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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS  
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CITY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA

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June 19, 1991

DIVISIONS:  
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SACRAMENTO ZOO  
PARKS AND RECREATION  
• NORTH  
• SOUTH  
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City Council  
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT; Report Back - Proposed Wading Pool Closures

SUMMARY

This report is in response to the Committee's request for additional information concerning the permanent closure of the City's 17 wading pools.

BACKGROUND

The proposed 1991-92 budget cuts for the Department of Parks and Community Services include the closing of all wading pools. There are several reasons this action was proposed, some of which are as follows. Of the 17 pools, 10 must be emptied every evening and refilled the next morning. The drain/refill procedure is mandated by the County Health Department for sanitary reasons. This represents approximately 5,000 gallons per pool or 50,000 gallons minimum of water per day for approximately three months. Five of the 17 pools do have filter systems which in theory means the water is recirculated and there is little loss. In fact, however, the filters are prone to blockages, malfunctions, etc. and their down time for repair is the rule rather than the exception. Consequently, these filtered pools are often drained/refilled resulting in yet an additional undetermined amount of lost gallonage. It should be noted that the County Health Department has stringent regulations concerning water quality, and rightfully so. Every year without exception, various wading pools are frequently ordered closed by the Health Department until the water quality meets standards. These are usually one day closures.

In order to minimize water waste and maximize available staff, the optimum solution would be for wading pools be in close proximity to and operate off the same filter system as large pools. Although wading pools are usually located in the same park near a regulation sized swimming pool, there is but one which is operated off the same filter system as the "big" pool. It is the Clunie swimming/wading pool complex in McKinley Park. It meets all criteria with one exception: the Clunie Clubhouse Auditorium has two side doors which open onto a patio adjacent to the wading pool. When the wading pool is closed for the day and there are evening activities in the clubhouse, the pool must be drained. Fire safety regulations do not permit the locking of these doors as they serve as exits. Therefore, draining the pool

eliminates the liability factor and another 5,000 gallons. Pool staff must communicate daily with clubhouse staff to determine if draining is necessary. This is usually the case five out of seven nights.

An alternative to wading pools is the Parent-Tot Water Adjustment Program. This program is conducted in the large swimming pools, the children learn the same basics as in the wading pool activity but in this case, the child is accompanied by a parent for obvious safety reasons. This is a structured American Red Cross activity consisting of 10 one-half hour sessions which is taught and/or supervised by a certified water safety instructor. The total cost for child and parent is \$14.00.

Another concern is continued accessibility to water activities at little or no cost to economically disadvantaged families should the wading pools be closed. These families will have continued access to large pools through two department programs. "Summer in the City" provides free admission every Thursday to pool facilities throughout the summer. In June and July, a family of four can obtain free admission with the donation of one can of food or one recycling item respectively. On August Thursdays, pool hours are free and extended to 8:00 p.m. to accommodate working parents. The Department's Family Fun Coupons Program mails discount coupons quarterly to 38,000 AFDC families. The coupons mailed with July 1 checks will include free swimming for a family of four and discounted swimming lessons.

#### FINANCIAL DATA

Closure of the wading pools will result in a \$30,000 budget reduction.

#### POLICY MATTERS

The concept of wading pools is outdated and inefficient given current drought conditions, fiscal constraints, and health and safety concerns. Services associated with city operated wading pools can be provided by portable wading pools at home and water safety/orientation classes at large public pools.

#### MBE/WBE

Not applicable.

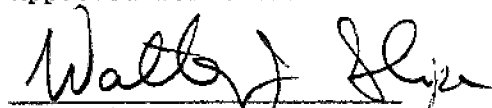
#### RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information only.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Robert P. Thomas, Director  
Parks and Community Services

Approved for Information:

  
Walter J. Slipe  
City Manager

June 19, 1991  
All Districts

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