

Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, October 2, 2025

Location: Monterey Room, 168 W. Alisal St. 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93905

Call to Order: 3:05 p.m. by acting chair Commissioner Ellerbee in absence of Chair Commissioner Sergio Sanchez.

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Commissioner Getzelman, Commissioner Stracke, Commissioner Ellerbee, and Supervisor Church

Absent: Commissioner Sanchez and Commissioner Prina

Staff: Bryan Flores, Chief of Parks; Nate Merkle, Administrative Operations Manager; Sabrina Guzman, Secretary; attending remotely Dona Luna, Management Analyst III, Maribel Zendejas Management Analyst II; Jessica Cordiero-Martinez, Finance Manager III; Keiha Yonemitsu, Accountant III; and

Public Comment

Peter Berridge, Vice President of the Monterey Off-Road Cycling Association (MORCA), informed the Commission that the California Outdoor Recreation Partnership will host its annual Base Camp event in Carmel Valley from October 22–24. The event brings together outdoor industry leaders to discuss ideas, network, and explore solutions, with Assemblymember Don Addis as keynote speaker.

He emphasized that outdoor recreation, including mountain biking, is part of a \$1.2 trillion U.S. industry that provides significant economic and community benefits. Berridge noted that while Monterey County has a strong conservation legacy, challenges such as overtourism have limited opportunities for collaboration around outdoor recreation. He urged the County to view recreation as a necessity and an opportunity rather than a burden.

Berridge proposed developing a countywide regional trails plan—integrating state, federal, regional, and local agencies, advocacy groups, and residents—as part of any updated County Parks master plan. He stated that MORCA is ready to partner in advancing this initiative to benefit the economy, public health, conservation, and community well-being.

Commissioner Comments, Requests, Recommendations

Commissioner Stracke requesting update on T-pads for the disc golf course at Royal Oaks.

Clerk Additions/Corrections

None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve the Parks Commission Minutes of June 5, 2025

- Corrections bullets points listed under discussed Measure AA revenue starting at CDFW bullet point moved under Department updates header. Motion to accept with corrections made by Supervisor Church and 2nd by Commissioner Stracke.
 - Commissioner Getzelman – Aye
 - Commissioner Stracke – Aye
 - Commissioner Ellerbee – Aye
 - Supervisor Church – Aye
- Motion passed

2. Approve the Parks Commission Minutes of August 8, 2025

- Corrections Commissioner Sanchez was added as late and absent, and Rancho Ordóñez was autocorrected in place of Royal Oaks under item number 4 and future agenda items. Motion to accept with corrections made by Commissioner Getzelman and 2nd by Supervisor Church.
 - Commissioner Getzelman – Aye
 - Commissioner Stracke – Pass
 - Commissioner Ellerbee – Aye
 - Supervisor Church – Aye
- Motion passed unanimously

Scheduled Matters

3. a. Receive a report on the proposed change to the County of Monterey Parks Commission Bylaws by adding an “At-Large” member who lives within the County of Monterey; and b. Support staffing moving the Monterey County Parks Commission Bylaws’ approved changes and modifications, to the Board of Supervisors for considerations and adoptions

Discussion Highlights:

- The Commission currently has an even number of members, making quorum difficult.
- Adding a 7th member keeps quorum at four but makes reaching it easier.
- District seats are all filled; adding another district representative would be inequitable.
- Recommendation: create an at-large seat open to any Monterey County resident, appointed by the full Board of Supervisors.
- Staff suggested the at-large member ideally have experience in:
 - Parks & recreation
 - Open space management
 - Land management/stewardship
- Draft bylaws provided in redline and clean versions
- Corrections to draft
 - A “whereas” clause referenced an incorrect 2018 resolution.
 - Correction needed: Resolution 18-048 added a Board of Supervisors member, not an at-large member.
- Commissioner Strake motioned to approve with recommendations, Commissioner Ellerbee seconded the motion.
 - Commissioner Getzelman – Aye
 - Commissioner Stracke – Pass
 - Commissioner Ellerbee – Aye
 - Supervisor Church – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

4. a. Receive a report on the draft E-bike Ordinance amending County of Monterey Code Chapter 12.12; and b. Support staff moving the Monterey County Parks

Presentation Highlights:

- Staff delayed for ~6 months to observe outcomes from other California jurisdictions adopting e-bike regulations.
- No legal issues or challenges emerged from those jurisdictions—staff recommends moving forward.
- Draft ordinance has been thoroughly vetted by: Parks Commission, the Public, and Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee.

- Commissioner Getzelman asked staff whether the ordinance includes everything intended staff confirmed it does.
- Staff noted one previous section—“other electric modalities”—was removed due to safety and environmental concerns with non-pedal electric vehicles.
- Commissioner Strake moved to recommend the Ordinance go before the Board of Supervisors for approval. Commissioner Getzelman seconded the motion.
 - Commissioner Getzelman – Aye
 - Commissioner Stracke – Pass
 - Commissioner Ellerbee – Aye
 - Supervisor Church – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

5. Receive the Parks Division General Fund Year-End Financial Report (FY 2024-25) and Budget Comparison (FY 2025-26)

Presentation Highlights: Presented by Jessica Cordero-Martinez, Finance Manager III

FY 2024–25 Year-End Financial Summary

- Total revenue for FY 2024-25 was approximately \$1.9 million, which exceeded budget projections by roughly \$266,000, largely due to increased revenue from Lake San Antonio. Revenue sources included \$1.75 million from park operations, \$138,000 from a one-time state boating grant, \$14,000 from leases, and \$5,000 from the sale of capital assets.
- Total expenditures were reported at \$10.2 million, coming in under budget by approximately \$46,000. Significant savings in salary and benefit costs—approximately \$829,000—were achieved due to staff vacancies, allowing Parks to redirect funds to complete major maintenance projects across multiple park facilities.
- Maintenance and Repair Projects
- Completed projects included:
 - Entry grid gate re-roof, emergency repairs, marina demolition, fire pit replacements, and well system repairs at Lake San Antonio
 - Bird and bat exclusions and termite treatment at San Lorenzo Park
 - Culvert repairs at Toro Park
 - Sinkhole repair at Royal Oaks
 - Playground equipment repairs across North County parks
 - Extensive tree trimming at all park locations
- Additional expenditures included \$1.8 million in countywide cost-plan allocations and \$61,000 for equipment purchases, including two replacement vehicles, rodent compressors, and mower attachments. An additional \$65,000 was transferred into VAMP (Vehicle & Maintenance Program) for two Ranger vehicles pending delivery.
- FY 2025–26 Budget Overview
- The FY 2025-26 budget includes projected revenue of \$1.8 million, which incorporates a transfer from Lake Nacimiento quagga-mussel prevention funds. Cordero-Martinez noted that Parks will consider a mid-year budget adjustment if revenue trends continue to exceed expectations.
- Budgeted expenditures for the current fiscal year total \$9.6 million, which is \$652,000 lower than the prior year. Personnel costs, however, are projected to increase by approximately \$525,000 due to new county labor agreements and wage adjustments.
- Staffing and Cost-Saving Measures
- Elimination of three positions: the Parks Planning Manager, the Parks Building & Grounds Supervisor, and a Park Services Aide I. The Senior Secretary position remains unfunded but

retained. Cost-saving strategies include pausing contributions to the VAMP program for one year and deferring all capital project spending.

- Commission Questions and Discussion
- Commissioners inquired about the timing of the request to the Board of Supervisors to designate the \$265,000 in year-end surplus revenue. Cordero-Martinez responded that staff is waiting for the County's year-end BAR report and anticipates submitting a request at mid-year. Staff is also exploring the creation of a rolling maintenance fund.
- Commissioners also asked about the impacts of pausing VAMP contributions. Staff noted they are compiling figures to determine the full effect.
- Public Comment
 - No public comments were offered for this item.

6. Receive the Rifle Range General Fund Year-End Financial Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 and the Budget Comparison for FY 2025-26.

Presentation Highlights

FY 2024-25 Summary

- Revenues totaled \$121,000 (\$17,000 over budget), primarily from regular operations.
- Expenditures totaled \$252,000 (\$8,000 under budget).
- Higher-than-planned wage adjustments were offset by intentional reductions in services and supplies.
- Net operating loss: \$131,000, improving the General Fund impact by \$25,000.

FY 2025-26 Budget

- Projected revenues: \$131,000, reflecting recent performance trends but subject to competition from other ranges.
- Budgeted expenditures: \$276,000, increased mainly due to wage and benefit adjustments.
- Services and supplies tightened; Cost Allocation charge expected to rise.
- Budget meets General Fund targets and remains balanced.

Commission Discussion

- Competition: Commissioners asked about differentiation from other regional ranges. Staff noted ongoing challenges due to private and nonprofit competitors with more amenities.
- Potential Enhancements: Staff are exploring trap and skeet shooting during days closed for Laguna Seca events.
- Future Operations: The Friends of Laguna Seca are expected to assume management of the range within 12–18 months, with plans for significant facility upgrades.
- Range Comparison: Other ranges offer longer distances and improved facilities. County range currently limited to ~350 yards for safety reasons.

Public Comment

- No public comments.

Additional Note

- Parks General Fund VAMP cost removed from the budget: \$307,000.

7. Receive the Lake Nacimiento Resort and Operations Enterprise Fund Year-End Financial Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-25 and the Budget Comparison for FY 2025-26

Presentation Highlights

FY 2024-25 Highlights

- Operations remained stable, but revenues fell short due to reduced visitation tied to:
 - Competition from Lake San Antonio

- Lower water levels
 - Delayed lodge renovations, reducing spring revenue
- Expenditures stayed under budget, aided by staffing vacancies at Explore U.S.
- Lodge renovation completed, funded by a \$3 million transfer from the Building Improvement & Replacement Fund.
- Net position grew to \$6.4 million, nearly doubling from the start of the year.

Revenue & Expenditure Details

- Total revenue: \$4M, approximately \$679,000 under budget (lower visitation; lost spring lodge bookings).
- Lodge reopened by Memorial Day; working with Explore U.S. to increase room rates.
- Received \$111,000 in ARPA funds for laundry/housekeeping building renovation.
- Expenditures: \$4.1M, \$258,000 under budget.
- Savings offset by unfunded lodge furnishings.
- Starting net position: \$3.3M; year-end: \$6.4M (includes capital assets and restricted Quagga/trailer funds).

FY 2025–26 Budget Overview

- Projected revenues: \$4.9M, driven by increased boat rentals, commissions, and lodge revenue.
- Monitoring visitation impacts due to dropping water levels.
- Expenditures: \$4.6M, increased due to county cost allocation and lodge-related depreciation.
- Capital budget: ~\$600,000 for Quagga mussel projects, mobile home replacement, and roof work.
- Planned transfer of \$300,000 to Lake San Antonio for shared Quagga costs.
- Expected \$551,000 reduction in net position, tied to planned spending from restricted funds (unrestricted funds remain strong).

Commission Discussion

- Clarification provided on mobile home replacements: two damaged units will be replaced with one rental unit.
- Commissioners noted strong financial improvement compared to previous years when General Fund support was required.
- Four additional modular units from Lake San Antonio await installation; work pending staff capacity.
- Discussion on year-round lodge availability and improving occupancy following renovations.
- Positive guest feedback noted, including long-time returning families and improved online reviews.
- Explore U.S. performance improving after initial challenges.
- Commissioner interest in a site visit; suggestion for a special meeting or joint tour with the Board of Supervisors.

Public Comment

- No public comments

8. Receive the Laguna Seca Recreation Area (LSRA) Enterprise Fund Year-End Financial Report for Fiscal Year's (FY) 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the Budget Comparison for FY 2025-26.

Presentation Highlights

Operational Transition

- As of August 1, 2024, operations transitioned to Friends of Laguna Seca (FLS), replacing A&RIGI LLC.
- Under the new concession model, FLS now manages all operating revenues and expenditures.
- The county retains responsibility for:
 - General liability and property insurance
 - Depreciation
 - Cost allocation plan charges
 - Track and bridge project loan repayment

FY 2024–25 Financial Results

- Operating revenues to the county dropped after August 1; only \$2.4M collected in July.
- Non-operating revenues totaled \$522,000, primarily audit adjustments and interest earnings.
- County salary/benefit costs: \$874,000, with \$480,000 reimbursed for staff working outside Laguna Seca during the transition.
- Services & supplies: \$1.7M (July operations, transition close-out, and insurance).
- Depreciation: \$1.6M.
- Operating transfer: \$355,000 to repay the track and bridge loan (covered by Mission Foods sponsorship).
- Net loss: \$1.7M, largely due to depreciation.
- Ending net position: \$29.4M
 - \$26.5M capital assets
 - \$366,000 restricted (storm-related projects)
 - \$2.5M unrestricted

FY 2025–26 Budget Outlook

- Projected net loss: \$2.5M, primarily depreciation.
- Revenues: Mission Foods sponsorship + reimbursement from FLS for cost allocation.
- Fixed costs (insurance, depreciation, cost plan) remain with the county.
- Estimated FY 25–26 ending unrestricted net position: \$1.7M.
- Rising insurance costs identified as the main pressure on long-term fund stability.
- County will not receive concession fee payments until early 2030 (10% of net operating income).

Commission Discussion

- Insurance costs: Commissioners asked whether county and FLS insurance created duplication.
Staff clarified:
 - Coverage is not duplicative; both entities require separate layers of protection.
 - County maintains umbrella coverage above FLS limits due to ownership liability.
- Some insurance costs (e.g., medical malpractice) have shifted to FLS.
- County must continue holding water/sewer permits and managing related compliance.
- Track and bridge loan repayment reflects only the 20% share originally agreed to by the prior operator, funded through Mission Foods sponsorship.
- Concern raised about whether the unrestricted balance can sustain costs through 2030 if insurance expenses continue rising.

Public Comment

- No public comments.

Department updates

Entry Gate Update

- Commissioners briefly discussed recent adjustments to the height clearance at the park entry gate. Staff noted improvements were made, including the addition of PVC protection.
- Challenges remain due to tall vehicle components (e.g., air-conditioning units) striking the gate. Staff confirmed damaged components have been modified or removed.

Fort Ord Vault Restroom Project

- Staff presented photos of the new vault restroom at Fort Ord.
- A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, October 4 at 11:00 a.m.
- The restroom is a two-stall, all-concrete structure with a marine treatment package to withstand coastal conditions.
- The building includes ADA access, time-locked doors, and is expected to last 50–60 years.
- Installation included significant logistical coordination, including crane placement and gas line protection.
- Total project cost: \$161,000 (including unit purchase, installation, construction management, permitting, and soil work).
- Public access will be available outside of special events to prevent overuse.

San Lorenzo Park Bat Netting Project

- Staff presented images of installed steel bat-exclusion netting at the San Lorenzo Park barn, museum, and Irrigation Museum.
- The project followed a large-scale fumigation effort completed due to structural concerns and health risks associated with bat guano.
- The steel netting is durable, visually clean, and designed to prevent bats and swallows from re-entering rafter areas.

Commission Comments

- Commissioners thanked Jessica Cordero-Martinez and staff for their work preparing the financial and project reports.
- Concern was expressed regarding declining investment capacity, including deferred vehicle purchases and postponed capital projects.
- Commissioners encouraged staff to return to the Board of Supervisors early—rather than waiting for mid-year—to request allocation of the \$265,000 surplus revenue for parks.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

December 4, 2025

Meeting Adjournment

4:34 p.m.