

Entry fee for Ben Lomond Park?

A 10-cent entry fee (non-county residents would pay 25-cents) is proposed for the Ben Lomond River Park.

The fees are included in a staff recommendation to the County Parks Commission, which took over operation of the park when the Ben Lomond Recreation District was dissolved by voters last July.

The commission is scheduled to consider the fee schedule and a budget to operate the park at a meeting this week.

The proposed budget for operation of the park is \$12,354 for the coming year. Last year's budget, as adopted by the old recreation district board of directors, was \$54,976.

However, \$18,829 of the board's budget had been earmarked for capital improvement projects.

Pat Reedy, an official with the parks department, said the entry fee would be charged only when the park's swimming hole is in operation. It is formed by damming up the San Lorenzo River.

A kiosk will be set up and manned to collect the entry fee.

Mrs. Reedy said operation of the park will be pretty much as in the past, except there will be no planned recreation program carried out by the rec district.

She said three lifeguards and a program-leader lifeguard will be assigned to the park. When the district operated the park, there were three park supervisors, two lifeguards, and a park aide June to Labor Day.

Maintenance of the park will be provided by employees

working at the county's new Highland Park off Highway 9 south of Ben Lomond.

Plans for levying a 50-cent parking fee—\$1 for non-county residents—at the Highland Park, which is scheduled to officially open soon. Residents could buy a season parking pass for \$7.

In addition, there would be a 25-cent fee for county residents to use the swimming pool at Highlands Park. Non-residents would pay 50-cents.

Mrs. Reedy said purpose in recommending an entry fee for Ben Lomond park was to ensure that users would pay their fair share.

She estimated the actual cost per person to use the park for a day is 37 cents.

Under the recreation district's budget for this year, a 52-cent tax would have been levied to finance the program.

Mrs. Reedy said that Valley residents, through the existing county Service Area 11, will now pay slightly less than two cents per \$100 assessed valuation. This amount includes money for Highland Park and other county facilities in the Valley zone.

Fees similar to what they were in the past will be levied for use of Wilder Hall and the annex at Ben Lomond. There would be no charge for public recreation and civic activities, except for kitchen use and clean up work. There would be a higher fee for public fund-raising events and still higher for commercial use of the facilities.

Last July, voters, by a 617 to 465 margin, dissolved the old

rec district, turning all its assets over to the county with the understanding they must be used for public recreation.

In 1911 the park property was dedicated to the public for recreational use under the Brooks Trust.

The trust was transferred to the Ben Lomond Fire District in 1942, and in 1950 it was transferred to the Ben Lomond recreation district that had just been set up. It was transferred to the county when the district was dissolved last year.

An audit of district facilities was presented to the County Board of Supervisors last week indicating the facilities when turned over to the county were valued at \$115,475.

Listed as assets were the land, valued at \$40,480; land improvements (at park) \$2,007; structures and improvements, \$59,285; recreation equipment, \$9,084; and furnishings and equipment, \$4,619.

The property included Wilder Hall, a meeting hall equipped with five tables and 63 chairs and kitchen facilities; the library building; the annex (used for small gatherings); basketball court; concrete stage area for outdoor functions; playground equipment; and picnic facilities, including tables and barbecue facilities.

If the parks commission this week approves the new fee and budget for Ben Lomond park, the matter will go next to the Board of Supervisors.

The board already has given preliminary approval for the parking and other fee at Highlands Park.



Highlands Park walkway

Craig Rogers, park design technician, stands on new pedestrian bridge just installed at Highlands County Park near Ben Lomond. The bridge leads from the parking lot to the Nasser home.