



Board Report

File #: 21-230, **Version:** 1

- a. Receive an informational report on the proposed update to the County Parks Volunteer Handbook; and
- b. Support a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to: 1) Adopt the updated County Parks Volunteer Program Handbook, and 2) Delegate and Authorize the Public Works, Facilities, & Parks Director, or Designee, with the support of the Parks Commission, to make future updates to the Volunteer Program Handbook and related forms that do not involve major program or policy changes.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission:

- a. Receive an informational report on proposed updates to the County Parks Volunteer Handbook; and
- b. Support a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to: 1) Adopt the updated County Parks Volunteer Program Handbook, and 2) Delegate and Authorize the Public Works, Facilities, & Parks Director, or Designee, with the support of the Parks Commission, to make future updates to the Volunteer Program Handbook and related forms that do not involve major program or policy changes.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On March 30, 2004, the Board of Supervisors approved updates to the Live-On Volunteer Handbook, Application, and Letter of Understanding for the Monterey County Parks Department's Live-on Volunteer Program. In December 2016, the County Parks Department was integrated into the Resource Management Agency. On September 6, 2018, RMA staff presented a report to the Parks Commission on a proposed updated Volunteer Handbook. On August 2, 2018 and September 5, 2019, staff presented a report to the Parks Commission on volunteer hours and services that illustrated how volunteers provide an essential component to the success of each park facility's operations.

Public Works, Facilities & Parks (PWFP) concluded an extensive review of the County Parks Volunteer Program Handbook and found it significantly outdated. A completely updated Volunteer Handbook (Handbook) is presented today for the Parks Commission's consideration and approval. With the extensive reorganization of material in the Handbook, staff did not produce a redlined version of the existing handbook.

The updated Handbook reflects recent County organizational changes and current County Parks' operations and conditions (Attachment A-County Parks Volunteer Handbook). The description of the County Parks Volunteer Program (Program) has been updated. Seven categories of volunteers are highlighted in the Handbook, including the introduction of the *Virtual* Volunteer. An updated overview of the volunteer application process, volunteer responsibilities, and volunteer benefits as well as County Parks' commitment to its volunteers is included. Lastly, this updated Handbook begins a shift in focus from the sole use of a printed handbook to a transition that takes advantage of available electronic/digital technology to improve the volunteer application process and access to Program materials, all consolidated in one location on the Department website. The website will provide 24/7 access to application packets, County policies and Park rules, parks governance structure, and new fillable forms. This website is under construction and envisioned, when complete, to contain

all materials related to the Program. Ultimately, the website may serve as a supplemental volunteer orientation and training venue. The new County Parks Volunteer Page will facilitate prospective volunteers in joining the Program and better serve volunteers over their tenure.

Along with the Handbook, various Program forms have been updated. New position-specific volunteer applications have been developed to best match prospective volunteers with County Parks' needs. Additionally, the Volunteer Letter of Understanding, specific to Park Host volunteers, and the Waiver and Release Agreement that all other volunteers sign have been updated to be consistent with the updated Handbook and current practices.

A new provision for acceptance to the volunteer program is a requirement for a photograph identification (photo id) and consent for a general criminal background and reference check for all volunteers interacting with the public. This addition is implemented for the safety and well-being of park patrons and employees and aligns County requirements with those of other county, state, and national park facilities. Acceptance to and continuance with the volunteer program is contingent upon successful screening.

The Parks Commission is asked to receive this informational report and support a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to: 1) Adopt the updated Parks Volunteer Program Handbook, and 2) Delegate and Authorize the Public Works, Facilities, & Parks Director, or Designee, with the support of the Parks Commission, to make future updates to the Volunteer Program Handbook and related forms that do not involve major program or policy changes.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

PWFP worked with the Human Resources Department, County Administrative Office, Auditor-Controller's Office, and Office of the County Counsel in preparing the revised Handbook. The Handbook is still under review by County Counsel, Human Resources, and the Service Employee International Union Local 521 (SEIU 521), and changes will be considered prior to submission to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

FINANCING:

Volunteers enable County Parks to offer enhanced services to the public. Positive guest experiences convert park users to loyal, repeat visitors, generating ongoing revenue essential to continue Parks operations. Cost of reference and background checks for volunteers is modest and included in annual adopted budgets.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The recommended action supports the Board of Supervisors Economic Development, Administration, Health & Human Services, Infrastructure, and Public Safety Strategic Initiatives. County Parks provide a safe outdoor recreational environment for people to engage in activities that promote fitness and physical and mental health. The latter is also attributed to reducing crime, which enhances surrounding communities making them attractive areas in which residents can thrive and businesses grow.

X Economic Development

X Administration

X Health & Human Services

X Infrastructure:

X Public Safety

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Attachment:

Attachment A-Proposed County Parks Volunteer Program Handbook