

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:  
September 13, 2007  
9:30 a.m.

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Regional Parks

Subject: Report Back: History And Detail Regarding Two Vacant Ranger Positions

Contact: Gary J. Kukkola, Director, 875-6132

At the September 6, 2007 Final Budget Hearings, the Board requested a report back regarding the history and detail of the two vacant Ranger positions that have been proposed as “un-funded” in the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Final Budget.

***Background***

During Fiscal Year 2005-06 Final Budget Hearings, the Board approved funding for three Ranger positions. Two of these positions were re-instatements from budget reductions taken in Fiscal Years 2003-04 and 2004-05, respectively. Those positions are assigned to general American River Parkway patrol. The third was part of a new program, entitled *Dedicated Patrol of the Lower American River Parkway*. The purpose of that program is to increase park ranger peace officer visibility in active use areas (i.e. bike trail, walking paths, equestrian trails, and parking/staging areas) in the lower six mile stretch of the Parkway. This increased visibility helps to change the public’s perception that this area of the Parkway is unsafe, and helps foster increased legitimate use of the Parkway.

For Fiscal Year 2007-08, the Department of Regional Parks has a total of 79 full-time positions. This is a net reduction of 5 positions from the Fiscal Year 2006-07 total of 84 positions, including the addition of the CEO recommended Recreation Specialist position. (84 - 6 + 1 = 79)

- 3 vacancies were “un-funded”
  - 2 Ranger positions
  - 1 Sr. Landscape Architect position
- 2 Permanent positions and extra help were eliminated for the Average Annual Savings Factor Reduction Plan:
  - 1 Account Clerk III (vacant)
  - 1 Park Maintenance Worker 1 (vacant)
  - Extra help 2.48 FTE’s
- 1 Sr. Office Assistant position on loan to and funded by the Business Environmental Resource Center (BERC) was permanently eliminated from Parks PBR
- 1 additional growth position for a Recreation Specialist is CEO recommended.

***Funding Alternatives***

As part of the 11-point plan, Departments were asked to develop a list of potential program reductions, based on target amounts as distributed to each agency and elected officials. The target reduction for Regional Parks was \$863,500. Departments were also asked to examine all

opportunities to proceed with fee increases prior to Final Budget Hearings. Staff completed these exercises, and submitted a list containing both program reductions and additional revenues, including revenues from proposed fee increases. The fee increases were subsequently approved by the Board on September 5, 2007; however, all identified revenues were already absorbed into the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Final Budget, and served to lower the Department's overall Net County Cost. **It was the Department's intent, however, to use this fee increase to offset the costs of the two vacant ranger positions, and prevent these positions from becoming "un-funded."**

The approved fee increases will generate approximately \$180,897 in additional revenues during the remainder of Fiscal Year 2007-08, and will generate on-going revenues of \$308,768 in Fiscal Year 2008-09. The cost associated with "re-funding" the two vacant Ranger positions is \$157,640. However, since the additional revenue of \$180,897 from approved fee increases has already been included in the Fiscal Year 2007-08 budget, it would be necessary to increase the Department's Net County Cost by \$157,640 to fund the Ranger positions for Fiscal Year 2007-08.

### ***Program Impacts***

If these positions remain unfunded, it results in the Department's in-ability to hire one Ranger peace officer to specifically patrol the lower six miles of the bicycle trail and the Woodlake/Cal Expo/ Discovery Park East areas of the Parkway, and one Ranger peace officer assigned to patrol all areas of the bicycle trail. Overall, this decreases park ranger peace officer visibility in active use areas for extended periods of time over the course of the day and evening, including commute hours.

### ***Hiring Process Timeline***

Staff requested the Park Ranger exam in February, 2005, to backfill a Ranger position vacated by the incumbent's promotion to Supervising Ranger, and in anticipation of other pending retirements. At that same time, minor revisions to the class specification were requested (the last revision took place June 1995). These revisions necessitated a more comprehensive review of the job classification. This triggered a class study, which was started in September 2005. The class study was assigned to the Municipal Services Agency (MSA) Human Resources Division as were all other class studies for MSA job classifications. Prior to the consolidation of the human resources functions in July 2007, MSA and the Department of Personnel Services (DPS) were under an agreement that studies for job classes unique for MSA departments would be performed by the MSA Human Resources Office. Since the consolidation of the human resources functions into DPS, all class studies are now conducted by DPS. The additional staff approved for DPS by the Board during the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Proposed Budget Hearings will expedite the processing of future class studies, thereby reducing the time from the initial request to the completion of the class studies.

In February 2006, MSA staff and the Office of Labor Relations held the first meet and confer meeting with the Union. In March 2006, additional information was then requested from MSA to continue with the class study; however, due to the 2006 contract negotiations, MSA staff was unable to collect the information required for the class study; therefore, the class study was delayed until September 2006. Between September 2006 and January 2007, MSA staff worked on revising and preparing a final draft of the job class specifications. In January 2007, the Office and Labor Relations and MSA staff resumed the meetings to finalize the class specifications. In March 2007, MSA staff finalized the documents and the Union was contacted to schedule

another meet and confer session. The second meet and confer meeting with the Union was held in April 2007 to review and finalize the class specifications. The Union had no objections to the class specifications. The Class Study was approved by the Civil Service Commission on June 15, 2007.

Exam Requested	February 2005
Class Study started	September 2005
Class Study halted due to labor negotiations	May 2006
Class Study re-initiated	September 2006
Class Study approved by Civil Service Commission	June 15, 2007
Exam Announced*	September 27, 2007
Final Filing Date*	October 18, 2007
Written Exam*	November 26, 2007
Eligible List established*	Mid December, 2007

\*dates tentative

To try to meet the Board approved program service levels, the Department provisionally hired four Park Rangers, and authorized remaining staff to work overtime. Two Park Ranger positions were left vacant in an effort to attract highly qualified candidates to the candidacy pool once the Park Ranger exam was administered. There is little to no incentive for candidates to apply if all positions are provisionally filled, and, as is the case for this position, there is infrequent turnover. Historically, most vacancies for Park Ranger positions occur through retirement.

***Additional Department Impacts***

In addition to the “un-funding” of the two Park Rangers, a Senior Landscape Architect position was “un-funded.” The Department has also been impacted by the complete elimination of an Account Clerk III, a Park Maintenance Worker I, and 2.48 FTE of extra help to related to the Annual Average Savings Elimination Plan.

***Senior Landscape Architect “Un-Funded”***

The Senior Landscape Architect has also been “un-funded” due to the longevity of the vacancy. Similar to the Rangers, the Department was unable to fill the vacancy due to the lack of eligible candidates from a civil service list. A Senior Landscape Architect exam was requested shortly after the vacancy occurred in 2005. A year later, a very short list of eligible candidates was provided to the Department. Of the four eligible candidates, two declined to interview. Of the two who were interviewed, the Department offered the position to one candidate who declined the job. The list was abolished due to a lack of a candidate pool, and a new list provided to the Department in May. Because of the uncertainty of the impending budget deficit, the Department chose to not fill the position, and to underfill with an Associate Landscape Architect as a short term measure to provide the County with a savings in the General Fund. The salary and benefits cost associated with an Assistant Landscape Architect position is \$90,952. Before this change could occur, the position was proposed to be “un-funded.”

The Senior Landscape Architect is responsible for grant administration, providing comments and coordination with County projects such as GenCorp’s Easton Project and Elverta Specific Plan, park master plans such as Mather Regional Park, and oversight of the capital improvement

program. Presently, there is \$10,380,825 of projects in or near construction. In the Senior's absence, a Deputy Director has assumed responsibility for these duties.

Respectfully submitted,

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GARY KUKKOLA, Director  
Regional Parks

APPROVED:  
TERRY SCHUTTEN  
County Executive

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
PAUL J. HAHN, Administrator  
Municipal Services Agency