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Placerville pool work gets fund infusion

By Cathy Locke -- Bee Staff Writer - (Published June 13, 2004)

Placerville Mayor Kathi Lishman declared Tuesday a "good day for the swimming pool" after the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors agreed to contribute \$300,000 to the city project.

Reconstruction of the municipal pool was among six projects approved last week for funding with state park bond money. The board also agreed to earmark \$564,000 for Bass Lake Regional Park, between El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park; \$50,000 for the Camino-Pollock Pines Regional Park; \$300,000 for the STAR Playfields in South Lake Tahoe; and \$50,000 to develop trail plans for the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor.

Last month, supervisors voted to contribute \$280,000 in park bond funds to buy 40 acres of the Cronin Ranch near Pilot Hill for development as a regional trails park and equestrian center.

Supervisors unanimously approved the allocations, although some members expressed concern that the Placerville swimming pool and Cronin Ranch park were siphoning money from the more expensive and long-term regional park projects.

"The dollars will dwindle down to nothing if we keep funding other projects," Supervisor Helen Baumann said.

The projects were supported by the county Parks and Recreation Commission, which was asked to recommend how to spend about \$1.7 million in bond funds. A remaining \$220,000 is expected to be allocated to the Bass Lake and Camino-Pollock Pines regional parks.

Parks commission member Bob Smart said that even if all the money were dedicated to one of the regional parks, it wouldn't be enough to complete either project. He noted the other projects involve partnerships with various entities, and the contribution of county funds is critical to bring them to fruition.

Smart and Supervisor Jack Sweeney also said the Placerville swimming pool is a regional facility, serving the unincorporated area and city residents.

"We desperately need it," Smart said. "The kids have got to have a place to go. To cut that thing short would be a terrible mistake."

The City Council rejected bids in January that were \$350,000 to \$500,000 more than \$1.6 million budgeted for the project. The county previously contributed \$210,000 to the effort.

City Manager John Driscoll said the city has trimmed costs and is ready to rebid the project at \$1.9 million.

"Your money will be put to good use," Driscoll told supervisors. "You will see the results."

George Sanders, the county's director of general services, said work is progressing on plans for the Bass Lake and CaminoPollock Pines regional parks.

Because of concerns about limited road capacity, the Bass Lake park will be developed in phases, he said. The first phase would provide an access road, ball field and restrooms. An environmental study should be completed in about 30 days, Sanders said.

A phased approach also is expected for the Camino-Pollock Pines park, he said, adding that timber must be harvested from part of the site before plans can be developed.

Sanders said the county also seeks public contributions of money, materials or labor for facilities such as restrooms.

About the Writer

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