DRAFT FOR CONSIDERATION – SEPTEMBER 3 DAC MEETING

Dear Director Bellas;

The Sacramento County Disability Advisory Commission (DAC) applauds the County Department of Regional Parks in its achievement of implementing the American River Parkway (ARPW) plan projects, to achieve the balance of competing interest to the development and promotion of public recreation use including hiking to benefit park visitors while safeguarding the naturalistic wildlife habitat. However, the DAC does share many of the concerns that have been previously expressed by Friends of Sailor Bar over the Department’s plan to re-open the closed, unimproved gravel maintenance/emergency roads into the interior of the Sailor Bar park for public vehicular use. In our opinion, this is inconsistent with the ARPW goals.

We agree with the comments made by Bruce Forman in his May 24, 2024, correspondence with District 3 Supervisor Rich Desmond:

*“Motor vehicle traffic significantly reduces the quality of a walking/hiking experience in an area designated for nature recreation. People visit the Sailor Bar to find a peaceful, safe, and clean place to enjoy nature without the sights, sounds, and toxic fumes of motor vehicles. Furthermore, pedestrians who have do not feel secure using the trails/paths due to limited mobility rely on using these same roads.”*

At their regular meeting of September 3, 2024, the DAC ratified the following motion of the DAC Physical Access Subcommittee:

The DAC believes County Parks would serve the community and environment well by keeping the maintenance/emergency vehicle roads closed to public motor vehicle traffic, while implementing accessible and usable trails designed for people with limited mobility to enjoy the sensory experiences. The DAC concurs with the following proposed solutions:

1. Develop an accessible trail and shaded resting area from the west side of the Illinois Avenue parking lot above the boat launch, and pave the lot for disability access.
2. Reclaim nature on selected social paths by native revegetation and gravel, and install accessible interpretive signs.
3. Create an accessible trail and resting areas around Turtle Pond, and pave the parking lot to accommodate disabled parking spaces.

In closing, we respectfully request reconsideration be given to permanently keeping the maintenance/emergency roads closed to public vehicular traffic, and to make improvements to these roads, so they can become accessible nature trails for all users of the park, including those with disabilities.

We look forward in learning of your decision on this item of great interest to people with disabilities seeking accessible nature trails in Sacramento County.

Sincerely,

Eugene Lozano, Jr., Chair

Sacramento County Disability Advisory Commission