



Flow Stand Up Paddle Board Parkway Plan Analysis

Introduction:

The American River Parkway Plan (ARPP), provides the guidelines for recreation activities that may be conducted on the American River Parkway. This report analyzes the proposed concession agreement with Flow Stand Up Paddle Board for compliance with the ARPP including potential impacts to users and the natural environment as required by the ARPP.

Activity Description:

Flow Stand up Paddle Board (Flow) is a combination of class instruction, rental and summer camps that would be conducted on the American River Parkway in William B. Pond Recreation Area and Discovery Park. Flow will be using the pond and American River for the concession operation. Additional description can be found in the operations proposal included with this analysis.

Goals and Concept Policies of the American River Parkway Plan

Goals (Page 10)

- To provide, protect and enhance for public use a continuous open space greenbelt along the American River extending from the Sacramento River to Folsom Dam; and
- To provide appropriate access and facilities so that present and future generations can enjoy the amenities and resources of the Parkway which enhance the enjoyment of leisure activities; and
- To preserve, protect, interpret and improve the natural, archaeological, historical and recreational resources of the Parkway, including an adequate flow of high quality water, anadromous and resident fishes, migratory and resident wildlife, and diverse natural vegetation; and
- To mitigate adverse effects of activities and facilities adjacent to the Parkway; and
- To provide public safety and protection within and adjacent to the Parkway.

Concept Policies (Page 11)

1.1 Balanced Management

The American River Parkway is a unique regional asset that shall be managed to balance the goals of controlling flooding; preserving and enhancing native vegetation, native fish

species, the naturalistic open space and environmental quality within the urban environment; maintaining and improving water flow and quality; providing adequate habitat connectivity and travel corridors to support migratory and resident wildlife; providing recreational opportunities; and ensuring public safety.

1.2 Recreation

The Parkway shall be oriented to passive, unstructured water-enhanced recreation activities which are appropriate in a natural environment, and which are not normally provided by other County recreational facilities. To this end, development in the Parkway shall be minimal, and facilities which are primarily visitor attractions should be placed in less sensitive areas within the County Park system. Insofar as possible, development shall not occur in areas where natural ecosystems are still relatively undisturbed.

1.3 Resource Protection

Limitation on the use of the Parkway through design and management tools to prevent overuse of the Parkway and preserve the environmental quality, thereby ensuring the integrity of the Parkway for future users.

1.4 Land Use

No existing publicly owned Parkway lands shall be disposed of through sale, lease, or de facto uses adverse to the goals and policies of this Plan, in order to assure the long-term protection and integrity of the present boundaries of the Parkway.

1.5 Cooperation

Coordination and cooperation in Parkway planning and management is essential, especially in recognizing the many important roles of jurisdictions and agencies with regulatory responsibilities within the Parkway.

Aquatic Recreation defined in the American River Parkway Plan (pg 98)

Aquatic Recreation

Aquatic recreation includes activities which are dependent upon the American River for their execution and enjoyment. Access and facilities to support aquatic recreation are permitted in the Protected, Limited Recreation and Developed Recreation land use categories. In Protected Areas, all aquatic recreation activities are permitted except motorized boat launching. The river supports a number of prized recreational anadromous fish, including steelhead, Chinook salmon, American shad, and striped bass. These fish are pursued from boats, the bank, and by wading. In addition, commercial guided fishing boats offer drift-fishing trips on the river. Populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, sunfish, catfish and other recreational fish, thrive in certain dredger tailing ponds where the water is deep enough to meet oxygen and temperature requirements. Fishing is permitted in these ponds, unless otherwise noted on an area plan.

5.22 Swimming, wading, snorkeling and scuba diving are activities that occur, although they are not encouraged due to swift currents, water temperatures, slippery and uneven ground, submerged debris and vegetation, and absence of lifeguard services.

5.23 Boating, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, motor boating, and similar activities are permitted Aquatic Recreation activities.

Commercial Activities defined in the American River Parkway Plan (pg 106)

Commercial activities in the Parkway are intended to augment and improve the Parkway visitor's experience. The primary purpose of any permitted commercial activity should be consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.

Commercial activities may be permitted in Developed Recreation areas as an auxiliary component of a permitted recreational facility or interpretive/educational facility. Commercial activities which occur on the Parkway are usually operated by private concession rather than by the County. A concession is a privately operated activity, usually for profit, which occurs on public domain by authorization of the responsible land use authority. A number of concessions have been awarded within the Parkway, including raft and canoe rentals, activities associated with the Ancil Hoffman Golf Course and operations of the Effie Yeaw Interpretive Center. Concessions are normally awarded when a desired activity or service can be accomplished more efficiently by a private entity than by the County.

Commercial activity by concession can be divided into two general groups: services and sales. Commercial services include such activities as garbage pickup, maintenance of grounds and structures, restoration planting and monitoring, professional instruction, and rental and boarding of horses. Commercial sales include food and beverages, recreation equipment, "convenience items" and other recreational or educational/ interpretive merchandise. In the future, commercial sales could also include a stand for the sale of produce and/or plants at the proposed native plant nursery and farm (preferably organic farm) in American River Ranch. These two groups, service and sales, may occasionally overlap. For example, a raft rental may include the sale of food and beverage. Recommended criteria to facilitate determinations on the establishment of commercial activities in the Parkway are included in the Implementation Measures section (Chapter 11) of this plan.

Compliance with the Goals and Policies of the Parkway Plan

Paddle Boarding is an Aquatic Recreation Activity (ARPP page 98) and is specifically allowed in section 5.23 "*Boating, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, motor boating, and similar activities are permitted Aquatic Recreation activities.*" In this case, paddle boarding is not specifically called out as approved, however it is similar to canoeing and kayaking in that it is (1) human propelled by paddle and (2) requires a floating board that sits on top of the water.

Flow is a proposed concession activity on the American River Parkway. Page 106 of the ARPP outlines the criteria in which the Department should consider concession activities. In this case, Flow is both a commercial service and commercial sales as defined by the ARPP. The instruction and summer camp would fall under the commercial services definition and the rental option would fall under the commercial sales definition of the ARPP. Both activities are allowed but must first

be approved by the Board of Supervisors and are only allowed in Developed Recreation land use designations.

Impacts to other users

Activity	Potential Impact	Mitigation Steps
Trails Recreation	Paddle Board crossing trails while accessing the river or pond	This condition currently exists for all aquatic recreation activities. The Department has conditioned the concession company to only allow employees the ability to carry the boards across the bike trail as new paddle boarders may not be able to carry the boards or may not be aware of the potential dangers in crossing the bike trail with a long paddle board.
Aquatic Recreation	Additional users on the river and in the pond. Launch area on pond could conflict with angling, as boarders may have to pass over or under fishing lines from the fishing pier.	The sport of paddle boarding has been allowed on the river and in the pond. The concession will increase the users; however, they will be limited no more than 10 boards for rent or 10 participants in the instructional class. This limitation makes the group size consistent with the small group (11-20) designation of the American River Parkway Plan. Small Groups are allowed in Protected, Limited and Developed land use areas per the Parkway Plan. The agreement also requires the concession staff to use an existing path from the parking lot that travels around and away from the fishing pier limiting the impacts to anglers.
Nature Appreciation	Paddle boarders could impact nature application by increased visibility, noise, and approaching wildlife. Conversely the paddle board gives users the opportunity to safely approach wildlife in a neutral area allowing the paddler to appreciate nature in its own habitat.	The concession contractor is bound to the goals and policies of the Parkway Plan and County ordinance which protect wildlife from certain impacts. Further, the paddle board activity is generally a quiet activity allowing the paddler to quietly and safely approach wildlife and increasing their appreciation for nature.
Recreational Enjoyment	Increased paddle boarders could have an impact on picnicking and other recreation enjoyment activities. Impact to anglers at fishing pier.	The impact to recreation enjoyment activities is very minimal if any. The two activities use different amenities in the Parkway and only share parking spaces. The concession will not draw a significant number of participants to impact parking at the two locations.

Environmental Impacts

Activity	Potential Impact	Mitigating Steps
Damage to the natural environment	Additional concession traffic could cause damage to the natural environment through trail and bank erosion.	The two locations selected for the concession activity are in Developed Recreation land use areas and are currently exposed to a high number of parkway visitors. The trails and access areas that will be used by Flow are designed to withstand the traffic caused by the pedestrian use anticipated with this concession agreement. Flow will be limited to existing trails and launch locations in the American River Parkway.

Department Impacts

Activity	Potential Impact	Mitigating Steps
Restroom Use	Increase restroom use	The existing restroom facilities are adequately maintained to accommodate the use.
Ranger Staff Time	The concession agreement could increase the need for Ranger responses.	The Concession operator is required to have all participants wear approved life vests as well as maintain first aid and CPR certification. This additional training will assist the Rangers if an emergency occurs during the activity.

Impact Monitoring

The Department staff will be responsible for implementing the provisions of the concession agreement during the term of this contract as well as ensuring that all trash, equipment and activity impacts are adequately mitigated. Significant changes and or damages will be documented and evaluated by staff to ensure proper steps are taken to protect or repair the impacted area. If activity limitations are required based on the results of the impact monitoring, the Department will ensure the necessary measures are in place to prevent further impacts from occurring.

Final Determination

The Department of Regional Parks has determined the proposed concession will not adversely impact the American River Parkway and is recommending consideration and approval for the Flow Concession Contract.