
SACRAMENTO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Mark White, Chair
Richard Hunn, Vice Chair
Thomas Malson
Laura Nickerson
Eric Rivero-Montes
Stephanie Holstege
Dr. Anthony DeRiggi
Kayla Rabey

A JOINT COMMISSION APPOINTED BY:
County of Sacramento
City of Sacramento
City of Isleton
City of Folsom
City of Galt
City of Elk Grove

MINUTES- **Monday, July 18, 2022 6 p.m.**

Meeting held via Zoom only.

Join ZoomGov Meeting

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ITEM

- 1 Call to Order – Vice Chair Hunn
Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.
- 2 Roll Call – Staff Secretary
Present: Richard Hunn, Eric Rivero-Montes, Tom Malson, Laura Nickerson, Dr. Anthony DeRiggi, Stephanie Holstege, Kayla Rabey
- 3 Introduction of Commissioners
- 4 Public Comment
*Speakers will have three minutes for each separate item including any matter not on the posted agenda.
- 5 Sacramento County Department of Parks: Lower American River Parkway Management Update- Liz Bellas, Director

The value of the Regional Parks system includes the protection of open space and natural resources, increased physical and mental health, improved quality of life and increased property values. Land, trees and open spaces improve air and water quality in communities as well as benefiting local economic development by increased visitation.

The Parks Natural Resources Management Plan was begun in 2018 with data collection, mapping of resources, identification of potential management action and public outreach. A draft was released in March, 2021. After comments are incorporated along with task force technical input and an EIR, a finalized plan may be released in the Fall of 2022 for Board approval.

Encampment impacts are a huge source of trash as well as fire hazard. In 2021, over 1300 tons of trash was removed from encampment areas. Since 2017, the number of human caused fires in the Parkway has doubled, from 90 to 170. There are an estimated 600-1000 unhoused people living on the American Parkway within City limits. When encampments present a fire danger and or public health danger, encampments are abated with a 72 hour notice to the residents.

Fire fuel reduction in the Parks includes firebreak maintenance, grazing, ladder fuel removal and controlled burns. Every year a management plan is drafted with advisory group input and available to the public.

Events such as concerts, runs and festivals bring in approximately \$531,759,701 dollars to the regional economy based on a Financial Needs Study in 2006 using CPI indexing.

Golf course turf is important within the park system, even in times of drought to mitigate urban heat island effects and provide green space to benefit public health both physically and mentally. Mather and Cherry Island Golf Course are both Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program certified as birds species rest in the habitat while on their Pacific Flyway journey.

Parks collaborate with Water Resources in the study of E.coli in the Lower American River. E.coli DNA testing points to birds as the source. Parks hopes to revegetate areas under the power wires that run through the Parkway consistent with power management, converting to pollinator habitats as much as possible. The NRMP identifies and calls for conservation and preservation of high value areas.

Campus Commons Restoration Project is preserving as much vegetation as possible while implementing flood control measures as needed. Parks has participated in bank protection meetings over the last several years in order to do the least amount of damage to our natural resources while ensuring flood safety.

The Lower American River Conservancy Foundation has funded many aspects of the NRMP. The revamping of picnic structures, a wash-out study of a section near Cal Expo, the American River Ranch Farm on the American River Parkway, restoration of an animal barn plan at the Ranch, restoration of oak trees and elderberry with local tribe collaboration and, Cordova Creek Phase II restoration.

On August 10th, Parks plans to take an ordinance to the Board regarding the protection of park land from unpermitted camping.

6 American River Parkway Foundation: Lower American River Parkway Management Update- Scot Murdoch, Director of Communications and Public Affairs

The American River Parkway is a huge financial driver for the region. The Parkway is 23 miles long, 4,800 acres, has 8 million visitors annually and supports diverse habitat and wildlife. From the Foundation perspective challenges being faced are:

- Increase of illegal campers, their count is approximately 2000-3000 people across the 23 mile stretch
- Increase number of fires
- Increase in the amount of trash
- Lack of open space management

There seems to be a low general awareness about the Parkway and how it connects established recreation along the Lower American River. The point in time count counted 594 illegal campers in less than a 5 mile stretch on the Parkway with more than 160 acres burned in human caused fires.

Some of the programs being run by the American River Parkway Foundation include:

- Fire Safe Council- includes over 60 organizations including Parks and 2 regional fire agencies and power providers, Union Pacific and other non-profits focuses on fire mitigation on the Parkway.
- Trail Maintenance and Volunteer Mile Stewards
- Native Plant Garden
- Natural Resources Management Plan
- Parkway Funding Support

The Foundation Demand letter to the County demanded action on addressing illegal camping in the Parkway requesting the County allow ARPF to manage Parkway Open Spaces. ARFP established the Voice of the Parkway Coalition to address business concerns, and work with business leaders on finding land and open space for shelters where the unhoused can also receive services.

The ARPF has hired a consultant to develop a wildfire protection plan that would supplement the plan developed in 2014 by Carol Rice.

Goals for the future include management of open space, completion of the Natural Resources Management Plan, removal of illegal campers, fire plans developed for the entire parkway, restoration of burned areas and new uses for land in the lower reaches.

ARFP has initiated a pilot project with La Familia called Parkway connect, focusing on getting

people outdoors to enjoy the parkway who aren't familiar with the natural resource.

7 Discussion of City of Sacramento Preliminary Draft Climate Action Plan and Consideration of Sending SEC Comment Letter

Commissioner Holstege felt the CAP did not address plastics pollution and preservation and conservation of land. The emphasis on walking and biking would not be effective in areas such as Natomas.

Commissioner Hunn appreciated that the plan was easy to read. There seemed to be a gap between identifying an action and actually reducing emissions and there wasn't clearly defined how many reduction measures would actually be implemented. It needs to evolve from a strategy document to an implementation document. If 50% of emissions is vehicle related how do you control VMT? He did applaud the ordinance electrifying new buildings.

Commissioner Nickerson commented on increased electric use with EV and EV chargers but didn't see solutions as to where the electricity will come from. Walking and biking in the plan made no mention of the fact that safety is currently an issue and people are not going to walk or ride bikes in places such as the parkway or downtown. Also, increasing the tree canopy means more water usage during a drought.

Commissioner Rivero-Montes sees challenge with electrifying heavy duty vehicles. Commented that electricity will come from more solar and wind sources.

Commissioner Malson mentioned new developments requiring solar.

A motion to draft and submit a comment letter to the City of Sacramento on the draft Climate Adaptation Plan was made by Laura Nickerson seconded by Eric Rivero- Montes.

Ayes: Richard Hunn, Eric Rivero-Montes, Tom Malson, Laura Nickerson, Dr. Anthony DeRiggi, Stephanie Holstege, Kayla Rabey

Abstentions: None

Noes: None

Motion passes with vote of 7.

8 Sacramento County Sustainability Update- John Lundgren, Sustainability Manager

The 13 members selected for the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force will go to the Board tentatively on August 9th. CAP is expected to be released in final draft form in August 2022.

9 Approve June 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve June draft minutes made by Tom Malson seconded by Eric River Montes

Ayes: Richard Hunn, Eric Rivero-Montes, Tom Malson, Laura Nickerson, Dr. Anthony DeRiggi, Stephanie Holstege, Kayla Rabey
Noes: None
Abstentions: None

Motion passes with vote of 7.

10 EMD Director's Report- Jennea Monasterio, Director of Sacramento County Environmental Management Department

11 Report Back on SEC Commissioner Monitoring of Environmental Issues and Agencies

Commissioner Holstege: Plastics Reduction Bill signed into law. Less stringent than the original bill and has longer timeframe to be reusable, compostable or refillable. Doesn't ban polystyrene but must follow same rules as plastics use. Allows chemical recycling.

Commissioner Hunn: Update on leaf blower ordinance. Most leaf complaints are noise related, not air quality related.

12 Commissioner Comments

* Lead Near the Sacramento Executive Airport. Commissioner Rabey discussed high levels of lead in the neighborhood and possible sources. FAA released a plan to phase out leaded aviation fuel many years out.

* Rancho Cordova and Citrus Heights should be contacted again to join the SEC.

* Sacramento State University has a CAP

* Cosumnes Groundwater Authority has a workshop on July 27th. Discussing Land Repurposing Project.

13 Next Meeting- August 15, 2022 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

This meeting is being recorded in its entirety and will be available the following day. Agendas are posted in the offices of the City of Sacramento, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Elk Grove, and the County of Sacramento and also on the EMD Website at: emd.saccounty.gov. Agendas are also forwarded to interested parties upon request.