

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only
Meeting Date **Held Until**
 ___/___/___ ___/___/___
Agenda Item No: **Agenda Item No:**

Department: Regional Parks

() 4/5 Vote Required

Contact:
Jim McCray

Phone:
(707) 565-3353

Board Date:
8/18/09

Deadline for Board Action:
8/18/09

AGENDA SHORT TITLE:

Tolay Lake Park - Fall Festival

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

- Authorize the Regional Parks Department to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma annually for up to 5 years.
- Authorize the Director of Regional Parks to set resale prices for festival products.
- Authorize the Director of Regional Parks to distribute excess pumpkins to community groups and schools.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

Estimated Cost \$

Contingencies \$
(Fund Name:)

Amount Budgeted \$

Unanticipated Revenue \$
(Source:)

Other Avail Approp \$
(Explain below)

Other Transfer(s) \$
(Source:)

Additional Requested: \$

Add'l Funds Requested: \$

Explanation (if required):

Prior Board Action(s): 09/27/05 Acquisition of Tolay Lake Ranch property, execution of Conservation Easement, Grant Agreement, and Certificates of Acceptance.
 09/16/06 Authorization to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at the Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma and authorization for the Director of Regional Parks to set resale prices.
 09/18/07 Authorization to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma and authorization for the Director of Regional Parks to set resale prices. Waived Environmental Health permit fees for nonprofit food vendors in the amount of \$1,208.
 09/09/08 Authorization to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma, authorization for the Director of Regional Parks to set resale prices, and authorization to distribute excess pumpkins to community groups and schools. Waived Environmental Health permit fees for Community Organizer Permit and nonprofit food vendors in the amount of \$775.

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:

Fall festival will not be held.

BACKGROUND:

Discussion

The Regional Parks Department seeks Board authorization for the next five years for the Director of Regional Parks to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park on an annual basis. This will be the fourth year of the Festival. The 2006, 2007, and 2008 Fall Festivals were extremely successful. Over 42,000 people have attended the festivals and supported local agricultural non-profit groups who raised funds for their organizations and promoted their activities. The initial challenges surrounding production of the Festival have now been resolved, and the public interest in this event remains high. Barring significant budgetary constraints, the Department has established sufficient program structure and resources to routinely produce the Fall Festival as a harvest-season tradition. It is therefore requested that the Board give the Director authority to hold the Festival for the next five years.

The Festival will focus on the Regional Park and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's (District) missions to promote natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources in Sonoma County and the agricultural heritage of the property. In the past, the Tolay Fall Festival gave the public an opportunity to experience the park prior to its September 2009 opening.

Sonoma County Regional Parks is expanding public access to Tolay Lake Regional Park with the new Interim Plan (IP) Day-Use Permit Program. The new IP Day-Use Permit Program allows the public to visit the park during posted hours once they've completed an hour-long orientation and obtained a permit. Permit holders may use the park for hiking, bicycling, picnicking, or horseback riding. This expanded opportunity to enjoy Tolay Lake Regional Park begins Friday, September 18. Leading up to this date, Regional Parks is offering a series of free one-hour orientations which cover permit procedures, rules and regulations. After the orientation, participants receive Tolay IP Day-Use Permits along with maps, park rules and regulations, and gate access cards. After September 18th, additional orientation sessions will be offered at the park. To mark this expanded access the Department is also planning a celebration on Saturday, October 10 at 10 am to thank the community members who helped in developing the access plan and acknowledge the acquisition partners and park neighbors.

The 2009 Tolay Fall Festival is scheduled from the 8th through the 11th and the 15th through the 18th of October. Total attendance is estimated at approximately 15,000 people comprised primarily of families and school groups. School buses are expected on Thursdays and Fridays. This represents a continuation of the Cardoza Pumpkin Festival format. Surveys from the first three years ranked customer satisfaction at the festival between 85% and 95%. The Department is planning to increase its promotion this year to improve public awareness and attendance.

Attachments:

On File With Clerk:

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

BACKGROUND: (continued)

The Environmental Discovery Center will host youth activities and crafts featuring the preservation of natural resources and the importance of physical activity and good nutrition for strong bodies and a strong earth. Several public agencies will be present to reinforce themes such as the 4-H, the Open Space District and the Sonoma County Water Agency. Additionally, the Department is working closely with the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria, who will be providing Native American cultural activities during this year's festival. Parks Department staff, interns and volunteers will staff the event.

Vendors will provide various autumn foods, such as BBQ, caramel apples, and pumpkin pie. In addition to commercial food vendors, charity organizations such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) will again sell food items as part of their annual fundraising campaign.

The Department is proposing to sell pumpkins, gourds and other related fall products and is working with Purchasing in an effort to obtain these products from regional and Sonoma County farmers. Products will be selected based on price, quantity and quality. Specifically, the Director will determine retail sales pricing based upon cost of the items, which will include shipping, administration and expenses related to the production of the Tolay Fall Festival. A six-dollar day use parking fee per vehicle will be charged during the days of the Festival.

Per requirement of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Notice of Exemption was filed on August 25, 2006. The Notice of Exemption declares that this program is exempt from CEQA because it is a continuation of a past activity at the site.

At the conclusion of the Fall Festival, the Department would like to distribute the excess pumpkins to Sonoma County non-profit, charitable community groups and schools for use in their fall activities and curriculum tie-ins. Community groups would include organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, children's health groups and hospitals.

Regional Parks is working with Risk Management to obtain additional insurance coverage for the County to cover this event.

Recommendation

- Authorize the Regional Parks Department to hold the Tolay Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma annually for up to 5 years.
- Authorize the Director of Regional Parks to set resale prices for festival products.
- Authorize the Director of Regional Parks to distribute excess pumpkins to community groups and schools.