



Monterey County Parks Commission

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Agenda No. 4

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- a. Receive a report on the recommended updates to the Park Volunteer Application and Handbook;
and
- b. Support recommended updates to the Board of Supervisors on the Park Volunteer Application and Handbook.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission:

- a. Receive a report on the recommended updates to the Park Volunteer Application and Handbook;
and
- b. Support recommended updates to the Board of Supervisors on the Park Volunteer Application and Handbook.

SUMMARY:

On March 30, 2004, the Board of Supervisor's approved updates to the previously approved application and Letter of Understanding for the Monterey County Parks Department's Live-on Volunteer Program. As presented during the August 2, 2018 Parks Commission meeting, Volunteers help supplement County staff and are a critical component in the success of managing each Park facility. As time has passed there have been significant changes that have necessitated the need to update the Volunteer Application, Volunteer Service Letter of Understanding, Volunteer Handbook, and overall enhance the Park Volunteer program. Staff proposes changes to both the organization and content of the current Parks Volunteer Program.

DISCUSSION:

In reviewing the current Parks Volunteer Handbook, Application, and Service Letter of Understanding several concerns arose regarding the overall program.

The Volunteer Application required potential volunteers to provide personally identifiable information (PII) or sensitive personal information including social security number, driver's license number, birth date, as well as other personal information. Once completed this application was to be submitted to either the Volunteer Coordinator, County Ranger, or North/South County Parks Manager. Upon identification that the 2004 Application requested information that was considered PII, staff modified the application to remove these fields. Staff is proposing other changes to the application such as requesting: references; type of volunteer position desired along with schedule/hours; and a dedicated section for those volunteers interested in being a Park Host with a desire to live on-site at one of the Parks. Other changes included updating the experienced/skills section, including specifically identifying

volunteers with special certifications or licenses. Another significant change involves engaging RMA Human Resources staff to be the central gate keepers where applications are to be sent.

Staff is recommending modifying the Volunteer Service Letter of Understanding from the current Volunteer Program to only be applicable to Park Hosts. Volunteers that are not Park Hosts would be required to sign the Waiver and Release Agreement form.

The current titled “Live-On Volunteer Handbook”, while heavily focused on Live-On Volunteers (Park Hosts), also pertained to “General” Volunteers. To attract the services of other type of volunteers in addition to Park Hosts, the type of volunteer designation has been expanded from just “general” to include Day Volunteer, Group Project Volunteer, Trail Volunteer, Park Docent/Naturalist, and Educational Presenter. Adding these specific designations will allow RMA staff to better match volunteer skills and interest with the specific needs of each park.

Currently, the County does not require volunteers go through a background check. Staff is recommending volunteers may be asked to complete a background check through the State of California Department of Justice Live Scan service where depending on assignment, final placement as a volunteer would be contingent upon the results of the criminal history check.

Ensuring an applicant understands the process of becoming a volunteer, knowing what is expected of them, and what they should expect from the County is important. Staff has updated the handbook to include documentation in more detail, including developing orientation and training. Information specifically applicable to the Park Host Program in detail, including the Park Host roles and responsibilities.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The draft changes to the 2004 Volunteer Program has not been routed for review to the County Administrative Office or County Counsel.

FINANCING:

The Volunteer program supplements County staff, enhances the park operations and offsets costs of repairs and maintenance resulting in overall savings to the County. In FY 2017-18, County Park volunteers donated over 23,000 hours which resulted in overall cost savings of \$651,000 (based on the CA hourly rate according to the Center for Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership).

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Parks are intended to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for people to achieve their potential. Parks require a certain level of community involvement to continue offering opportunities for outdoor recreation and green space, in support of healthy lifestyles and the environment. Updating our Volunteer Program and offering additional volunteer opportunities in our Parks allows RMA to maintain and enhance our park facilities.

- ☒ Economic Development
- ☒ Administration
- ☐ Health & Human Services

☒ Infrastructure

☐ Public Safety

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Attachments: A - 2004 Volunteer Program

B - 2018 Draft Volunteer Program