



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 25, 2004
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBJECT: SWEETWATER LOOP TRAIL (Districts: 1 and 2)

SUMMARY:

Overview

In an effort to improve access for the public to both South San Diego County and East County, a trail has been planned in an 11-mile route completely circling the Sweetwater Reservoir. The existing trail at the Sweetwater Reservoir currently does not encircle the Reservoir and consequently provides only limited recreational opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. This Sweetwater Loop Trail will link the existing trails in Bonita to those in Spring Valley, offering regional access to scenic open space and increased recreational opportunities.

Today's recommendations will appropriate \$128,000 that will be used to complete CEQA documentation and secure the necessary environmental permits to begin work on the Sweetwater Loop Trail. Additionally, the funding provides for staff time in the Department of Parks and Recreation. \$64,000 of this funding is proposed to be allocated from District 1 Community Project Funding, with the remaining \$64,000 from the District 2 Trails Fund.

Recommendation(s)

CHAIRWOMAN JACOB AND SUPERVISOR COX:

1. Establish Appropriations of \$64,000 in Contributions to Capital Outlay Fund (Operating Transfer Out), for trails projects in Sweetwater Summit Park, based on Fund Balance Available in the General Fund (4 Votes).
2. Transfer \$64,000 from the Community Projects budget (0261) to Contributions to Capital (Operating Transfer Out) for Sweetwater Summit Regional Park Improvements to complete CEQA documentation and obtain environmental permits for the Sweetwater Loop Trail.
3. Establish Appropriations of \$128,000 in the Capital Outlay Fund for Capital Project KN3106, Sweetwater Summit Park, based on an Operating Transfer from the General Fund (4 Votes).

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Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of the proposed recommendations is \$128,000. The funding source is \$64,000 of District 1 Community Projects funding and \$64,000 of District 2 Trails Fund. This action will result in the addition of no staff years and no future costs.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

At the eastern end of the Sweetwater River lies the Sweetwater Reservoir, formed by the construction of the Sweetwater Dam that was completed in 1888. In addition to providing water storage for the Sweetwater Authority, the Reservoir offers visitors a serene and scenic destination. The habitat encircling the reservoir supports a number of critical species, including the endangered Least Bell's Vireo and the California Gnatcatcher, as well as vernal pools and several indigenous plant species.

To allow the public access to the area around the Reservoir, almost five miles of trail have been constructed along the south side of the Reservoir with an entrance at San Diego County Sweetwater Regional Park off of San Miguel Road in Bonita. However, the existing trail currently does not encircle the Reservoir and consequently provides only limited recreational opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians.

In an effort to improve access for the general public and residents of both South San Diego County and East County, a trail has been planned in an 11-mile route surrounding the Sweetwater Reservoir. This Sweetwater Loop Trail will link the existing trails in Bonita to those in Spring Valley, offering regional access to open space and recreation and improved public amenities.

The Sweetwater Reservoir Loop Trail Preliminary Engineering Report and Implementation Plan, completed and delivered to the County on June 18, 2003, identified the next steps in completing the Loop Trail project. A major goal of this Plan is to utilize the existing trails to the fullest extent possible while minimizing environmental impacts and construction costs, enhancing usability, and addressing safety concerns where possible.

Today's recommendations will allocate \$128,000 that will be used to complete CEQA documentation and to secure the necessary environmental permits to begin work on the Sweetwater Loop Trail. Additionally, the funding provides for staff time in the Department of Parks and Recreation. \$64,000 of this funding is proposed to be allocated from District 1 Community Project Funding. Funding being appropriated by District 2 comes from the District 2 Trails Fund, Community Projects funds that have been allocated in previous fiscal years for trail improvements in District 2.

Support for these recommendations will allow the County to move forward with the Sweetwater Loop Trail project, a tremendous recreational resource linking the South and East regions of this County.

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We urge your support for this measure!

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB
Chairwoman

GREG COX
Supervisor, First District

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COUNTY COUNSEL APPROVAL: Form and Legality Yes N/A
 Standard Form Ordinance
 Resolution

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER/AUDITOR REVIEW: N/A Yes
4 VOTES: Yes No

CONTRACT REVIEW PANEL: Approved N/A

CONTRACT NUMBER(S):

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTION:

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

CITIZEN COMMITTEE STATEMENT:

CONCURRENCE(S):

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: First Supervisorial District
Second Supervisorial District

CONTACT PERSON: Ron Kelley (619) 531-5511
Chimene Adams (619) 531-5522

Respectfully submitted,

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