



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 25, 2009

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administrative Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Parma Park Status Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a status report regarding actions to mitigate damage associated with the Tea Fire and plans for the restoration of Parma Park.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this staff report is to provide the Commission with a status report on staff efforts to mitigate the impacts of the Tea Fire at Parma Park and develop a rehabilitation and restoration plan.

Immediate Response after the Fire

The November 2008 Tea Fire caused significant damage to Parma Park. This included the loss of trees and vegetation, and the exposure of highly erosive soils and other cultural damage. Immediately following the fire, a number of steps were taken to help protect Parma Park, Sycamore Creek and its tributaries and downstream property from flooding and/or erosion. These included clearing burned trees and brush within Sycamore Creek, application of hydro-mulch to 36 of the 200 acres of the park, installation of a debris wrack in the creek upstream of the park entrance at Stanwood Drive, and excavation of the old Parma debris basin. The Parks Division and the Creeks Division, as well as the Public Works Department and County Flood Control District were directly involved in these projects.

Coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Since the Tea Fire was designated a federal disaster, Department staff has been working with FEMA representatives to determine which of the emergency and safety projects are eligible for reimbursement. Preliminary discussions with FEMA indicate that the hydro-mulch project and creek debris removal actions are eligible for reimbursement. In addition, the Department has identified important safety projects for implementation over the next six months that could be eligible to reimbursement. The

Agenda Item: _____

Public Works Department and County Flood Control District are working separately with FEMA to seek reimbursement for the debris basin and debris wrack.

Rehabilitation and Restoration Plan

Over the last six weeks staff developed a detailed plan for the rehabilitation and restoration of the park. The plan includes a detailed assessment of all the park damage including the viability and safety of the remaining trees, viability of the olive grove, presence and eradication assessment of non-native invasive plants, trail maintenance and repair needs, restoration of the electric service, need for ongoing erosion control, and an assessment of signage, fencing, and culverts. A number of these assessments will allow the park to re-open in the near future. The plan includes specific action steps associated with restoration efforts that will be implemented from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010.

The plan was presented to the Parma Park Trustee in late January, and a detailed cost proposal for the first 18 months of the plan was submitted last week. The Park Trustee has indicated his support for the plan.

National Emergency Grant Funds

Staff is also working with the Workforce Investment Board of Santa Barbara County to secure National Emergency Grant funds for the rehabilitation of Parma Park. Approximately three million dollars is potentially available to communities in Southern California to provide jobs to mitigate damage from the fires. If funded, the grant would support up to three 4-person crews for 24 weeks to remove brush, rebuild fences, install erosion control materials, eradicate non-native vegetation, and replant trees and other vegetation at Parma Park. The grant funds are intended to provide temporary employment to people out of work.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The estimated cost for the immediate response to the Tea Fire and 18 months of subsequent restoration activities (January 2009 – June 2010) is \$416,556. We anticipate that FEMA will reimburse \$204,311 of these costs. We have requested that the Parma Park Trust cover the remaining expenses of \$212,245. The Parma Park Trust disburses funds on an annual basis for the maintenance of the park. Currently, the balance in the Parma Park Maintenance Account is \$192,639.

ATTACHMENT: Parma Park Status Report and Action Plan

SUBMITTED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks & Recreation Director