To: Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive
From: Robb Courtney, Director, Parks and Recreation
Date: March 9, 2012
Subject: FY 2013 Requested Budget Submittal and Department Overview

The Parks and Recreation Department administers the County’s 46,000-acre park system which includes the operation and maintenance of 28 diverse regional parks, and the provision of recreation and interpretative programs, and special events such as the annual Fantasy of Lights and Festival in the Park. Parks staff works with cities, special park districts, contiguous counties and the State of California on mutually beneficial projects that leverages our resources, furthers our mission, and develops complementary park and recreation programs. As we move forward into the 2013 budget year we want to continue to provide a growing and diverse system of parks, trails and natural areas that connects people to the natural environment, supports healthy lifestyles, and provides outstanding visitor experiences.

In my short time with the Department, I have identified several key strategic opportunities that I want to focus the department’s attention on in the coming years. This year’s budget request is designed to support these objectives. The opportunities include:

- Strengthening our organizational capacity and team culture. One project that is crucial to our success in this area is the role clarification process. This project is essentially an employee led process to clarify roles and responsibilities and to enhance communication and coordination through regular meetings and the development of joint work plans. We can also do more to support our work with volunteers and partnerships with other agencies and organizations. The same is true with respect to leveraging technology. I will be working with staff to explore initiatives that make better use of our human resources as well as technological resources.

- Martial Cottle Park
The Board’s approval of the master plan last year paves the way for design development that is currently underway. We are aiming to open the perimeter trail to the public in the latter half of 2013, with completion of phase 1 improvements
in 2014. This park provides the opportunity to implement an alternative operating model, beginning with the management of the park. Given its unique partnership with affiliate groups such as Our City Forest, UC Cooperative Extension, and 4H, and the commercial agriculture program envisioned, the FY 2013 budget includes one new position. The Martial Cottle Park Manager would be responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance of the park including the supervision of park maintenance, park ranger, and other staff assigned to the park, including the work of volunteers. This position is responsible for managing the park’s annual budget development, coordinating capital projects conducted on park property, and is the liaison and contract administrator with the park’s affiliate organizations (UC Cooperative Extension, 4H, Master Gardeners, Our City Forest) for their uses on park property; and the master farmer for the agricultural program in the park, and any future park advisory group(s).

The park manager will be responsible for providing an annual report on the performance of the park, its agricultural program, and the work of its affiliate organizations and other partners. The manager will also be responsible for developing and implementing a revenue generation model at the park that includes earned income, sponsorships, grants, and other types of support that may be in-kind or financial in nature.

- Department’s strong fiscal position
  The Park Charter Fund has allowed the Department to remain stable in these uncertain economic times; and we continue to exercise caution about taking on additional ongoing costs. However, it is vital that our revenue generation is optimized so that we are able to keep pace with operating costs as the park system grows over time. I will be working with staff to understand where our strengths currently lie and areas where our financial performance can be improved.

- Expansion of trails program
  The Board recently asked the department to take another look at its role in urban areas. One clear opportunity for the department to strengthen its service to urban areas of the county is by taking more of leadership role in implementing the County-wide trails master plan. Expanding the trail system increases residents connections to their neighborhood, local parks, and the broader regional trail system; it enhances transportation opportunities and supports healthy lifestyles.

These strategic opportunities form the backdrop for the FY 2013 budget. The Department’s budget recommended actions as well as internal Department initiatives (not dependent on additional budget for implementation) are arrayed according to the seven areas of your County Vision.
Customer Focus

Recommended action:

- Customer needs and satisfaction survey $50K
  The Department’s last customer satisfaction survey was completed in 2006 and it is time to survey our customers again in order to establish new baselines for development of performance measures and to inform the update of the Department’s strategic plan. Included in the survey project will be intercept surveys so that we can obtain information directly from park users this summer.

- Reservation software upgrade $13K
- ARC GIS software $3K
- Volunteer Program database software $25K
  The three software requests are to make using our reservation system more user friendly for the customer, to add a license for more staff to be able to use ARC GIS software, and to have a more efficient way of capturing service hours worked by our volunteers.

- Radio replacements $60K
  Funding is proposed to replace the Maintenance Division’s hand held radios from analog to digital in order to comply with County Communications’ planned radio network change. The new radios will be compatible with the current network and the new network.

- Computer replacements $29K
  In order for the Department to maintain the County’s four-year computer rotation schedule, funding is proposed to provide additional computers to accomplish the rotation as well as two new computers to outfit the new Anderson Visitor Center.

- Servers replacement $23K
  The Department’s email and file servers are scheduled for replacement in 2013 and funding is proposed to accomplish this requirement.

Department initiatives:

- Urban service delivery plan- development of a plan that includes:
  1. Implementation of the acquisition plan to address park deficient areas of the county, specifically the Alum Rock and Burbank islands.
  2. Continued partnership with local cities to acquire property to complete important trail systems.
  3. Using information from the customer satisfaction and intercept surveys to inform capital improvement and strategic plan actions.
- Cultural competency- this initiative is to increase the staff’s knowledge of
cultural diversity and how best to meet their recreation needs given the large and varied residents of the county.

Performance Measurement and Results

Department initiative:
- Develop 5 key performance measures and associated goals in the Operations, Maintenance, Interpretation, Real Estate, and Project Management Programs. This initiative will involve staff from five program areas that will be trained on performance measurement to develop appropriate measures for their program. The goals are to see if these programs are effective at accomplishing the right objectives that are meaningful to our customers, and the information collected is used for decision-making and continuous improvement.

Mid-Manager Empowerment and Engagement/Build Bench Strength/Use Latent Talent

Recommended action:
- 1.0 FTE Program Manager I/II $145K

A Program Manager position is requested to be the park manager for Martial Cottle Park. He/she will be responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance of the park, is the liaison and contract administrator with the park’s affiliate organizations, and for developing and implementing a new operating model and revenue generation plan for the park.

The first of phase of improvements is currently under design; the park’s perimeter trail is targeted to open in 2013 with the balance of the phase 1 improvements to be available for public use in 2014. By filling the park manager position in FY 2013, it will allow them to participate in making decisions, during design development that will ultimately be their responsibility to operate.

Department initiative:

This is part of our effort to increase our organizational capacity and build team culture by providing opportunities for staff to participate in “stretch” assignments that expose them to working with different staff, collaborate on developing options and recommendations on a key strategic focus area for the Department, and gives those employees who want to expand their horizons an opportunity to do so.
Reducing Cost of Services

Department initiative:
- Martial Cottle Park operating model- the opening of this joint County and State park provides an opportunity to implement a new model to operate and manage the park at a reduced cost from the traditional operating model. It also provides an opportunity for the Department to pilot a new revenue generation program given all of the affiliate and partner organizations that will be a part of the park.
- Perform current cost of service analysis for any outsourcing opportunities.
- Evaluate effectiveness of the Unit management model.
- Evaluate current staffing model for relevancy.

Consolidation

Department initiative:
- Consolidation of Outdoor Recreation Program with Interpretive Services- these two programs will now be managed by one manager since the programs have many similarities. Community resources generated for one program may also be beneficial to the other program, thereby leveraging the resources.

Fixed Assets

To ensure compliance with current State emissions requirements for off-road diesel vehicles, the Department will be replacing two tractors and two skip loader tractors, and a forklift. These pieces of equipment are currently rated as high emission producers; all of the new replacement equipment will be rated as low emission producers.

The Department recommends the purchase of an all terrain vehicle for use by our in-house Trails Crew to access single-track trails and to haul materials to remote sites. Other new equipment includes a gas powered fire pumper for the Ed Levin County Park. This equipment will provide improved wildland fire fighting capability and additional resources to support the prescribed burn program that is part of the resource management plan for this park. A mower and mulcher attachment for an existing excavator is also recommended. The attachment will make mowing and mulching of brush easier as brush clearing is an on-going task needed to maintain trails and fire breaks. A narrow gauge 4x4 tractor is requested in order for Trail Crew staff to access remote park areas for single-track trail construction and maintenance. A new trap machine for Field Sports County Park is included as the existing machine has outlived its useful life. Lastly, a new generator is recommended to provide back-up electrical power at the Department's Central Yard facility. Central Yard is designated as an alternate emergency operations center in our COOP plan and a generator is an essential piece of equipment to have on-site.
Proposed Capital Improvement Projects for FY 2013:

The department has over the past several years accumulated a backlog of appropriated, but not yet completed capital projects. For 2013 we are adding only a few projects and will focus our efforts on completing these and the remaining backlogged projects. During this year we will take a strategic look at our CIP for 2014 and following. The department’s proposed CIP projects for 2013 include:

Paving Repairs – to repair paved sections of a trail at Sanborn County Park and a campground roadway at Mt. Madonna County Park.

- Sanborn: the existing six foot-wide path from a parking lot to the Sequoia group picnic area has deteriorated to the point of needing reconstruction. The path has potholes and cracks and if not addressed, will pose health/safety concerns.

- Mt. Madonna: the Valley View road loop (east of the Valley View 3 Campground) is in need of major repairs in three areas. In one section, the edge of the road is sagging a few inches below the rest of the road surface; in another section the road is crumbling in several locations, and all three sections have deep potholes. These sections should be repaired and repaved.

Project budget of $125K is proposed to be funded from the Park Charter Fund.

Sanborn Welch Hurst Study Implementation – to add funds to an existing project for study implementation (construction design phase). After the leasehold of the Welch Hurst youth hostel concluded, the Department conducted an initial examination of the structures and determined that the building had significant deferred maintenance and was mothballed to prevent further deterioration. In addition, future uses of the building need to be evaluated in order to inform repairs and needed renovations. Project budget of $200K is proposed to be funded from Park Charter Fund.

Almaden Quicksilver: Hacienda Restroom – to install permanent restrooms at this location as per study recommendation. Because the site is extremely constrained due to mercury remediation and the proximity of Alamitos Creek, the Department conducted a site investigation to determine the most feasible location for the restrooms. The Department proposes to allocate $350K from the Park Charter Fund.

Santa Teresa County Park Historic Area Neighborhood Improvements – to design and prepare construction documents for neighborhood serving improvements to access the Santa Teresa County Park historic area. The Department completed and the Board approved the "Santa Teresa County Park Historic Area Site Plan" in December 2009. The Department proposes to proceed with design and development of new shared-use
pathways along the perimeter of the historic area to facilitate neighborhood access to this area of the park. Project budget of $600K is proposed to be funded from the Park Charter Fund.

Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch – to replace the lakeside park entrance kiosk at Coyote Lake. The existing kiosk consists of a plywood shed and is deteriorating. The project calls for a standard entrance kiosk similar to those found at Ed Levin, Hellyer, Anderson Lake, and Vasona County Parks. The Department completed Phase 1 improvements and the Master Plan recommended the lake site kiosk improvements as a Phase 2 project. Project budget of $50K is proposed to be funded from the Park Charter Fund.

Conclusion

The Department looks forward to reviewing its budget submission package with you at our annual review meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ann Feng, Fiscal Officer, at 355-2241.

C: Sylvia Gallegos, Deputy County Executive
Mary Stephens, OBA, Budget Director
Autumn Arias, OBA, Budget & Public Policy Analyst
Julie Mark, Deputy Director
Matt Anderson, Acting Deputy Director
Ann Feng, Fiscal Officer