



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: June 18, 2008

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: SWEETWATER REGIONAL PARK (DISTRICTS: 1 & 2)

SUMMARY:

Overview

The County of San Diego strives hard to provide high quality parks and recreational opportunities for its residents, in addition to preserving regionally significant natural and cultural resources.

Today's recommended action will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a plan to establish the boundaries for the Sweetwater Regional Park, stretching approximately nineteen miles, starting West of the Sweetwater Reservoir to the connection with the California Riding and Hiking Trail (CRHT) in the East.

By formalizing such a boundary the County could extend riding and hiking trail opportunities for our San Diego residents while preserving significant natural habitats. In addition, the County will likely be more competitive for grants for the acquisition of properties in the area.

Recommendation(s):

CHAIRMAN COX AND VICE CHAIRWOMAN JACOB

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to develop a plan for the establishment of the Sweetwater Regional Park, stretching approximately nineteen miles, from the staging area at Interstate 805 to the connection with the California Riding and Hiking Trail (CRHT) in the East.
2. Direct the CAO to identify the approximate number and type of parcels and ownerships within the area proposed.
3. Authorize the CAO to identify potential funding sources for the acquisition of land and/or easements from willing sellers as well as for management and maintenance needs of the Regional Park.

SUBJECT: SWEETWATER REGIONAL PARK (DISTRICTS: 1 & 2)

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this proposal.

Business Impact Statement:

N/A

Advisory Board Statement:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The County of San Diego strives hard to provide high quality parks and recreational opportunities for its residents, in addition to preserving regionally significant natural and cultural resources. Providing public access to significant local natural habitats serves as an important educational opportunity.

Today's recommended action will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a plan to establish the boundaries for the Sweetwater Regional Park, stretching approximately nineteen miles, starting West of the Sweetwater Reservoir to the connection with the California Riding and Hiking Trail (CRHT) in the East.

By formalizing such a boundary the County can extend riding and hiking trail opportunities for our San Diego residents while preserving significant natural habitats. In addition, the County will likely be more competitive for grants for the acquisition of properties in the area.

In addition, the Regional Park would complete a planned link between four different regional trails: the California Coastal Trail; the Sweetwater Loop Trail; the Otay Valley Regional Park Trail; and the CRHT. The establishment of a Regional Park connecting major regional trails could make the County more competitive for certain park and trail grants which, in turn, would enable the County to extend and provide additional riding and hiking trail opportunities. Most of the area includes communities that already have approved community trails plans and desire additional trail opportunities.

The Sweetwater Regional Park will provide a gateway to East County by connecting the cities of San Diego, National City, Chula Vista, and the communities of Bonita, Valle De Oro, Spring Valley, Jamul, Crest-Dehesa, Granite Hills and Harbison Canyon with the CRHT. The Regional Park could also help preserve the rural character of communities that continue to face development pressure.

The Regional Park is located within the County's approved South County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) area, and as such would complement the County's ongoing efforts to preserve important habitat and to provide public access to the preserve. The Park will increase flood protection and be a positive watershed protection measure serving as a natural filter of runoff water.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

SUBJECT: SWEETWATER REGIONAL PARK (DISTRICTS: 1 & 2)

It is too early in the process to prepare an environmental review of the proposed park because a plan for the park has not yet been developed, see CEQA Guidelines section 15004 (b). In addition, this action does not approve the acquisition of any property for the proposed park. The appropriate environmental findings will be made before the plan for the proposed park is approved or property is acquired.

We urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,

GREG COX
Chairman
Supervisor, First District

DIANNE JACOB
Vice Chairwoman
Supervisor, Second District

