



Save the American River Association

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Via E-mail (hard copy to follow)

November 8, 2012

Mr. Jeffrey Leatherman
Parkway Manager
Director Regional Parks Department
4040 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA 95827

Subject: Special Event Permit for "Truckin' on the River"

Dear Mr. Leatherman,

Based upon a careful review of information available to SARA, we have concluded that the subject permit is inconsistent with the requirements of the American River Parkway Plan and must, therefore, object to the issuance of the permit. It seems to us that the option of having the event in Discovery Park, which is recognized as being more appropriate for these types of events, doesn't seem to have been considered.

As we understand the event which occurred on October 13th, some 15 or so commercial food trucks were parked on the grass in William B. Pond Park within a fenced area which included a fenced Beer Garden. Live entertainment accompanied the consumption of food and beverage from the commercial vendors by participants. The permit for the event allowed up to 600 event participants.

As you know, the American River Parkway Plan provides that commercial activities that are compatible with the "goals of the Parkway shall only be considered as an auxiliary component to permitted recreational or interpretative/educational facilities." (*American River Parkway Plan 2008, Chapter 6, Policy 6.1.4, Page 105*).

We understand that you have determined that the permitted recreational use for the subject permit is "picnicking".

1 of 3

Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961

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We believe your reasoning in identifying "picnicking" as the permitted recreational use is tortured and expands the definition of picnicking beyond that clearly contemplated in the Parkway Plan. You have expanded the definition of "picnicking" to include consumption of any food in any amount, no matter the source or how minor in relation to the other activities occurring at the event. This expansion means that almost any event that involves consumption of any amount of food, no matter how small in food portion in relation to the other event activities, would qualify as a picnic, and commercial activities involving food and beverages would be permitted, assuming of course no other reason for permit denial. This would be at odds with the goals of the Parkway Plan which emphasize balance between recreation use and protection of Parkway resources.

We are pleased to learn that you believe that the Parkway Plan calls for educational and interpretative efforts that address the entire Parkway and are designed to increase visitor's appreciation and understanding of the Parkway. We believe that these requirements should be defined and included as a condition of special event permits so that the goals of the Parkway Plan can be realized and introduction of new users will be meaningful.

The Parkway Plan requires you, as the Parkway Manager, to exercise good judgment to avoid or minimize potential conflicts and protect Parkway resources. Perhaps you have performed the requisite analysis. However, we have been unable to independently conclude that you have met this responsibility due to the absence of any documentation of any analysis that can be independently reviewed. This problem needs to be corrected immediately so as to protect the integrity of the Plan and permitting process. Regarding the subject event, we would be most happy to receive and review any documentation that we have not been privy to and consider new conclusions as determined by the analysis.

We have additional concerns arising from the review of this permit that we will bring to bear during the review of draft proposed trail policy and draft fee schedule.

We appreciate the difficulty of processing permit applications involving fund raising by Parkway stakeholder groups. However, the Parkway Plan must apply to the Parkway stakeholder groups without potentially abusive interpretations or it will not apply to anybody. In our view, we will see the destruction of the Parkway's natural resources unless not only the literal word, but also the clear intent, of the Parkway Plan is honored. We recognize that the subject special event is now history and hope that it is one of a kind.

We would like to establish a protocol that provides SARA with the opportunity to review applications for special event or large group activities in future. Development of a protocol

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will survive current volunteers and staff and enable early input from SARA, the Guardians of the American River Parkway since 1961 and a leader in the interpretation and implementation of the American River Parkway Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Clyde Macdonald
President

cc: SARA Board