



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 7, 2017

DATE: October 25, 2017

TO: Open Space and Regional Park Commission

FROM: Colleen Wallace Barnum, Parks Operations Superintendent

THROUGH: Eric Crump, Operations Division Director

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve a Pack Internship Grant from the Nevada System of Higher Education through University of Nevada, Reno. The grant total is \$2880 (two consecutive one-year terms of \$1440), from January 1, 2018 through July 31, 2020. We would direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget adjustments. All Commission Districts will be impacted as this intern would serve all parks throughout Washoe County.

SUMMARY

The University of Nevada, Reno conducted an information session about internship opportunities throughout the local community in March of 2017. Park operations staff has been discussing the possibility of interns in parks for many years. We were interested in the Pack internship as it is a paid internship for students with local Reno businesses and nonprofits. Park staff identified three possible opportunities for interns. We worked with the Career Studio to develop learning outcomes for the students and agreed to provide on-site training, supervision, professional development, and evaluations of the intern. An application for three interns was submitted. Career Studio staff agreed to support one of the three intern positions. They were amenable to supporting more interns if we were willing to cost share. We decided to begin with one intern and build if this program provides value.

Career Studio staff conducted an on-site visit for the intern position they were willing to fund. The intern position will be placed with our Projects and Safety Coordinator out of Rancho San Rafael Park. The intern will be assisting with playground safety inspections for all parks in Washoe County with playgrounds. They will be helping with data collection of our playgrounds and learning how to conduct safety inspections from the Project and Safety Coordinator who is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI).

The UNR Pack Internship Grant Program is an internship that would last for three years. Interns are placed for the spring semester of each of the consecutive 3 years. UNR will fund the intern for the first two years, for a total grant award of \$2880 (\$1440 for two consecutive years). In the third year, they require the grantee to fund the position at \$1440. If the grantee does not have funding for the third year, the Pack Internship ends.

Our desire, should the program provide value, would be to match funding to assist with the third year of the internship and to obtain more interns in the future.

County Priority/Goal supported by this item: Stewardship of our community

BACKGROUND

In 2009, Washoe County's Parks and Open Space Department made the difficult decision to eliminate the Playground Safety Inspector position. The staff person who occupied the position remained employed as a Maintenance Worker II. Regular playground safety inspections were no longer being conducted and deferred maintenance was the only option at the time. Over the course of the next eight years, our maintenance staff was repairing playgrounds on an as needed basis.

In 2015, Washoe County's Community Services Department was making the decision to transition the Washoe Golf Course to a full management option. At the time, three full-time Washoe County staff still worked at Washoe Golf Course, a Grounds Equipment Mechanic, a Grounds Supervisor, and a Senior Grounds Maintenance Worker. The Grounds Equipment Mechanic transitioned to an open mechanic position stationed at Rancho San Rafael Park in 2015 after a retirement. The decision was made to absorb both remaining positions into the current full-time park operations staff. We would transition the Grounds Supervisor to a Maintenance Supervisor and the Senior Grounds Maintenance Worker to a Projects and Safety Coordinator. A full management contract for Washoe Golf Course was negotiated in the fall of 2016, and full management began in January of 2017.

In January of 2017, the Projects and Safety Coordinator position started in Washoe County's Community Services Department. This new position coordinates work for all infrastructure preservation projects and conducts regular playground safety inspections. The employee became a certified playground safety inspector (CPSI) in May of 2017. After obtaining this certification, it became clear that Washoe County needs to record inspection data, truth our existing playground assets, and track inspections, preventative and corrective maintenance over time. We did not have a CPSI on staff for eight years, and our data collection and tracking before that time was antiquated and needed improvement. The creation of this process will take some time and we would like to have it in place by December of 2018.

There will be no fiscal impact to Washoe County in 2018 or 2019. If we feel this internship is valuable and there is a desire to continue with the program, the fiscal impact in 2020 will be \$1440.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Open Space and Regional Park Commission recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the Pack internship grant that will begin January 1, 2018 and continue through July 31, 2020.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with the staff recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the Pack internship grant that will begin January 1, 2018 and continue through July 31, 2020.”