



Board Report

File #: 16-920, **Version:** 1

Receive report from the Parks Department regarding plans for a limited opening of Lake San Antonio facilities through the 2016 summer camping season; and

- b. Consider approval of the Parks Department plan for a limited opening of Lake San Antonio facilities through the 2016 summer camping season; and
- c. Provide Direction to the Parks Department to report back to the Board of Supervisors at the end of the 2016 Summer camping season on options for a larger opening of Lake San Antonio facilities next year for public use; and
- d. Provide other direction to staff as appropriate. (Added via Addendum)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive report from the Parks Department regarding plans for a limited opening of Lake San Antonio facilities through the 2016 summer camping season; and
- b. Approve the Parks Department plan for a limited opening of Lake San Antonio facilities through the 2016 summer camping season; and
- c. Provide Direction to the Parks Department to report back to the Board of Supervisors at the end of the 2016 Summer camping season on options for a larger opening of Lake San Antonio facilities next year for public use; and
- d. Provide other direction to staff as appropriate.

SUMMARY:

On June 21, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved a one-time funding request for the Parks Department budget that authorized staff to keep Lake San Antonio (LSA) in a “caretaker mode” rather than a hard closure. This allowed for basic level maintenance of park grounds and facilities to prevent excessive degradation that can occur during a full closure. Additionally, basic maintenance served to reduce the time and costs that would be associated when the park was ready to re-open to the public. Lastly, the park remaining in caretaker mode also allowed some public activities to continue such as limited operation of the North Shore equestrian area with volunteer labor, and special events like Lightning in a Bottle, and Tri- California’s Wildflower Triathlon event.

At the June 21st hearing, the Parks Department was also asked to analyze and report back in July on the possibility of opening LSA to the public for camping and/or other recreational activities during the summer months of 2016.

On July 19, 2016, Parks Department staff reported back to the Board of Supervisors on the possibility of opening LSA during the summer of 2016. The Parks Department reported that due to limited funding for staffing and other resources, a full public opening of the LSA grounds was not recommended.

At the July 19th hearing, the RMA-Parks Department was directed to further analyze the situation and report back on July 26th with a plan detailing the possibilities of opening LSA facilities to the public on a limited

basis through the 2016 summer camping season.

DISCUSSION:

Subsequent to the direction of the Board of Supervisors on July 19th, 2016, RMA-Parks Department met with The California Parks Company (CalParks) on July 20, 2016 to analyze the feasibility of opening LSA on a limited basis and to develop a plan to bring back to the Board for consideration. In developing this plan, County staff and CalParks made considerations for things like: Current Site Conditions/Suitability & Sanitation, Hours of Operation/Staffing & Maintenance, Emergency Services & Safety, and Water Levels & Lake Usage. Staff's recommended plan is detailed in the discussion below.

Current Site Conditions/Suitability & Sanitation:

Due to the preventative maintenance accomplished during caretaker mode, most areas of the LSA grounds can be opened in the span of a week. Given this, staff from the County and CalParks determined that the area most desirable to the public would be the Harris Creek Campground and Day Use Area. Harris Creek offers campsites with hookup services (electrical & water only) as well as primitive sites. Bathrooms, showers, and RV sewage stations are also within the campground. In addition, Harris Creek provides the closest proximity to the lake at its current water level.

Hours of Operation/Staffing & Maintenance:

Current County staffing levels will allow LSA to open, but only with reduced hours of gate operation and utilizing overtime. CalParks will be filling additional temporary positions to provide adequate staffing. To maximize public benefit, County and CalParks staff is recommending that LSA open only on Friday, Saturday, and Sundays from August 5th to September 12th. The park gate would be open and staffed Fridays 12:00pm to 8:00pm, Saturdays from 8:00am to 8:00pm, and Sundays from 8:00am to 5:00pm. The early gate closure on Sundays would ensure that staff is able to clear guests from the park grounds entirely before leaving for the week.

Park duties would be shared between County Parks Department staff and CalParks. The breakdown of duties would be as follows:

County Parks Responsible For:

- Providing security services
- Providing and managing barriers/signs to delineate areas of allowed and prohibited camping and park use
- Opening and closing LSA entry/exit gates
- Ensuring guests are off the lake and out of the park by the required times each evening
- Trash/recycling pick up and disposal and general park maintenance
- Providing personnel to respond to emergencies during all park open hours
- Providing personnel to handle property damage and maintenance emergencies during all park open hours
- Maintenance of park facilities

CalParks Responsible For:

- Providing staffing for LSA entry/exit gates for all hours the gate is open
 - This includes providing mussel and general boat inspection duties at the gate prior to entry into the park
- Cleaning and stocking the camping restroom/shower facilities opened to the public
- Handling all revenue (cash and credit), including money from gate operation and overnight camping deposit box
- Providing a camp host/ambassador who will travel through the campgrounds and work with gate staff to ensure that all guests have paid appropriate fees and have appropriate permits

Emergency Services & Safety

In case of emergencies, County Park staff will be equipped to provide services to all areas of LSA while local response agencies are in route. However, Parks staff will be responding from Lake Nacimiento. Safety and basic hazard monitoring may only be provided on a minimal basis when staff is available. Signage will be in place to inform guests of the limited supervision and potential risks.

Water Levels & Lake Usage

As of July 21, 2016, Lake San Antonio was at 7% capacity with a surface area of 788 acres spanning a length of only about 6 miles. California boating law requires highly limited speeds within 200 feet of a landing, beach or dock. Nearly one half of the lake surface is occupied by floating County property, equipment or other assets. Due to this coverage, very little of the lake would be navigable outside of this reduced speed zone. Additionally, the dense compression of these objects over the reduced lake surface narrows the navigable space and creates more opportunity for collisions. For these reasons, and due to a lack of staff to patrol the lake for unsafe motorized boat activity, staff is recommending lake usage be limited to non-motorized vessels. Examples of allowable vessels would include: Kayaks, Canoes, and Rowboats.

The following, is a summarized version of staff's recommended plan for a limited LSA opening to the public through Summer 2016:

2016 Opening/Closing Dates

- August 5th to September 12th

Hours of Operation

- Fridays: 12:00pm to 8:00pm
- Saturdays: 8:00am to 8:00pm
- Sundays: 8:00am to 5:00pm

Areas Open to the Public (See Attachment A)

- Harris Creek Recreational Area
 - A, B, C and D Camping Loops ONLY (137 sites total)
 - Approx. 26 sites with electrical and water (A Loop)
 - Approx. 111 primitive camp sites (B,C and D Loops)

- No sewer campsite hookups - dump station on site
- Showers
- Bathrooms
- Harris Creek Day Use Area
- Open during gate hours
- Lake Access at Harris Creek
 - Launch from Harris Creek Boat Ramp
 - Non-motorized boats ONLY (Kayaks, Canoes, Rowboats, etc.)

RMA-County Parks staff will work cooperatively and collaboratively with CalParks to ensure a successful limited opening at LSA. Both agencies are committed to providing safe and enjoyable park services to the public through Labor Day Weekend. Following closure in September, staff recommends reporting back to the Board of Supervisors with a summary of the limited opening at LSA and options for a larger opening of the facilities next year for public use.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The CAO's Office (IGLA) participated in preparation of this recommendation.

FINANCING:

The costs associated with the recommended limited opening of Lake San Antonio for the 2016 Summer camping season were not included in the FY 2016-17 Adopted Budget. RMA - Parks intends to implement this action within the approved department budget appropriations through other cost savings measures and increased efficiencies throughout the fiscal year. Staff will include a financial summary of the LSA opening in the report back to the Board of Supervisors. If necessary, staff will advise the Board of potential impacts to other services and the need for consideration of additional appropriations at that time.

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Approved by: John Guertin, Resource Management Agency Acting Deputy Director , x6654

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

Attachment A - South Shore Areas Open to the Public