be discussed at the County budget hearings in mid-June. The Parks and Recreation Division has requested funding to maintain the current level of operation at the park in fiscal year 2011/12 (open weekends only, from mid-February to early September).

10. Receive Parks and Recreation Division Staff Report

Sykes provided handouts with the monthly attendance and revenues to date for each park, and the status of projects funded from grants from the Fish and Wildlife Propagation and Suisun Marsh Specific Fund grant programs. Sykes reported that the Lynch Canyon Management Agreement will terminate on June 30, 2011, and discussions with Solano Land Trust to renew the agreement were underway. Finally, Sykes reported that Parks and Recreation Division was being proposed for transfer from the County’s General Services Department to the Resource Management Department, subject to Board approval (scheduled for consideration at the Board’s June 7 meeting. If this occurs, the Parks administrative functions would be moved to the Resource Management Department in Suite 5500, but the intent is for the change to be seamless for the park operations in the field.

There was no Commissioner discussion of the staff report.

The next Commission meeting was confirmed for July 14, 2011, 5:30 p.m. Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.