

# Entrance fee at Pinto Lake Park ordered by council

The days of free recreation at the city's park at Pinto Lake are coming to an end.

Starting June 1, visitors to the park will have to pay an entrance fee, the City Council decided Tuesday night.

Charging fees is part of the city's overall plan aimed at improving the facilities at the lake. Another part of the plan, the most controversial, was to kick speedboaters off the lake.

The fees will go mostly for paying the salaries of a park ranger and a park aide. The aide will spend much of his time collecting fees; the ranger will be responsible for maintaining decorum at the lake.

Exempted from the fees will be Little Leaguers during the season as well as all persons under 16 years of age.

Adult "walk-ins" will have to pay 50 cents. To drive into the park will cost \$1 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends and holidays. A seasonal day-use permit (good between April and Sept. 30) will cost \$15. An annual permit will cost \$25.

Boat-towing vehicle fees will be \$1 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends and holidays. A season permit will be \$15 and an annual permit \$25.

A seasonal "walk-in" permit will be \$7.50 and an annual permit \$10.

A little League season pass for vehicles will cost \$2. Little Leaguers will be issued passes to get in free.

There will be no charge for the use of tables or barbecue pits. But groups, organizations or large families will be able to reserve a large barbecue pit and surrounding tables for a \$15 fee. Group picnics are limited to 50 people, new city law says.

Owners of travel trailers, campers or other "sleeping units" will pay \$2 for use of the dump station. They are already banned from overnight use.

Seniors (age 62 and over) and the handicapped will not be given a break on daily fees, but they will get a 50 percent discount on seasonal and annual permits.

The vote to impose the fees passed on a 4-2 vote Tuesday night, with Mayor Bill Johnston and Councilman Frank Osmer dissenting and Councilwoman Jean McNeil absent. Johnston and Osmer have been opposed to the new plan for the lake since the start. So has Councilman Vido Deretich, but he voted to carry

out the plan favored by the majority of the council.

For the fishermen and women who regularly use Pinto Lake, the proposed \$1 and \$2 use fees don't pose much of a problem.

Surprisingly the consensus among a handful of people at the lake today was that if the City Council can rid the small lake of motorboats, then the fee is OK with them.

"I've been coming seven or eight years with my children," said Alice Turner, who drives about 17 miles to fish on the lake. "And I'm willing to pay if it keeps speedboats off the lake. The guys in the boats have no respect for the picnickers, fishermen and waders."

Mrs. Turner sat by the side of Pinto Lake with a friend, Joyce Ash, and her three children.

"It's quiet here and the kids really enjoy the water," she said.

Last year, Mrs. Turner said, a boater and she got in a heated argument over the rights of boaters vs. fishermen when the boater accidentally cut her fishing line. She's been anti-boater since then.

N.H. Sparks, a 30-year resident of Watsonville, who visits the lake once or twice a month, said he wouldn't use the facility as often if a fee were charged.

"I'm on a fixed income, which makes any added expense a little tough," he said.

Other fixed income visitors to the lake agreed that a use fee would be tough on their budgets, but no one opposed it. In fact, two Watsonville residents suggested a scheme to ease the proposed \$1 per vehicle charge.

"We'll just get our buddies to park outside and come in one car," said Al Davis.

"That way we can split the cost, and it wouldn't be too much," his friend, Joe Silvera, added.

One retiree who uses the lake in winter said he'd buy a season pass because he wants to see the park maintained better.

"It's a cotton pickin' shame that they don't have anyone here on weekends to clean this place up," the man said. "Another park in town went down the drain because they let it get so dirty. I wouldn't want to see that happen here. And if they could get the skiers off the lake, I'd be really happy."



—Photo by Sam Vestal

N. H. Sparks says he won't be able to go to the lake as often once the entrance fees take effect.

REFERENCE

[REDACTED]