

MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE
COUNTY OF PLACER

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Thomas M. Miller, County Executive Officer
By: Anita Reis, Management Analyst
DATE: January 25, 2011
SUBJECT: Resolution concerning the future management of the Auburn State Recreation Area

ACTION REQUESTED:

Adopt a Resolution supporting a long term solution to effectively address management of and funding for the Auburn State Recreation Area.

BACKGROUND:

The 31,000 acres comprising the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) are a unique and irreplaceable asset to the citizens of Placer County. Most of the lands comprising ASRA are federal property managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, an agency within the United States Department of Interior.

Funding for the management of the ASRA has decreased more than 20% for fiscal year 2010-2011 and funding in subsequent years is at risk due to federal and state budget fiscal constraints. Additionally, funding reductions continue to threaten the viability of a new plan for the future management of ASRA and an agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for fire protection services on ASRA lands.

There is a clear and urgent need for a long term resolution to ASRA management and funding concerns that will effectively address fire risk and public safety needs, protect natural, cultural and historical resources, and ensure the responsible management of the diverse and growing recreational use of ASRA lands.

Your Board's 2011 County Legislative Platform contains a provision "supporting legislation, regulations, and permanent federal funding for the management of the federal lands managed as the Auburn State Recreation Area." It is requested, therefore, that your Board adopt a resolution that will allow for immediate steps by Placer County to: (1) address and resolve long term land management and management responsibilities for the Auburn State Recreation Area; and (2) provide sufficient funding to protect public safety, responsibly address wildfire prevention and fire suppression needs, properly manage the recreational use of ASRA lands, and protect ASRA's natural, cultural and historical resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Permanent funding received would help to mitigate potential negative impacts to local communities and fire fighting agencies, especially in the event of a catastrophic fire, and enhance the management and preservation of this popular and valuable resource.

Attachment: Resolution

Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of:

Resol. No: _____

RESOLUTION CONCERNING FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held on _____ by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Attest:
Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, the lands comprising the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA), with their steep forested canyons, scenic beauty, and diverse recreational opportunities, are a unique and irreplaceable asset to the citizens of Placer County;

WHEREAS, most of the lands comprising ASRA are federal property managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, an agency within the United States Department of Interior;

WHEREAS, ASRA provides Placer County residents with convenient, close-to-home access to beautiful semi-wilderness river canyons;

WHEREAS, ASRA is an enormously popular recreation destination that attracts approximately one million visitors annually, and is the site of world famous events such as the Tevis Cup Ride and Western States Endurance Run, thereby producing substantial economic benefits to Placer County;

WHEREAS, the ASRA canyonlands have a rich human history and include hundreds of Gold Rush and Native American cultural sites, many of which are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation has cut the Department of Parks and Recreation's budget for ASRA management by more than 20% for fiscal year 2010-2011, and has declared that it may be unable to provide any funding in subsequent years;

WHEREAS, ASRA lands adjacent to the communities of Auburn, Colfax, Foresthill, and other populated areas of Placer County have not been properly managed for fuels reduction and as a result pose a grave and unacceptable risk of catastrophic fire loss to those communities;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation has suspended all funding and work on the development of a new plan for the future management of ASRA, and has declined to enter into new agreements with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for fire protection services on ASRA lands;

WHEREAS, there is a clear and urgent need for a long term resolution to ASRA management and funding concerns that will effectively address fire risk and public safety needs, protect natural, cultural and historical resources, and ensure the responsible management of the diverse and growing recreational use of ASRA lands;

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Placer County Board of Supervisors calls on the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior to take immediate steps, in consultation with Placer County, to: (1) address and resolve long term land management and management responsibilities for the Auburn State Recreation Area; and (2) provide sufficient funding to protect public safety, responsibly address wildfire prevention and fire suppression needs, properly manage the recreational use of ASRA lands, and protect ASRA's natural, cultural and historical resources.

