

NEWSLETTER

california state park rangers association

Volume VI Number 67

November 1995

Letter Opposing Transfer of Beaches

9/11/95

Dear Governor Wilson:

The California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) is a group of just under 700 State Park employees whose mission is to promote professionalism in the California State Park System.

CSPRA joins the Sierra Club and Friends of California Parks in their vigorous opposition to AB 504 which would allow the transfer of eight State owned beaches in Los Angeles County which are currently under State operation.

CSPRA OPPOSES this transfer because of the County's historic mismanagement of their budget. The County, being 1.2 billion dollars in debt, has opted to take ownership of these beaches which by their own admission will cost them 4.3 million dollars per year to manage. One must ask the question why? Maybe this move is an example of the many decisions the board of Supervisors made which (Continued on page 4)

Perpetuity

by Mark Faull
State Park Ranger
Red Rock Canyon State Park

With a smile I handed the pamphlet to the park customer. On its face was printed "The Best of California Forever". Quietly I pondered the accuracy of this statement, and whether I should intrude upon this individual's pursuit of serenity. Could I justify risking relaxation to inject an asterisk?
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1996 California Parks Conference "Californians Need Their Parks"

If you work for the State Park Bear, in any capacity, please consider the following:

- * Parks and open spaces bring beauty to an area while giving people satisfaction and improving their quality of life. (Personal)
 - * Recreating together builds strong families, the foundation of a strong society. (Social)
- (Continued on page 6)

President's Message

Are you all confused about what we are doing about our funding problems? Let me 'splain it.

Once upon a time four committees were formed. Let's arbitrarily call them Reduction, Closure, Conversion, and Revenue.

Reduction: We all labored long and valiantly to develop figures that could be used to determine exactly (?) what it costs to operate every unit in the system. Thus in the event of a funding cut of any magnitude, we could promise what level of service to the public would be eliminated. This concept was not well received by the administration which doesn't want to begin with such a negative approach. They want us to find the revenue source to keep on operating the Department. Enter the next three committees.

They want us to find the revenue source to keep on operating the Department.

Closure: This committee is really just a refined version of the Reduction Committee. Its charge was to determine which units or portions thereof could be closed, thus saving money. This committee's findings were not received well either, as they were also rather negative, and self-defeating if the basic premise of the whole exercise was to keep the parks open and operating. So it doesn't seem as if we can plan on a lot of savings here either — thank goodness.

Conversion: This committee, the only one without a self-describing title, was formed to look at the possible divestiture of units or the turning over of the operation of units to other entities. The divestiture phase of this study was operating under a hardship (again, thank goodness), the caveat that no units of state-wide significance could be offered up for grabs. Thus only units like the "Great Green Barn SHF," a unit that had never been operated by the Department, could be given to the local community after we had already done our part by restoring the barn, and were no longer necessary. The principal savings from the turn-over of the rumored 13 units will be in the ink when we print the next list of state park units and leave them out. A little ink here, a little ink there.

The turning over of units to other operating entities is more serious. There could be a real savings through elimination of positions and a real reduction of services in this scenario. The recommendations of this committee are still secret, undoubtedly because of the great impact on the Department. The committee members and the other Departmental employees who were asked to sound out other park agencies, cooperating associations, non-profits, and concessionaires were supposed to keep this whole process secret. So only a few thousand people here and there know the Department is even giving this possibility consideration.

Revenue: This was the one positive committee, unless of course their ideas went too far and actually impacted the park resources and the quality of the visitor's experiences in an unacceptable manner. This committee came up with ideas for several millions of dollars of new revenue over the next couple of years without any great compromises in park values. They have been asked to redo their report and be more imaginative.

So that's where we are. Our course in the next few years should now be clear to you all. If you do need further clarification, we have only to read the newspapers as they report Governor Wilson's messages on privatization. The Los Angeles Times reported that the Governor was preparing proposals that among other things would privatize the operation of prisons and "nature parks." The next day's Sacramento Bee reported that the Governor didn't think that the private operation of prisons was a good idea. Presumably the idea of private operation of nature parks is still a good idea.

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President's Message (Continued from page 2)

It must be — there are so many private corporations in the business. If there was money to be made in nature parks, I suspect this profit-taking would make them all non-nature parks.

Despite all of the above, I am personally heartened by all of the groups and individuals that seem to be rallying around us. All of the park-oriented groups are naturally planning to do all they can to secure proper funding for the Department. Various legislators are expressing their concern and are pledging to help us. And individuals are writing letters to the Governor. I know because I had to answer two of these letters that were written by staff in a district I'm associated with.

We need more letters from friends, families, groups, and particularly chambers of commerce and visitor bureaus that focus on the parks' economic benefits to surrounding communities and businesses. Let the Governor know that lots of people of diverse interests care about their parks.

Don Murphy's News and Views column was thought provoking. The concept of all the public paying for the core function of preservation of the cultural and natural resources in parks is great. We should have General Fund or other dedicated monies for this purpose. And then for our other equally important services have the user fees pay the bills. Wouldn't it be great if we could sell this concept to everyone? Let's try!

Bud Getty, President

Retiree's Rendezvous 1995

C S P R A

The Retiree's Rendezvous of 1995 was again held at McConnel SRA. Attracting over 90 participants, this annual October event was fun for all.

As is usually the case when park people get together, good food and questionable stories carried the day. Clyde "Elmer" and Rosemary Strickler started things off Friday night with their "Road Kill Dinner", with help from Wes and Celeste Cater and a host of others. Breakfast the next morning was up to its usual standards, with Kirk and Marie Wallace, Tex Ritter, Lucille Lonacker, and many others joining the already mentioned dinner gang. Dinner Saturday night found Ron McCall, Dave Nelson, and Bob Stewart joining this growing list of "chef wannabees".

In between all of this eating, the group actually found time to do other things. Chuck Lyden organized the golf tournament, Carl Lonacker added his horseshoe expertise to the crew that worked on building new pits (including Wes Cater, Ed Williamson, Les McCargo, Bob Allen, Terry Adams, Kirk Wallace, and retiree trainee Bill Beat). Thanks also to the Four Rivers staff who furnished the materials for the new horseshoe pits, and Clyde Elmer who got the new cement mixer working, but forgot to take all of the tools out of it first! Tom Miller also found a job that he does best. He used all his past experience to keep the restrooms clean.

A final thank you to John Kolb and his staff for hosting the event; Inez Cook and Celeste Cater for helping at Registration and Sales; Bud Getty for acting as MC; and to all the unnamed who helped make the event a success.

And a final, final thank you to Kirk Wallace and Doug Bryce. Without their planning and organization, this annual event would not be possible.

See you next year!

... the Governor was preparing proposals that among other things would privatize the operation of prisons and "nature parks."

Letter to Governor Wilson (Continued from page 1)

brought them to their 1.2 billion dollar problem. The point being — how can a county, on the verge of bankruptcy afford to protect some of our State's most precious resources? They cannot! If these beaches are placed in the hands of the County they are forever in danger of commercial development to help the County out of their budget woes.

While the State Park System considers "divestiture" and "closure" are we redefining "best" . . . or "forever"?

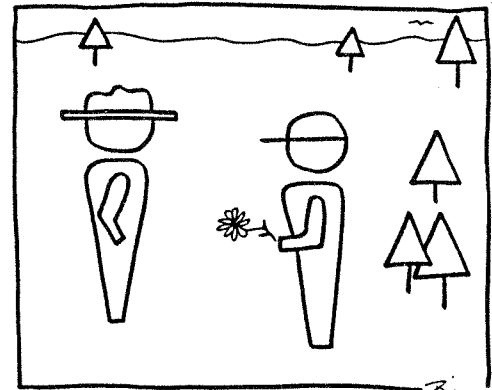
The California Department of Parks and Recreation has a proven track record of resource protection. They also have a track record of supplying some of the finest lifeguard protection and beach maintenance services in the world. DPR has been operating these beaches since May of 1995 without major incident and have received compliments from the community. The State Park Lifeguards are also Peace Officers under Penal Code section 830.2 (h) and as such provide a much needed additional benefit of law enforcement services to ensure the safety of beach visitors.

The final point that makes DPR the most appropriate agency for operating these beaches is the fact that with DPR operating these beaches the overall cost to the taxpayers of the State will be far less. The County's employees are among the highest paid in the world. In the case of the Lifeguards salaries, the County Lifeguards are paid up to 40% more than their state counterparts.

Again, CSPRA opposes the transfer of the State Beaches in Los Angeles County to the County.

Sincerely,
Dave Nelson, President -Elect
California State Park Rangers Assoc.

RANGER LOGO



"WHAT KIND OF FLOWER? WELL,
MY FIRST THOUGHT IS THAT IT'S
A PICKED FLOWER."

Perpetuity

(Continued from page 1)

While the State Park System considers "divestiture" and "closure" are we redefining "best" . . . or "forever"?

State park professionals face a philosophical precipice, a chasm, unlike any in recent times, or to my meager knowledge, unlike any in our history. With a near twenty million dollar deficit in operating funds projected for fiscal year 1996/97 and rumors of pay-your-own-way parks lingering on the horizon, clearly the basic philosophy, recognition and function of parks in our society is in disfavor with elected officials. This denotes, at minimum, a certain level of failure by administrators and park professionals to adequately communicate.

A multi-faceted approach is essential to delineate problems and originate remedies; whether this would be educating legislators of their constituents, alerting allies and rallying appropriate reaction, more precisely defining economic values or creating alternative revenues.

Suggesting a solution to short term revenue deficits is an arduous task, for which I cannot conjure a twenty million dollar remedy. But long-term solutions may be available and I here submit one for consideration.

(Continued on page 5)

Perpetuity (Continued from page 4)

I propose, for scrutiny, the creation of the "State Park Perpetuity Fund", to be legislatively enacted, enabling our department to solicit donations and contributions, compiled in an investment fund in which the principal is forever secure and the department may utilize the interest. The endowment fund would be managed by a board of directors whose members would be suggested by the Director of California State Parks, nominated by the Governor and approved for set terms by the State Senate.

Income to the fund would derive from a well planned and pursued assortment of creative avenues. Here I list some initial considerations.

1) Promote or establish the ability for individuals to upon death transfer to the state park system money, stocks or property — land, houses, automobiles, etc. — the proceeds from which would become principal to the fund. The program would require marketing both through out the state park system and to specified target groups.

2) Accept donations of property (of value) from living donors which could be liquidated to increase the funds principal. Promote or establish tax advantages. (Many private charities now solicit automobiles in this fashion for resale.)

3) Solicit donations at every park unit statewide utilizing both direct donations and mailed-in gift forms. Individual parks would maintain dual donation boxes — one for improving the park of today (short term) and the other for sustaining the park of tomorrow (donations toward long-term stability, a gift to "your grandchildren." Marketing firms could be hired or sought "pro bono publico" to research, advise or direct our agency toward effective techniques and language.

Every year at every park this program would be a march of dimes and dollars continually

CSPRA Membership

The California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) has been dedicated to protecting and preserving features of the California State Park System for almost three decades.

Membership is open to all current and retired employees of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

CSPRA was organized in 1964 by California park professionals as a non-profit, tax-exempt, professional society to encourage quality interpretation, resource management, public protection, maintenance and management of the State Park System.

CSPRA actively promotes advancement of the ideals and philosophy for which state parks were originally founded.

For membership information write: CSPRA, P O Box 292010, Sacramento, CA 95829-2010. (800) 558-3734.

C S P R A

But long-term solutions may be available and I here submit one for consideration.

flowing from the field to the fund in principal.

4) Establish a state tax form donation line (similar to existing Fish and Game donations).

5) Establish corporate sponsorships similar to the Olympics. For established fees, determined by market value, corporations would purchase the right to utilize "An Official Sponsor of the California State Park System" on product packaging and in advertisements. The right to display such a logo would be limited to specified terms established by the fee collected. The Department would market the logo use targeting specific companies with an either poorly perceived environmental image (a form of public redemption for mining, forest product or petro-chemical companies) or companies which derive
(Continued on page 6)

Perpetuity (Continued from page 5)

benefit from the presence of state parks (eg. camping equipment, ice chest, fishing gear and surf product manufactures or retailers).

"Official Sponsor" status would be offered on an annual basis, or for a multi-year package with reduced annual rates. To acquire funds in local and regional markets the official sponsorship of individual parks would be offered at a lesser, appropriately determined rate.

6) Perhaps less palatable would be the expansion of the current methodology utilized to increase redwood acreage within the state park system. The purcyhased naming of redwood groves could be enlarged offering labeling of various creeks, peaks, trails and even buildings for donor recognition meeting predetermined substantive donation criteria. If we can sell titles of forests for short term acquisition goals, can we sell names of creeks and peaks to build long term system wide stability. The physical features to be offered for title would originate in the field and proceed through a review procedure to determine appropriateness and propriety. The fees required should reflect the perpetuity of the title.

The "State Park Perpetuity Fund" would originate with a determination and assessment of the needs of the donor; needs such as individual or corporate recognition, a belief in community service and even a sense of immortality.

The "Perpetuity Fund" would be publicized with an emphasis on the long term nature of the donations; a gift today that will mimic the perpetuity of our parks.

Donations spent at the time of inception accomplish singular tasks. Donations which are banked in an endowment initially yield smaller returns, but are a renewable resource reusable generation after generation. If pursued vigorously, eventually (in half a century

or a century) the annual dividends from the "Perpetuity Fund" would encompass the entire system's operation, without burden to the taxpayers. The success depends upon the creativity of the solicitation and the aggressiveness of the recruitment.

The most substantive obstacle to long term success will be the temptation of politicians to tamper with the fund's enlarging principal.

With rumors of each park paying its own way we could easily deteriorate into an "every park for itself" mentality; a sort of Jerry Jones-like approach where each unit seeks its own short term corporate or community sponsors. Instead we should target a team approach where rural units are assisted by metropolitan parks and long term stability for every park is the common goal.

In brief, will we favor individual entrepreneurial units continually testing the limits of propriety in order to remain solvent or can we creatively seek a system wide solution so we need not redefine the cherished slogan "The Best of California Forever".

"Californians Need Their Parks"

(Continued from page 1)

* **Pay now or pay more later! Investment in recreation as a preventative health service makes sense. (Economic)**

* **Through the provision of parks, open spaces and protected natural environments, recreation can contribute to the environmental health of our communities. This is an essential life-sustaining role. (Environmental)**

As the above statements clearly indicate, parks and recreation services provide significant benefits that are personal, social, economic and environmental. Is there any doubt that the work we do as park and recreation
(Continued on page 7)

The "State Park Perpetuity Fund" would originate with a determination and assessment of the needs of the donor;

"Californians Need Their Parks"

(Continued from page 1)

employees is critical to our society's quality of life? Of course not!

Then why is it that we increasingly find our anxiety meters over-revving as the storm clouds of budget cuts, program reductions and layoffs loom ever-darker on the horizon ("Horizon, heck! It's pouring right now!" you say)? Why are park and recreation agencies the targets of the ax-wielding budgeteers if the services we offer are so danged important? And what does the future hold for parks — and our society — if people have forgotten how important parks are?

The threats facing parks, and especially public parks, at all levels —from national to state to local —are extremely serious. The issues involved go far beyond whether we will have jobs next year, as serious as that issue is. It is not hyperbole to say that the threats facing public parks and the recreation opportunities they offer go to the heart of the democratic ideals upon which this country was built and the quality of life our children will inherit. What a tragedy if these treasures that were meant to belong to all the people for all time were to be lost for lack of understanding of their importance.

That's why the upcoming California Parks Conference to be held in Ventura, March 11-15, 1996, is shaping up to be one of the most important in recent memory. The conference's theme, "Looking Ahead, Moving Forward, Serving with Pride" aims to recognize the accomplishments and contributions we in "Parks" have consistently made to the communities in which we work and live. But even more significantly, next year's conference will focus on the essential role that "Parks and Recreation" play in keeping society healthy and worth living in.

Resource Management: Virginia Gardiner-Johnson, (805) 899-1412. FAX (805) 899-1415.

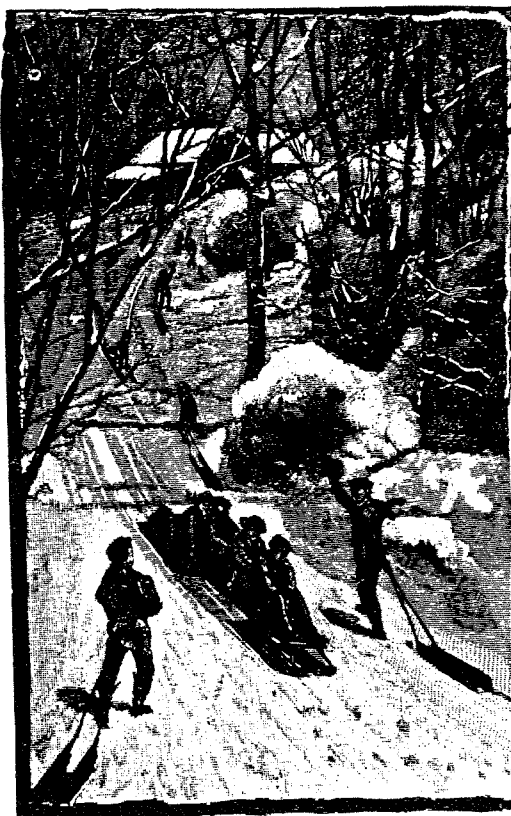
Operations: Frank Padilla, (805) 986-8484, FAX (805) 488-5367.

Public Safety: Scott Nakaji, (805) 248-7015, FAX (805) 248-0228.

Interpretation: Wes Chapin, (805) 899-1406, FAX (805) 899-1415.

Reserve the dates, March 11-15, 1996. You need this conference! Parks need advocates! And we need you!

See you in Ventura!



November

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CSPRA
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California
Parks
Conference
Ventura
3/11-15/96

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Save Bodie! and all other
committees use CSPRA address.

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