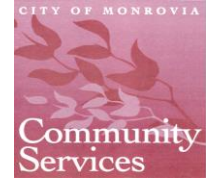




**CITY OF MONROVIA  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION  
AGENDA REPORT**



**DEPARTMENT:** Public Services

**MEETING DATE:** September 8, 2015

**PREPARED BY:** Eugene Suk,  
Hillside Wilderness Preserve Supervisor

**AGENDA LOCATION:** AR-3

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**TITLE:** 2014-15 Canyon Park Outdoor Educational Program Evaluation

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide the Community Services Commission with an evaluation of the 2014-15 Canyon Park Outdoor Educational program.

**BACKGROUND:** A component of the Canyon Park mission is to provide quality environmental education programs that foster a respect and appreciation for the natural world. Staff is dedicated to providing interpretative based curriculum that connects the minds and hearts of the students to the natural and cultural resources of the Monrovia foothills. Since 1997, compliance to the California Science Standards and inclusive coordination with the Monrovia Unified School District (MUSD) has fostered a relationship committed to providing every second, third, fourth and fifth grade Monrovia student the opportunity to develop an in-depth affiliation with the natural and cultural heritage of the community. The program content is based on the California Science Standards. Programming is available to all students and school districts throughout Southern California. Through an agreement with the MUSD, only Monrovia students receive a grade level appropriate Activity Book, and use of the Cabin/Conference Center as an off-site classroom. Non-MUSD school tour groups receive identical programming with the exclusion of activity books, and use of the Cabin/Conference Center. To date, the non-Monrovia Schools have not requested activity books but, if they did, books could be purchased for \$2 each. All schools have use of the Canyon Park Nature Center.

Through established fee's, staff is able to provide this beneficial program to all participating students. The cost of a hike-led educational tour is a minimum of \$120 (for up to 30 participants). For each additional participant (up to an additional 30 participants), a \$4 charge will be assessed. The program includes trained interpretive staff, a two hour program, use of the Canyon Park Nature Center, and educational materials.

**ANALYSIS:** The Outdoor Education Program was developed to meet the curriculum needs of Monrovia elementary schools. Currently all MUSD second, third, fourth and fifth grade students have the benefit of participating in the program. Canyon Park staff has also developed Kindergarten through second grade environmental programs to meet the needs and requests of all elementary schools.

**AR-3**

Summary of Educational Programs: The following information outlines the Outdoor Education program:

- **Second Grade – “Growing Pains”:** Participants learn to understand the relationships between members of plant, animal, and insect kingdoms, and how their lifecycles affect each other.
- **Third Grade – “Foot Prints in the Canyon”:** Program is geared toward a students’ first time exposure to a wilderness area. Knowledge of plant and animal communities, and history of cultural and natural resources within the park provides the students with an understanding of the basic needs and interdependency of all living things.
- **Fourth Grade – “Adapt, Migrate or Disappear”:** Program provides students with an in-depth look at the biological mechanisms plants and wildlife use to survive in their habitat including food, mobility, protection, temperature, and reproduction. Animal pelts, skulls and games are used to demonstrate interdependency.
- **Fifth Grade – “Get into the Flow”:** Designed for students to examine water’s effect on the eco-system. The exploration of the water-cycle provides an explanation of where the water comes from, and which sources supply the Park’s year-round waterfall. Riparian vegetation and aquatic insects are examined to evaluate the health of the stream.

The following chart illustrates the number of students served over the past two years. MUSD student participation was 1,350 for fiscal year 2012-13, up 31 participants compared to 1,290 the previous year. The MUSD increase is attributed to additional programs created for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade participants. Non-MUSD student participation increased slightly from 1,008 in 2013-14 to 1,047 in 2014-15.

NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS		
	2013-14	2014-15
MUSD Students	1,259	1,290
Non-MUSD students	1,008	1,047
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>2,267</b>	<b>2,337</b>

**Fee Survey Comparisons:** The following information highlights the fee survey findings. The survey extends from the San Gabriel Valley to the Los Angeles and San Bernardino County areas due a limited number of similar programs to survey in neighboring cities.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM FEE SURVEY	
Agency	Cost Per Participant
All Los Angeles County Natural Areas	\$ 0
San Gabriel Canyon Outdoor Ed Center – (United States Forest Service USFS)	\$ 8
El Dorado Nature Center – Long Beach	\$ 10
Mary Vagle Nature Center - Fontana	\$ 5
Oak Canyon Nature Center - Anaheim	\$ 6
<b>Average Per Student</b>	<b>\$ 6</b>
Monrovia Canyon Park - Monrovia	\$ 4

The survey results indicate that the Canyon Park Outdoor Education fee of \$4 per student is below the survey average of \$6. Staff does not recommend increasing this fee as MUSD staff indicated a fee increase might limit their participation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:** The guided outdoor education programs support the Green Accords by allowing the students to have a personal connection with the environment. The fifth grade program *Get into the Flow* encourages students to understand the process of the water cycle, and how conservation plays into the role of everyday life.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Proposition A funds were used to renovate Canyon Park, therefore all school districts participating in the Outdoor Education Program are subject to the same fee as the Monrovia Unified School District. The following information illustrates the Environmental Education program revenue.

OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVENUE		
	2013-14	2014-15
Monrovia Unified School District	\$3,777	\$5,160
Non-MUSD School Districts	\$3,025	\$4,187
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,802</b>	<b>\$9,347</b>

The increase in MUSD revenue is attributed to the additional second grade program allowing additional participation.

Note: Monrovia Canyon Park Volunteers provide 180 hours to the Outdoor Education Interpretive Program in fiscal 2014-15. Based on a staff cost of \$15.51 per hour, multiplied by 180 volunteer hours, the Volunteers provided a staff cost savings of \$2,791.

**PROGRAM COMMENTS:**

1. Staff will expand publicity efforts of Canyon Park’s outdoor environmental education programs to non-Monrovia school districts to increase awareness and participation.
2. Staff will continue securing additional volunteer support to augment existing staff. This will decrease staff cost, and will allow staff to focus on park operations, patrols and maintenance.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Community Services Commission move to receive and file AR-3 2014-15 Canyon Park Outdoor Education Program Evaluation.

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUIRED:** If Community Services Commission concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion to: ***Receive and file AR-3 2014-15 Canyon Park Outdoor Education Program Evaluation.***