

Sonoma County Parks and  
Recreation Advisory  
Commission

Submitted by Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist  
Regional Parks Planning Division

Informational

Action

Commission Meeting Date: 03-31-2008

Deadline: N/A

Agenda Title: TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK - INTERIM PLAN  
DAY-USE PERMIT PROGRAM PROPOSAL

## Executive Summary

First, a summary of PRAC meetings associated with the Tolay Lake Regional Park Interim Public Access & Management Plan (Interim Plan).

**October 16, 2006: Scoping Meeting.** It has been the practice of Regional Parks to have a Scoping Meeting as early as possible in the planning and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process for a project to let the public know that we're initiating a project and obtain feedback. The feedback assists staff in formulating the Project Description and alerts us to concerns that need to be addressed in the CEQA document.

**February 26, 2007: Interim Plan Project Description.** Regional Parks released the draft Interim Plan Project Description for a 30-day comment period. This was not required by CEQA but Regional Parks determined it was in the best interest of the public and the project to obtain feedback. In general, the Project Description was received favorably.

**July 16, 2007 - Interim Plan Project Description Revisions.** Staff discussed the comments received in response to the Interim Plan Project Description. These comments resulted in the need to scale back the Interim Plan in several areas. Items that were discussed at length included the change associated with equestrian use. The February 2007 Project Description provided for unguided equestrian access when the park would be open for public access. This was scaled back to provide equestrian & bicycle access through our existing Guided Tours program.

**Day-Use Permit Program Background.** After the July 16, 2007 PRAC meeting, staff finalized the CEQA document and prepared to present the document to the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee (ERC) on December 18, 2007. People associated with equestrian and bicycle interests presented concerns to Regional Parks regarding the Guided Tours-only access for these user groups. In response, Regional Parks hosted a Special Meeting on the evening of December 17, 2007 to hear from these affected user groups. The idea of providing public access via a Day-Use Permit Program, based on the model used at Willow Creek (Sonoma Coast State Beach), was brought forward by numerous speakers. This idea was also raised at the ERC meeting the following morning. Regional Parks committed to researching Day-Use Permit Programs, including that implemented at the Willow Creek property. Regional Parks initiated a Working Group to focus on Interim Plan trail access.

**Working Group.** Invitations to Participate were sent out to the various equestrian, bicycle, and hiking clubs and organizations that Regional Parks had information for. A total of fifteen individuals representing a cross-section of interests agreed to participate. Two Working Group meetings were held in February 2008 and some members of the Working Group met separately in between the two scheduled meetings. The goals of the Working Group were met in terms of coming to agreement regarding an outline for a Day-Use Permit Program for the Tolay Lake Regional Park Interim Plan. Some Working Group members have expressed interest in continuing to be involved in the yet-to-be-developed Orientation Program, which is a significant component of the Day-Use Permit Program. One remaining issue is the desire for Tolay Lake Regional Park to be open at least one additional mid-week day during the Interim Plan implementation phase. At this point, Regional Parks intends to limit

the public access days to Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during the warm-weather months and Saturday – Sunday during the wet-weather months.

**Day-Use Permit Program.** The Attachment describes the Day-Use Permit Program Proposal, which was developed through staff research and participation of the Working Group.

**Next Steps.** Regional Parks is working on the following:

- ❖ Develop the Orientation Program, Program Administration, and Program Monitoring that are essential components of the Day-Use Permit Program.
- ❖ Amend consultant studies, such as the Interim Plan Traffic Study, as needed.
- ❖ Revise the CEQA document to incorporate the Day-Use Permit Program and amended consultant studies. The CEQA document will then be released for the required 30-day public comment period.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that a Day-Use Permit Program be implemented during the Interim Plan implementation phase at Tolay Lake Regional Park.

### **Requested Commission Action**

Staff requests PRAC support for the Day-Use Permit Program during the Interim Plan implementation phase at Tolay Lake Regional Park.

### **Attachments**

- Day-Use Permit Program Proposal Outline