

SC Park User Survey Results

The city of Santa Cruz is initiating a park users' survey and car count to determine who is using the municipal parks and what facilities or programs should be planned for future needs.

The survey and car count will be made four times yearly: in August, November, February and May. Each survey and count will be made over a seven-day period, with park employees asking four basic questions:

1. The area of residency of the park user: city, county or outside-county.
2. The willingness of the park user to pay a user fee to offset park maintenance costs.
3. The opinion of the user on the condition of the park.
4. The number of times the user visits the park yearly.

Car counters will be placed to register vehicles, and license numbers of vehicles in the parking lots will be written down and checked to determine where the vehicle is registered: in the city, in the county, outside the county or "other" (not registered for one reason or other.)

The first survey and car count was made at Harvey West Park July 7-14, according to a report by Bob Thomas, Santa Cruz parks and recreation director.

The car count showed that 6,942 vehicles entered the park, that the peak period of use was a Sunday from noon to 4 p.m., with 100 vehicles per hour registered.

Of the vehicles counted, 47 percent were registered in the city, 29 percent in the county, 18 percent out of the county and 14 percent not registered.

Park users surveyed showed that 129 persons, or 43 percent, would pay an entrance fee, while 169 persons, or 57 percent, would not.

The park got good ratings. There were 272 persons, or 85 percent, who called the park good, 40 persons or 13 percent who called it satisfactory and only one person who called it unsatisfactory.

Some 48 percent of those surveyed said they use the park six or more times yearly. Some 61 percent of the park users were 19 years or older, 30 percent from one to 12 years old, 9 percent from 13 to 18 years old.

At Lower DeLaveaga Park, from July 14 through Aug. 21, there were 3,333 vehicles counted, with 39 percent registered in the city, 36 percent in the county, 20 percent out of the county and 5 percent not registered.

Of the park users surveyed (396) 50 percent said they would be willing to pay an entrance fee, 50 percent said they would not. Some 95 percent rated the park from good to satisfactory. Some 69 percent were 19 years or older, 23 percent from one to 12 years of age, 8 percent from 13 to 18 years of age.

At Neary's Lagoon the last week of August, 707 vehicles were counted. Of these, 43 percent were city-registered, 20 percent were county-registered, 37 percent were out of county.

Only 10 of 71 persons surveyed said they would pay an entrance fee, all rated the park from good to satisfactory. Some 69 percent were 19 years or older, 17 percent were 13 to 18 years old, 10 were 12 or under.

The surveys were made in what the city calls its regional parks, parks intended to serve the total city or area. In future, community parks (intended for city residents only) will also be surveyed.