



OCEAN BEACH FIRE PROGRAM

February 2017 Public Open House – Oral Presentation Outline

The National Park Service (NPS) hosted a public open house on February 16, 2017 at the Cliff House Terrace Room in San Francisco, CA. The public open house was an opportunity for the NPS to provide an update and opportunity for discussion on the program, to share information about the past burn season, and to highlight what visitors can look forward to in the upcoming season.

The open house featured staffed informational tables and an approximately 30-minute oral presentation given first at 5:00pm, and then repeated at 6:00pm. An outline of the points covered in the presentation is provided below:

Introduction

(Craig Kenkel, Acting General Superintendent)

- Hello and welcome from Craig Kenkel, Acting General Superintendent at Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA)
 - Craig Kenkel's background, history with NPS, and role at GGNRA
- Thank you for coming out on a weeknight to attend this Open House
- Thank you to the Cliff House for hosting us, they're a great park partner
- We have made a lot of progress since our last public meeting on this topic in September 2015
- We're here to host the first annual Open House for the Ocean Beach Fire Program.
 - For those of you who may be new to the program we'll give a bit of history and background on the program
 - We'll provide a brief overview of the elements that make up the fire program
 - We'll recap what we've seen so far this first year and during this first No Burn Season
 - And finally, we'll give you a preview of what you can expect to see in the 2017 Burn Season
- GGNRA is committed to a safe, manageable, and sustainable beach fire program
- Thank you to the stakeholders who've supported this program
 - Eric Mar, previous District 1 Supervisor
 - San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department
 - San Francisco Surfrider Chapter
 - Burners Without Borders

- All those who provided comments on the program proposal and Draft CE
- New District 1 Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer is here tonight as well, and we're looking forward to working with her to ensure the continued success of this program
- Agenda overview
 - This presentation will be followed by a half hour of staffed informational tables
 - The presentation will then be repeated at 6:00pm

Ocean Beach Fire Program Presentation

(Trevor Rice, Environmental Protection Specialist)

- Introduction to Trevor Rice, Environmental Protection Specialist in the park's Planning Division, who has been managing the planning process since late 2015.
- History and background on the Ocean Beach Fire Program
 - NPS-related History of Beach Fires at Ocean Beach
 - 1975 – NPS inherits longstanding San Francisco tradition of beach fires at Ocean Beach with the land transfer from City and County of San Francisco (CCSF)
 - Until the early 2000's fires continued essentially unregulated across the 3.5 miles of Ocean Beach
 - 2002 – Newly created CCSF Commission on the Environment passes resolution 001-02, which requests GGNRA "...create an effective system that reduces [beach fire] impacts."
 - During the following few years, GGNRA made some minor adjustments, but found they weren't appropriately addressing the impacts from beach fires.
 - 2005 – NPS proposed banning fires altogether on Ocean Beach
 - 2006 – NPS receives more than 3,000 individual comments, largely in opposition to the proposed ban of fires on Ocean Beach
 - NPS was able to take the feedback to heart, and recognized this is a beloved activity
 - 2007 – Worked with Burners Without Borders and the local Surfrider chapter to institute a one-year Pilot that:
 - limited fires to newly installed fire rings between stairwells 15-20, and
 - capped group size at 25 people per fire ring
 - This Pilot was extended for a few years, and was initially successful, but slowly conditions began to deteriorate and impacts continued to be an issue
 - 2014 – NPS institutes a Revised Pilot Program with 12 fire rings, 9:00pm curfew, and prohibition of fires on summer and winter Spare the Air days
 - 2015 – February public meeting (hosted at Cliff House): NPS provided a summary on the Revised Pilot Program and discussed potential next steps

- At this point in the history, we make the transition from previous pilots into the current Ocean Beach Fire Program
- History and planning background for the current Ocean Beach Fire Program
 - Internally discussed feedback from the 2014 Revised Pilot Program, and options for how to address the remaining concerns
 - NPS hosted a Public Meeting at the County Fair Building on September 24, 2015
 - Proposal (Draft CE) released - October 22, 2015
 - 44-day comment period
 - Over 500 comments received
 - NPS reviewed and analyzed feedback
 - Made changes to the proposal
 - Final Program signed & released - February 19, 2016
 - Compendium Effective Date (Implementation began) - April 4, 2016
 - Stakeholder Workshop held to discuss signs and liaison program - July 13, 2016
 - First No-Burn Season began - November 1, 2016
 - Today: First Annual Public Open House - February 16, 2017
- Current Program
 - Proud of how we've been able to incorporate the feedback we received from the public during the review and comment period into the final program
 - Program is made up of 12 Elements
 - All elements are important to the success of the program and they rely on each other to ensure we have a sustainable program
 - 1. Permit System
 - Initial proposal would have required a permit for every beach fire
 - Majority of public comment was against permits, and further NPS investigation into feasibility resulted in a removal of general permit requirement from the program
 - Special Use Permits (SUP) are still required for groups of 25 people or larger
 - 2. Burn Season
 - Major component of the program
 - Burn Season lasts from March 1st – October 31st (8 months)
 - No-Burn Season means there are no fires allowed on Ocean Beach from November 1st through the end of February
 - The No-Burn Season matches the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) Winter Spare the Air season, and also is when public demand for beach fires is lowest
 - 3. Partnership with San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (SFRPD)

- Continued from 2014 Revised Pilot Program, SFRPD will provide support for outreach & education
- SFRPD will also provide additional maintenance support, primarily in the form of trash removal
- 4. Replace Fire Rings
 - Added four rings (from 12 to 16 total), an increase of one third
 - Testing new designs which will be stenciled with the program rules right on the rings themselves
- 5. Replace Signage
 - Replace existing complex messaging with simpler designs
 - Add on-the-beach signs immediately adjacent to the fire rings
- 6. Enforcement
 - No program can be successful without enforcement
 - Majority of public comment requested stricter enforcement
 - Program rules and regulations are enforced jointly by NPS Visitor and Resource Protection Rangers and United States Park Police (USPP)
 - During the initial implementation period, and during seasonal program changes (i.e. transition from Burn Season to No-Burn Season), Rangers and USPP Officers employ a strategy of education periods followed by stricter enforcement
- 7. Public Outreach and Education
 - Enforcement alone can't be successful
 - Cornerstone of outreach and education element is the Beach Fire Liaison Program, which leverages NPS staff and volunteers to spread the word on how to have a responsible beach fire
- 8. Curfew Time
 - 9:30 pm (previously 9:00pm) for beach fires
 - Later curfew provides almost a full hour of after-sunset burn time even on the longest days
- 9. Summer Spare the Air Days
 - Continued from Revised Pilot Program
 - Fires are banned during summer Spare the Air days to support air quality
- 10. Revised Data Collection and Monitoring
 - Periodic, sample-based monitoring modified from methods used during the 2014 Revised Pilot Program
- 11. Ongoing Program Evaluation
 - Evaluate the program internally

- Includes what is occurring at this Open House, NPS will continue to share information with the public on an annual basis during the No-Burn Season
 - 12. Age Requirement
 - “Responsible leader” age for supervision of minors dropped from 21 to 18
- What we’ve seen so far in the first year of the Program (since April 2016)
 - Burn Season
 - Began in April: added the additional fire rings, and moved to the later curfew
 - NPS convened a stakeholder workshop in July, and invited Supervisor Mar, SFRPD, Surfrider, Burners Without Borders, Parks Conservancy, and NPS staff across divisions (Law Enforcement, Maintenance, Outreach, Volunteer Management) to brainstorm how to implement new signage and the Beach Fire Liaison Program
 - Beach Fire Liaison Program presence on the beach began in late fall
 - So far, we have found that visitors have been enjoying the additional fire rings and later curfew
 - Continued to see regular fire program issues and concerns
 - Alcohol & Glass
 - Large amounts trash, debris, and hazardous materials, especially on good-weather weekends
 - Fires outside of fire rings, even with the increase from 12 to 16 rings
 - Non-compliance with the curfew, even with the additional half-hour
 - NPS will continue to monitor progress on those issues and concerns in the upcoming burn seasons
 - First No-Burn Season
 - Began prior to November with lots of outreach to the public, including:
 - Email, web updates, press release, press event, and social media reminders
 - Ensured visitors weren’t surprised by the change
 - Removed fire rings from the beach and changed the signs on Nov. 1
 - A comprehensive cleaning of the beach occurred in November following the removal of fire rings, and will occur again at end of February before the new rings are installed
 - No-Burn Season will last until the end of February
 - Initial observations are that the No-Burn Season has been extremely successful in reducing operational demands of the program
 - Maintenance crews have found significantly less trash in and around the cans, and less litter on the beach

- Allowed redistribution of resources to focus on other needs such as graffiti abatement
 - Still have seen some illegal fires on the beach
 - We didn't expect 100% compliance, and acknowledge that there will always be a need for enforcement
 - Important to note that the number of illegal fires on the beach during the No-Burn Season has been trending downward, but realize some of that may potentially be attributed to the poor weather
- What to expect in the upcoming 2017 Burn Season
 - New Signs
 - New, simpler design, focusing on iconography rather than heavy amounts of text will be installed at each stairwell
 - New on-the-beach signs featuring an artistic symbolized flame topper
 - Signs were developed with input from public comments and stakeholders
 - New Fire Rings
 - Stenciled with rules right on the fire rings to help avoid confusion
 - New design which should be longer lasting
 - Continuation of Beach Fire Liaison Program and other outreach
 - NPS Interpretive Ranger, Marcus Combs, with volunteers and interns will be stationed on the beach during prime burning days and times with cards and information to help spread the word about how to have a responsible fire.
 - We need your help to make this program a success, please go speak with Marcus to learn about how to get involved