

## **FAQs Re: Future of Del Rio Woods Recreation District**

### **What is the Purpose of the June 3, 2015 5:30 p.m. community meeting on Del Rio Woods?**

All five Del Rio Woods Recreation District (District) Board Members have resigned from the Board Directors and have requested that the responsibilities for the District be transferred to Sonoma County Regional Parks. This meeting is to share with voters, property owners and any interested members of the public the options that have been identified as to how the District could be managed in the future.

### **Why did all the Board of Directors resign?**

Del Rio Woods Recreation District was formed to enable the installation of a seasonal dam on the Russian River to create a swimming facility for the District residents. After extensive attempts and research the Board decided that they reluctantly need to accept the reality that regulations had changed such that it was essentially impossible to get the approvals to install the seasonal dam. Given that reality they turned their attention to removing the old dam spillway from the river; as it presented an ongoing liability risk for the District. With the help of a grant from State Parks they removed the spillway there by returning the river to its natural condition. Given that the initial reason for creating the District was to install the season dam and the District Board's experience with a lack of available volunteers to serve on the District Board of Directors they decided it was best to dissolve the District. Because the State Parks grant of \$165,463 for removal of the spillway required the park to continue to be opened to the public the District Board approached the County about dissolving the District and transferring the operation of the Beach and Park to County Parks.

### **What is the status of the District at this time?**

As a result of the resignation of the Board of Directors there was no one with the authority to operate the District and its Park and Beach facilities. With the summer season fast approaching, on April 28, 2015 the County Board of Supervisors took action to appoint themselves as the Interim Board of Directors for the District and appointed Caryl Hart, Director of Sonoma County Parks, as the Interim Manager of the District. This action has provided the necessary authority and resources to manage the Del Rio Beach and Park for the upcoming summer season.

### **What is the purpose of the "interim" status for the District Board of Directors and Manager?**

The advantage of creating an interim Board of Directors and interim manager for the District is that it provides for operating the Park and Beach during the time needed to work with the District voters, property owners and other interested parties on the options for operating those facilities in the future. Should the community feedback confirm the sentiments of the past District Board of Directors to dissolve the District the interim status allows the six to nine months necessary for LAFCO to process the application for dissolution.

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### **Has it been decided that the District will be dissolved?**

No, that is one option but no decision has been made to start the dissolution process.

### **What options have been identified for operating the park and beach areas?**

1. Approach the Del Rio Woods District residents to determine if there are others who would be interested in serving on the District Board.
2. Dissolve the District and move funding and responsibilities to County Parks
3. Approach other public park entities to see if they would be interested in assuming responsibility for the R & P District.
4. Continue the separate District and have the County Board of Supervisors appoint themselves as the Board of Directors.
5. Dissolve the District, sell the property and dispose of the assets and repay the State Parks Grant.

### **What are the property tax implications if the District is dissolved?**

Currently the District receives about \$60,000 annually from property tax revenues which, with the parking lot entry fee revenues, is used to provide the seasonal services to operate Del Rio Beach. If the operational duties are transferred to County Parks it is their intention to request that those funds continue to be allocated to a separate fund to be used to fund the operation of Del Rio Woods Park. If the District were dissolved and the assets disposed of the \$60,000 would roll into the County General Fund. Property tax payers would see no change in the amount of their taxes under either scenario.

### **Would County Parks operate the park and beach in the same manner as the District has in the past?**

#### **Del Rio Woods Recreation District Services**

The Del Rio Woods Park District has provided an onsite parking attendant and lifeguards during the summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) and provided facility maintenance, trash removal and vegetation management as needed throughout the year. A parking fee of \$5 was collected during the summer months. The parking lot has remained open year round since the dam structure was removed during the summer of 2014.

#### **Regional Parks Proposed Services**

The Del Rio Woods Russian River Access will be open daily from dusk to dawn for public access including walking access to Russian River, swimming, hand launching of canoes and boats, picnicking and wildlife viewing. Temporary closures may be required if hazardous conditions occur onsite or during Russian River flood events. An automated pay station will be installed to collect the \$7 day use parking fee consistent with other River Access Parks operated by the County. Anyone with a County Park Membership (annual pass) would be allowed to park free of charge.

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This River Access will be included in the summer Russian River Patrol Program with Park Rangers and Lifeguards providing bilingual water safety information 2-4 days per week and lifejacket loaners for visitors utilizing the park. Park staff will respond as needed to routine and emergency issues onsite and regular facility maintenance and vegetation management will occur throughout the year. The parking lot gates will typically be closed at night during the summer months and may remain open during the remainder of the year. Vandalism will be repaired and graffiti will be removed in a timely manner. Information and regulatory signage will be updated and installed to Regional Park's standards. A portable restroom will be located in the parking area during the summer months and sanitized regularly. Trash receptacles will be located onsite at various locations and litter will be removed in a timely manner. Volunteer stewardship projects will occur 2-4 times per year to remove invasive vegetation and other projects that will benefit the river ecosystem and park visitor's enjoyment of the facility.

### **What if the community wanted to continue to have life guard services as in the past?**

Given the lifeguard cost and requirements for the County Parks to provide the lifeguard services there is not enough funding available to cover those costs. If the provision of life guard services has been driven by liability exposure, County Parks believes that a non-guarded beach may be a better option from solely the liability point of view.

### **If someone was willing to consider an appointment to the District Board of Directors what are the duties responsibilities of the District Board of Directors?**

The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that the District services are provided in such a way as to ensure they operate safely, with in the funds available, and conform to all requirements under the County, State and Federal laws. That requires developing, approving and managing annual budgets, securing and managing staff resources; filing required reports; developing and approving District policies; coordinating with law enforcement agencies and responding to citizen complaints and securing appropriate insurance coverage.

As articulated by past 40 year Board President of the Del Rio Woods Recreation District, a Board member should consider the following duties:

- Attend regular meetings
- Deal with complaints, legitimate and not, from homeowners
- Hire lifeguards and take care of payroll
- Develop, pass and act on preliminary and final budgets
- Undertake the annual report of finances to the State Controller
- Address concerns about possible liability
- Be responsible for beach cleanup, for keeping alcohol off of the beach, and for keeping boom boxes turned down etc.
- Responsibility for addressing unruly beach conduct

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- Responsibility for garbage and portable toilets

### **Are District Board of Directors elected?**

The five District Board members for the Del Rio Woods Recreation District are appointed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for a four year term. They are eligible to be reappointed and there are no term limits. Should the County Board of Supervisors appoint new people to the District Board it is anticipated that they would stagger the terms so that not all five new Board members terms would expire at the same time.

### **How would someone apply for an appointment to the District Board of Directors?**

Under Public Resources Code § 5784 an individual must be a voter in the District in order to be on the Board of Directors. They could contact any member of the Board of Supervisors offices or the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and request an application form.

### **Does the County have a preferred option?**

At this point there is no identified preferred option that County Staff would advocate for. The community has enjoyed access to the river from Del Rio Woods Beach since 1941. County Parks would hope that it would continue to available for the public's use for years to come. Who operates the park and beach in the future is an open question and Park staff recognizes operating the park and beach by other than the county may be seen as the best option.