

Mountain Democrat

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Supervisors set priorities for public parks

By [Chris Daley From page A3](#) | June 15, 2015

Recognizing parks as an asset to the community, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors last week directed staff to establish a parks capital improvement program and begin an annual campgrounds inspection program.

El Dorado County owns and maintains four developed parks for the public's recreational use — Henningsen-Lotus Park in the Coloma-Lotus valley, Pioneer Park in the Fair Play-Somerset area, Forebay Park in Pollock Pines and Bradford Park in Shingle Springs. Recently re-named by a vote of local residents, Forebay Park is now known as Pollock Pines Community Park.

The county also owns four undeveloped properties slated for park-hood in the future. The Rail Park in El Dorado ultimately will be as much museum as park while a Bass Lake park, Pollock Pines park and the Cronan Ranch property are currently under consideration. In addition to these parks and properties, the Chief Administrative Office's Division of Parks and Trails oversees the El Dorado Trail, Rubicon Trail, Joe's Skate Park and the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor. The latter includes portions of the El Dorado Trail and the former Southern Pacific Railroad bed.

Parks Manager Vickie Sanders gave a slide presentation to the Board of Supervisors on June 9, which included a listing of parks-related priorities in each of the county's five supervisorial districts.

In District 1, the parks and recreation commission identified two projects to consider. A trail connector from the El Dorado Hills Business Park to the rail/trail corridor is recommended so residents and visitors can park in the business park and easily access the trail/rail facilities. Second, agenda documents show a recommendation for a small parking area off Bass Lake Road, providing access to the "county-owned regional park property."

Pioneer Park in District 2 is described as "currently in adequate condition" and staff therefore recommends that funds be used as needed for parks in other districts.

Priorities for District 3 include several projects related to development of the Rail Park and security along the rail/trail corridor. The county plans to install a restroom at the Rail Park and a security gate at the Missouri Flat Road end of the corridor. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the trail. Further environmental work is needed before additional development of the SPTC facility including cultural, biological and wetland studies to determine mitigation measures that may be required.

The top priority in District 4 is to implement the Henningsen-Lotus Park Conceptual Plan which includes land acquisition and river bank stabilization. A connector trail between the county park and the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma and bike lanes from the county park to Highway 49 are broader elements of the Henningsen-Lotus project. In addition, conceptual plans are under way for the Cronan Ranch and Chili Bar properties.

The county also owns 56 acres in District 5 that are leased to the city of South Lake Tahoe for camping and public park use. The city and county are currently developing a master plan for the property, and the county is assisting the Tahoe Paradise Park Resort Improvement District.

Chief Administrative Officer Pamela Knorr told the board that the Parks Division has “no secure funding” as almost all of its revenue comes from a variety of grants like the state’s Off Highway Vehicle tax, federal Rails to Trails program and the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program. Supervisors directed staff to continue to look for permanent funding sources.

District 1’s Ron Mikulaco has consistently urged the county to consider levying the Transient Occupation Tax on campsites and Air B&Bs. The TOT is a 10-percent tax charged on hotel, motel and licensed bed and breakfast inns. Under the terms of the TOT ordinance, 51 percent of the revenue is to be used for county-wide economic development.