



County of Santa Cruz

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SHERIFF -CORONER

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MARK TRACY
SHERIFF - CORONER

December 8, 1999

AGENDA: January 11, 2000

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

1999 PARKS DEPUTY PILOT PROGRAM REPORT

Members of the Board:

The County Parks system consists of more than 30 sites that provide for recreation and leisure time opportunities for county residents and visitors. This summer the Sheriff's Office and the Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department established a pilot parks patrol. The patrol project was an attempt to be a pro-active effort to keep the park experience enjoyable for residents and visitors.

In conversations between the Parks Department and the Sheriff's Office, it was realized that conventional patrol methods and private security contractors did not effectively address the public safety needs of the county park system. It was determined that the two agencies, working collectively, could develop solutions and methods to address those matters that are special to the Santa Cruz County Parks Department and facilities.

In the Spring of 1999, the Sheriff's Office assigned a patrol deputy to work exclusively at County Parks. The deputy was provided work space at the Simpson's Swim Center, along with a patrol car, bicycle and car bike rack.

The deputy reported to a manager in the Parks Department and the Live Oak Service Center sergeant. The deputy used the bicycle extensively during the shift. The use of the bicycle was consistent with the community policing goal of the deputy, having frequent, positive contacts with park employees and parks visitors throughout the county.

The deputy worked at a number of large events that were held at park sites. The deputy's presence throughout the events provided the organizers with a law enforcement point of contact, and the assurance that park rules regarding alcohol, parking, noise, etc., were followed.

The deputy was also very successful in reducing noise and alcohol related incidents at Pinto Lake County Park. The deputy routinely met with soccer participants and people who rented the pavilions where alcohol is allowed as part of the rental. By working cooperatively with park users, alcohol arrests went down, as did noise complaints.

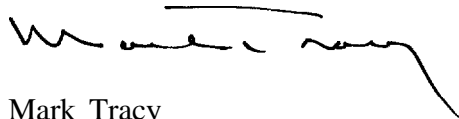
The deputy not only patrolled large parks but checked on small neighborhood parks. The patrol computer-aided dispatch logs show patrol time throughout the county from Highlands Park in Ben Lomond, to Pinto Lake County Park in Watsonville. The summer program was concluded at the end of September.

The Parks Director and the Sheriff-Coroner, along with respective staff members, met to discuss the program outcome. The comments from both sides were positive. The parks received increased patrol and some ongoing problems were greatly reduced.

The deputy only worked on park issues and was seldom called to other duties. Sheriff patrol staff liked the program because its pro-active approach usually stopped a problem before it started. The overall calls for service at parks went down, and no major incidents occurred at the parks this summer. The Parks Director and the Sheriff agreed to run a second year test program next summer.

It is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that the Board accept and file this report on Parks Deputy Pilot Program.

Sincerely,



Mark Tracy
Sheriff-Coroner



Barry Samuel, Director
Parks, Open Space and Cultural
Services Dept.

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello, CAO

c: Sheriffs Office
Parks, Open Space & Cultural Services