

Meeting of the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument
Visitor Center – Conference Room, Modular One
San Simeon, CA
February 7, 2001

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Paul Junger Witt, Chair
Joseph Cotchett
Caryl Hart
Marcia Hobbs
William Newsom

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

H. Martin Jessen

STAFF PRESENT

Rusty Areias, Director
Mary Wright, Chief Deputy Director
Dick Troy, Deputy Director, Park Operations
John McMahon, Deputy Director, Marketing
William Berry, Central Division Chief
Lynn Rhodes, District Superintendent, Monterey District
Kirk Sturm, District Superintendent, San Simeon District
Ken Gray, Associate Resource Ecologist, Monterey District
Lois Harter, Superintendent, Big Sur Sector, Monterey District
Ted Jackson, Assistant Secretary

VISITORS REGISTERED/REPRESENTING

Janet Cobb / Yosemite Restoration Trust
Charley Custer / Redway Forest Defense
Laura Davick / Alliance to Rescue Crystal Cove
Susan Jordan / League for Coastal Protection / California Coastal Protection Network
Pam Heatherington / Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo
Gordon Hensley / Environmental Defense Center
Rick L. Lewis / Individual
Suzette Nyokka / Individual
June Ostrow / Individual
Leib Ostrow / Individual

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Legal notice having been given, Chair Witt convened the Executive Session at 9:30 a.m. The Executive Session was convened in order that a Department representative could update the Commission about two ongoing law suits filed against the Commission because of actions it had taken at its March 8, 2000 meeting regarding the Castle Rock State Park General Plan. No action was taken during the Executive Session. (Minutes of the Executive Session are contained in a separate document.)

CALL TO ORDER

Legal notice having been given, the California State Park and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Chair Witt. Chair Witt introduced each of the Commissioners who were present along with Director Rusty Areias and Chief Deputy Director Mary Wright.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF OCTOBER 25, 2000

Commissioner Hobbs moved for approval of the minutes of the October 25, 2000 meeting in San Jose as presented. Commissioner Hart seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – UPDATES ON MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

WELCOME FOR NEW COMMISSIONER WILLIAM NEWSOM

Director Areias welcomed recently appointed Commissioner Newsom to his first Commission meeting and recited many of the former judge's lifelong accomplishments and activities.

CONCESSIONS REPORT

Commission members were asked to refer to the Concessions Report included in their meeting packet regarding the one RFP that had been issued by the Department since the prior Commission meeting.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Director Areias stated that one of the challenges for this program was the need to recruit and hire staff to implement this program. During prior administrations, the unit that was responsible for performing deferred maintenance had been severely reduced and much of the work that was completed during that period was accomplished by contracting it out to other entities. Therefore, there was a tremendous need to rebuild the Environmental Design Unit and that effort is taking place in earnest and with good success. Director Areias stated that in the first year of the three-year, \$157 million program, the Department completed 98 projects totaling \$30.6 million. This fiscal year, the Department has completed 33 projects to date, there are 435 projects currently in progress, and committed cost to date for the fiscal year are \$26.4 million.

PARK BOND UPDATE

Director Areias introduced Chief Deputy Director Mary Wright to update the Commission on activities related to the administration of the \$2.1 billion park bond act (Proposition 12). Chief Deputy Director Wright told the Commission that the Grants and Local Services Office, which had seen its staffing levels reduced during the prior years, was in the process of being re-built. The Chief Deputy stated that the Grants and Local Services Office, which consisted of a staff of, five had grown to 31 employees as of this date. On December 1, 2000, Charlie Willard was hired to be the Chief of the Grants and Local Services Office. Mr. Willard is a 28-year Department employee, and prior to his appointment to be the Chief of the Grants and Local Services Office, he was the manager of the Department's Statewide Trails Program. The staff of the Grants and Local Services Office spent the month of January researching and writing program guidelines to administer the bond program. The office is in the process of refining those guidelines in order to present them at public meetings and then to begin to actually administer the grants under those new program guidelines.

STATE PARK SYSTEM PLAN AND THE STATEWIDE MASTER PLAN

Chief Deputy Wright informed the Commission about the Department's new planning efforts and activities. Chief Deputy Wright stated that the Department had appointed Keith Demetrak to be the Chief of the Planning Division. Mr. Demetrak is a 32-year Department employee and has been involved in a variety of assignments during his State Parks career, including Chief of the Office of Interpretive Services and he was the Department's Personnel Manager prior to assuming his current assignment. The Planning Division will be responsible for both the State Park System Plan and the Statewide Master Plan. It is anticipated that the State Park System Plan will be completed for review by this spring.

Both the State Park System Plan and the Statewide Master Plan will reflect the results of the visioning process of which a number of the Commissioners were participants. The visioning process consisted of five regional meetings held throughout the State which allowed the Department to receive input concerning its direction and activities for the coming years. The work on the Statewide Master Plan will begin after completion of the State Park System Plan. Chief Deputy Wright stated that the Department will keep the Commission updated on the development of both plans. The department will also seek the Commission's involvement during the development process.

Commissioner Hart inquired as to the amount of dollars that were available for local grants and she wanted to know the main purpose behind the awarding of local grants. Chief Deputy Wright stated the local grants are intended to be awarded to local park and recreation agencies and special districts. She also told the Commission that out of the \$2.1 billion park bond, approximately \$500 million went to the Department for the State Park System and the remaining balance went to the grant program. Chief Deputy Wright explained that the bond was structured such that some of the guidelines for awarding a portion of the available funds were established through the bond act and those grants had been awarded and were being funded. The Chief Deputy went on to explain that the larger share of the local assistance funds are subject to the program guidelines that will be developed through public meetings and public input. Commissioner Hart stated that there is tremendous interest from the regional park districts concerning the grants program and she added that their wish list is huge. Commissioner Newsom stated that he was very unfamiliar with many aspects of the bond administration procedures and he requested that the Department provide him with some basic information regarding the bond and the administration of the bond. Commissioner Hart was supportive of Commissioner Newsom's request. Commissioner Cotchett stated that all of the Commissioners are being asked similar questions by constituents and those questions are where is the \$2.1 billion, how is it broken down, and for what is it being used. Commissioner Cotchett echoed the requests of Commissioners Newsom and Hart by stating that he wanted the Department to prepare an executive summary on the bond that would be provided to each of the Commissioners.

STATE PARK FEE REDUCTION

Director Areias stated that the fee reduction was one of the cornerstone initiatives of his administration. On July 1, 2000, the Governor reduced fees at 109 parks within the State Park System. On January 1, 2001, the fees were reduced at the remaining 156 state park units. The fee reduction basically cut entrance fees in half and eliminated several add-on fees such as dog fees, boat launching fees and extra vehicle fees. The Director called the fee reduction good policy and he stated that the Department had realized a twenty - percent increase in attendance at the park units where fees had been reduced.

Commissioner Hobbs asked the Director if the public would be willing to accept fee increases in the event of a significant downturn in California's economy. Director Areias answered that one of the challenges that his administration has taken on is to build a strong coalition between the various stakeholder groups of State Parks so that there will be a political price to pay in the future should governments attempt to balance budgets on the backs of State Parks and park lands in general.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Witt appointed a nominating committee to make recommendations to the Commission for the election of new officers (Chair and Vice-Chair). The election will be held at the next Commission meeting. Chair Witt appointed Commissioners Cotchett, Hart and Newsom to the nominating committee.

COMMITTEES

Assistant to the Commission Ted Jackson reported his findings regarding the history of Commission committees and the origin of the current Commission committees. The report included several photocopies of minutes from previous meetings that focused on Commission committee activities. The current Commission committees were established at a March 1993 meeting (a "Special Events" committee was added at a 1996 meeting). Mr. Jackson stated that the Commission and, in particular, the Commission Chair, has great latitude as it relates to the establishment and the activities of committees. The Commission Rules of Order and the Operating Procedures for the Commission both state that the Chair shall appoint all committees and their members, and that the members serve at the pleasure of the Chair.

Commissioner Hart expressed her strong support for Commission committees, stating they are very important because of their flexibility and because of the formality of Commission meetings. Commissioner Hart offered her ideas on Committees that she felt were important, stating that she hoped to see the Commission establish a committee that would look at diversity issues from the standpoint of increasing diversity within the Department and also within park users, and that the Commission would also establish a committee focusing on both the park bond and park planning. Commissioner Hart stated she did not see the need for a Special Events Committee or the Land Ownership Evaluation Committee. Chair Witt echoed Commissioner Hart's comments about a Diversity Committee, stating that he believed that establishing a committee to specifically look into issues of diversity was incredibly important.

RETIREMENT CERTIFICATES

Commissioner Hobbs announced retirement certificates for the following Department employees: Janet L. Anderson, 25 years, 6 months; Rene S. Avant, 31 years, 6 months; David H. Carle, 17 years, 4 months; James A. Carpenter, 19 years, 4 months; Carol A. Ebbitt, 15 years, 8 months; Charles R. Gross, 25 years, 11 months; William P. Jacquier, 31 years, 8 months; John H. Jennings, 26 years, 7 months; Jeffrey Jones, 19 years, 4 months; Kenneth B. Jones, 29 years, 5 months; Michael R. Lunsford, 25 years, 3 months; Douglas H. Meyers, 25 years, 10 months; William C. Miller, 30 years, 8 months; Kenneth L. Mitchell, 37 years, 5 months; Owen D. Newbey, 31 years, 3 months; Stephen P. O'Brien, 26 years, 10 months; Albert H. Stadelman, 25 years, 5 months; William B. Stewart, 25 years, 3 months; Robert L. Todd, 28 years, 8 months; Dennis R. Wright, 27 years, 11 months. Commissioner Hobbs and Chair Witt extended the Commission's thanks and gratitude to these employees.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MEMORIAL GROVES

The following resolutions to establish memorial groves as requested by the Save-the-Redwoods League were read by Commissioner Hobbs: 4-01 to establish the John, Mabel and Joyce Davis Memorial Grove in Butano State Park; 5-01 to establish the Clara and Will Marshall Grove in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park; 6-01 to establish Mom and Dad's Meadow in Gray Whale Ranch State Park; 7-01 to establish the Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz Grove in Gray Whale Ranch State Park; 8-01 to establish the Elizabeth Harris Taylor and John D. Taylor Grove in Navarro River Redwoods State Park; 9-01 to establish the Elsa and David Wheeler Memorial Grove in Calaveras Big Trees State Park; 10-01 to establish the Catherine Miller White, Vida White Lane, Lora Lane Bell and Marjorie Lane Byck Grove in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

The following resolutions to establish memorial groves as requested by the Sempervirens Fund were read by Commissioner Hobbs: 11-01 to establish the Stanley and Margot Feuer Family Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park; 12-01 to establish the Tom Marshall and Mary O'Lone Redwood Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park; 13-01 to establish the Ved S. Mudan Memorial Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park; 14-01 to establish the Gryffyd and Janet Partridge Family Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park; 15-01 to establish the Vossbrinck Family Memorial Grove in Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Witt opened the public hearing at 10:09 a.m

NAMING AND CLASSIFICATION OF LIMEKILN PROJECT – RESOLUTION 1-01

Chair Witt introduced District Superintendent Lynn Rhodes of the Monterey District. Superintendent Rhodes offered introductory remarks to the Commission regarding the formal naming and classification of the Limekiln property as a California state park. After her brief remarks, Superintendent Rhodes introduced Ken Gray, the Monterey District Resource Ecologist, and Big Sur Sector Superintendent Lois Harter, who gave a slide presentation that provided an overview of the Limekiln property and supported the naming and classifying of the Limekiln property as Limekiln State Park.

As there were no registered speakers on this topic, Chair Witt closed the public hearing at 10: 24 a.m.

Commissioner Newsom moved for approval proposed Resolution 1-01, regarding the naming and classifying of the Limekiln property as Limekiln State Park. Commissioner Cotchett seconded the motion. Chair Witt read the proposed

resolution, which passed unanimously by roll call vote with Commissioners Cotchett, Hart, Hobbs, Newsom and Chair Witt voting yes.

REVIEW OF CONCESSION PROPOSAL TO DETERMINE COMPATIBILITY WITH UNIT CLASSIFICATION AND GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS (BRIDGE TENDER'S RESTAURANT WITHIN TAHOE STATE RECREATION AREA) – RESOLUTION 2-01

Chair Witt opened the public hearing on this item at 10:27 a.m. and immediately closed the hearing as there were no registered speakers.

Commissioner Hobbs read and moved for approval proposed Resolution 2-01, regarding the finding that the Bridge Tender's Restaurant within Tahoe State Recreation Area complies with the unit's classification and general plan. Commissioner Newsom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote with Commissioners Cotchett, Hart, Hobbs, Newsom and Chair Witt voting yes.

ON-PREMISES SALE OF BEER, WINE, AND DISTILLED SPIRITS AT THE BRIDGE TENDER'S RESTAURANT WITHIN TAHOE STATE RECREATION AREA

Chair Witt opened the public hearing on this item at 10:29 a.m. and immediately closed the hearing as there were no registered speakers.

Commissioner Hobbs read and moved for approval proposed Resolution 3-01 regarding the on-premises sale of beer, wine, and distilled spirits at the Bridge Tender's Restaurant within Tahoe State Recreation Area. Commissioner Newsom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote with Commissioners Cotchett, Hart, Hobbs, Newsom and Chair Witt voting yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Witt opened the meeting to public comment at 10:32 a.m. and called on the following individuals who had registered to speak:

Mr. Charlie Custer, representing Redway Forest Defense, stated his support for the possible acquisition of individual trees by easements and other means that would enable the long-term protection of the slopes of the Eel River and the hillside above this area immediately upstream from Whittemore Grove, a branch of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Mr. Custer told the Commission that Pacific Lumber Company currently owns 600 acres immediately adjoining Whittemore Grove and that he and his organization have engaged in a dialog with Pacific Lumber Company that makes this acquisition possible. Mr. Custer stated that the advantage to such an acquisition is that for much less money than is required to purchase entire blocks of property, money could be put into protecting individual trees that would stand in groves of other protected areas and thereby for pennies on the dollar protect wide swaths of river frontage. This acquisition would preserve land adjacent to Whittemore Grove, allow public access, and protect hillside property that is extremely unstable and susceptible to hill slides and erosion. Mr. Custer provided the Commission with copies of a Humboldt area local newspaper that contained an article on the agreement that was reached between Pacific Lumber Company and Redway Forest Defense Fund. Mr. Custer stated that he hoped to have further discussions with the Commission on this and other small scale proposals for buffering and thereby enhancing parks/public lands.

Mr. Leib Ostrow, an individual, also spoke in support of the efforts of Mr. Charlie Custer and Redway Forest Defense in their advocacy of the acquisition of individual trees that adjoin Whittemore Grove in order to provide protection for the slopes above the Eel River.

Ms. Laura Davick, representing the Alliance to Rescue Crystal Cove, stated that she wanted to bring the Commission up to date on efforts going on in Orange County as a result of the January 18, 2001 public meeting that dealt with issues at Crystal Cove State Park. Ms. Davick stated that the Alliance had met with eighteen various local and state environmental organizations with a goal of uniting the environmental community in their efforts to fight the development of the proposed resort that is planned for Crystal Cove. Ms. Davick provided the Commission with a packet of newspaper articles written since the January 18th meeting. She also provided copies of 148 letters and petitions

containing 759 signatures that voice strong opposition to the planned resort at Crystal Cove State Park. Ms. Davick stated that the environmental community and the citizens in the communities surrounding Crystal Cove State Park were pleased to see that the Department was re-evaluating some of the alternatives to the planned resort development.

Ms. Janet Cobb, representing Yosemite Restoration Trust and the California Oak Foundation, stated that through funding from the Packard Foundation, her organization had completed a report that examined and considered opportunities for saving the corridor that leads to Yosemite National Park. Ms. Cobb stated that the Trust had forwarded copies of the study to each of the Commissioners. The Yosemite Restoration Trust is promoting the idea of a Yosemite Foothill State Park that would protect the scenic values and habitat areas, with a specific emphasis on protecting wildlife and the endangered oak trees. Ms. Cobb told the Commission that the area in question is one that could be considered "State Parks-poor" (an under-representation of State Park units) when compared to other areas of the State. One of the other visions that the Trust is pursuing is the concept of a biological and natural resource corridor from Monterey to Bodie State Historic Park.

Pam Heatherington, representing the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo, is the executive director of the Environmental Center. Ms. Heatherington thanked the Commission for meeting in San Luis Obispo County. She told the Commission that they had a responsibility to study the impacts of growth on State Parks resources. By increasing the visitation at State Parks in the Hearst San Simeon area, there will also be an increase in the impacts on the surrounding environment. The Environmental Center had recommended that State Parks conduct an environmental impact study to determine the impacts associated with increased visitation to state parks in the Hearst San Simeon area. Ms. Heatherington asked the Commission for the status of that recommendation. San Simeon District Superintendent Kirk Sturm replied that Hearst San Simeon State Historic Park has an historic benchmark and average of approximately one million visitors. Recent attendance has fluctuated between 600,000 visitors to the more current just over 900,000 visitors. Superintendent Sturm stated that the goal is to return to the one million-visitor level and that the existing infrastructure has handled that level of visitation in the past and can handle a return to those levels. Superintendent Sturm stated the Department is open to the idea that should attendance levels rise significantly above the one million visitors level, that additional studies would need to be conducted. Central Division Chief Bill Berry stated that existing environmental laws do not require an environmental impact study, and often times when there is not a legal requirement for a study, then acquiring the funding necessary to conduct such studies can be very difficult.

Susan Jordan, representing the League for Coastal Protection and the California Coastal Protection Network, stated she works on statewide coastal protection issues. Ms. Jordan told the Commission that they would be involved in arguably two of the most controversial and significant projects statewide. The projects are Crystal Cove State Park and the future of the Hearst property and the San Simeon coastline. Mr. Jordan urged the Commission to visit Crystal Cove State Park in order to understand why it is such an important resource. Ms. Jordan continued, Crystal Cove State Park is the last open stretch of relatively pristine coastline in Orange County. Since the purchase of Crystal Cove by State Parks, the public's access to the park has been extremely limited. Ms. Jordan stated that Crystal Cove State Beach is extremely important to the beach-going public because it sits within a very over-developed stretch of coastline that consists mostly of gated communities. This particular stretch of coast is not appropriate for an exclusive \$500-\$700 per night resort. Ms. Jordan also commented on the San Simeon coastline issue. Ms. Jordan stated that San Simeon is a statewide resource and also a national treasure. She continued that the Hearst Corporation was becoming active again with its attempts to move forward with plans for development that would impact the state park. Ms. Jordan told the Commission that the groups that she represents would hope that State Parks, in considering its future plans for San Simeon, would take a close look at the Coastal Commission's recommendations and would include the public in any future planning activities.

Suzette Nyokka, an individual, expressed her support for the comments made by Mr. Charlie Custer and Mr. Leib Ostrow regarding the acquisition of individual trees that adjoin Whittemore Grove in order to provide protection for the slopes above the Eel River.

Gordon Hensley, representing the Environmental Defense Center, welcomed the Commission to San Luis Obispo County and stated that his organization is a public interest environmental law firm that recently opened an office in San Luis Obispo. Mr. Hensley stated that State Parks is an important neighbor and great partner in many of the conservation efforts that are occurring in the San Luis Obispo area. Mr. Hensley used this opportunity to introduce

himself and the organization he represents to the Commission. He stated that he looks forward to an ongoing relationship with State Parks.

JOHN MC MAHON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Director Areias introduced John McMahon, Deputy Director for Marketing, who made a presentation to the Commission regarding his ideas, plans, strategies and goals for the marketing of California State Parks. Deputy Director McMahon envisions an expanded role for marketing, employing many tactics and strategies, many of which he shared with the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Witt adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rusty Areias
Secretary

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