

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
8-15-2014
9:00 AM

To: American River Parkway Advisory Committee

From: Department of Regional Parks

Subject: Consideration For Amendments To American River Ranch Master Plan And Soil Born Farms Lease Agreement (Report Back)

Supervisory District: Nottoli

Contact: Jeffrey R. Leatherman, 916-875-6132

Overview

The Master Plan for the American River Ranch was presented and approved by the American River Parkway Advisory Committee (ARPAC) on July 18, 2014. During the review of the Master Plan and public testimony provided by members of the community, the ARPAC requested a report back regarding commercial activities at the American River Ranch. It was the desire of the ARPAC to consider language amendments to the Soil Born Farm lease agreement related to commercial activities.

Recommendation

- 1) Approve an amendment to the Master Plan requiring a Commercial Operations Plan and forward it to the Recreation and Park Commission for consideration.
- 2) Approve staff's recommendation to amend the Soil Born Farms lease agreement to include the Commercial Operations Plan.

Measures/Evaluation

The recommended action fits into the "Sustainable and Livable" County Strategic Objective and supports Regional Parks stated Performance Measure: to provide safe, accessible, and clean recreational facilities for Park users.

Fiscal Impact

There is no financial impact to the Department of Regional Parks related to the action.

BACKGROUND

On July 18, 2014 the ARPAC approved the American River Ranch Master Plan and requested the Department of Regional Park staff to report back to the committee on options for updating the lease agreement with Soil Born Farms to include provisions for commercial activities at the American River Ranch. Public testimony was heard during the meeting advocating that in order to be compliant with the American River Parkway Plan, certain language must be added to the

Master Plan restricting commercial activities. Department staff provided testimony that the appropriate document for operating provisions at the American River Ranch was the lease agreement and not the Master Plan.

DISCUSSION

The Director of Regional Parks met with Mr. Shawn Harrison of Soil Born Farms and Mr. Bill Davis representing Save the American River Association (SARA) to discuss provisions for commercial activities at the American River Ranch. As a result of the meeting, staff is providing two recommendations to the ARPAC.

The first recommendation is to include language in the American River Ranch Master Plan requiring a Commercial Operations Plan. This would require all current and future operators to have a Commercial Operations Plan in place in order to remain consistent with the 2008 American River Parkway Plan or future version of the plan. The proposed language is included as attachment A.

The second recommendation is to amend the Soil Born Farm lease agreement to include the Commercial Operations Plan. The proposed language is included as attachment B and provides allowance for certain types of commercial activities on the American River Ranch. The allowances included in attachment B were based on an analysis of the provisions within the Parkway Plan related to the Commercial Activities, current operations, and future operations of the American River Ranch.

American River Parkway Plan (Chapter 6 Non-Recreational Use of the Parkway)

6.1 (page 105) Commercial Activities shall be permitted only if compatible with the goals of the Parkway as determined by this Plan.

American River Parkway Plan non-recreation use of the Parkway	Staff Comments
6.1.1 Commercial activities shall not be permitted solely for the purpose of raising revenue to fund the management of the Parkway.	The recommendations provided include language that allows commercial activities to assist with the management of the American River Ranch and the Parkway but are provided primarily as an interpretive and educational tool and a revenue generating activity second.
6.1.2 All proposed commercial activities, whether on land or water, shall be subject to review by the Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks and the Recreation and Parks Commission. Final approval shall be by the Board of Supervisors.	The review of the Master Plan and subsequent review of the proposed language meets the criteria included in section 6.1.2. Final language will be included with the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

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<p>6.1.3 The following criteria shall be considered during the review of commercial proposals:</p> <p>a Services or sales shall be necessary to the enhancement of permitted recreational activities.</p> <p>b Services or sales shall not attract customers who would not otherwise be Parkway users.</p> <p>c Services or sales shall be dependent upon the Parkway environment and be consistent with its stated purpose.</p>	<p>Staff have reviewed the proposed limitations included with this provisions and have found that the current and proposed future operations are consistent with these standards.</p>
<p>6.1.4 Commercial activities determined to be compatible with the goals of the Parkway shall only be considered for location in Developed Recreation areas and only as an auxiliary component to permitted recreational or interpretive/educational facilities.</p>	<p>The Master Plan will define the final 7 acres of the Developed Land within the American River Parkway Plan River Bend Area. The proposed commercial activities are designed to remain inside the 7 acre footprint.</p>
<p>6.1.5 Commercial activities in association with special events, including the sale of food and beverage from mobile day-use units, will only be considered in fixed locations in association with a special event permit. Staff shall review each special event permit request on an individual basis to assess potential adverse impacts on the Parkway such as litter and other nuisances.</p>	<p>The lease agreement and proposed commercial operations plan provides certain provisions for special events to be held at the American River Ranch. Some activities proposed by Soil Born Farm are allowed within the lease agreement and some will require additional review by staff. The annual operations plan required in the lease agreement will provide a report back to the ARPAC and the Recreation and Park Commission on activities held at the American River Ranch.</p>
<p>6.1.6 Proposed commercial activities shall be designated on appropriate area plans.</p>	<p>The Master Plan provides the details for commercial activities and their location and are incorporated by reference in the American River Parkway Plan Map Amendment.</p>
<p>6.4 Agricultural activities that promote land stewardship, provide educational/interpretive services to Parkway users, or help to transition land to a restored state are consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.</p>	
<p>6.4.1 Agricultural activities in the Parkway should incorporate educational and interpretive programs. Sustainable, organic and wildlife-friendly farming practices are preferred.</p>	<p>This provision has been met by Soil Born Farms and is included by reference in the Master Plan.</p>

6.4.2 Agricultural activities, as permitted per land use designation, may be used as a management tool on an interim basis to inhibit the spread of invasive species.	Grazing and other activities at the American River Ranch have met this standard when implemented as part of the agricultural operations.
6.4.3 It is the preference of this Plan that lands previously leased for agricultural purposes be converted to uses that improve wildlife habitat and ensure a wildlife corridor.	While this is an overall goal of the Parkway Plan this section is not applicable to the American River Ranch and is superseded by alternative goals for the American River Ranch related to agricultural, interpretive and educational goals.

MEASURES/EVALUATION

The recommended action fits into the “Sustainable and Livable” County Strategic Objective and supports Regional Parks stated Performance Measure: to provide safe, accessible, and clean recreational facilities for Park users.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

There is no financial impact to the Department of Regional Parks related to the action.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey R. Leatherman, Director
Department of Regional Parks

Attachments

- ATT A Recommended Master Plan Amendment
- ATT B Recommended SBF Lease Agreement Amendment
- ATT C SBF Lease Agreement May 8, 2012