

# Watsonville bans drinking in Pinto Lake Park

By KEITH MURAOKA  
Sentinel staff writer

WATSONVILLE — Drinking alcohol at Pinto Lake Park here will soon be prohibited, but drinkers at Ramsay Park have gotten a reprieve.

The Watsonville City Council Tuesday night unanimously OK'd the drinking ban at Pinto Lake.

But a decision on prohibiting drinking alcohol at Ramsay Park was delayed until money can be

found to enforce such a ban. Ramsay Park remains the lone city park where alcohol consumption is allowed in designated picnic areas.

The city's Parks and Recreation Commission had recommended the alcohol ban at both parks to prevent problems with drunks.

Pat Hatler, the concessionaire at Pinto Lake Park, told council members that drunken people cause many problems not only for her

staff, but park users.

The alcohol ban was also endorsed by officials of recreational groups that use Ramsay Park. The groups include youth and adult sports leagues.

The ban was proposed by council members last October, but referred to the city's Parks and Recreation Commission for study. The seven-member commission unanimously recommended the non-drinking policy.

Council members expressed concern about the cost of enforcing an alcohol ban at Ramsay Park, which is used extensively by various sports leagues. Watsonville Police Capt. Chuck Carter estimated enforcement of a ban during the 13 summer weekends at \$8,841. A full-time officer assigned to the park would cost \$53,280 a year, he said.

Council members referred the question of funding to enforce a ban at Ramsay Park back to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The proposed alcohol ban at Pinto Lake Park on Green Valley Road will return to the council on Feb. 11. If approved again, it will become law 30 days after that.

According to a spokeswoman for the county parks system, alcohol consumption is allowed in county parks.

The city of Santa Cruz has prohibited alcohol consumption on city beaches. State parks officials also have banned alcohol at Seabright State Beach.

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