



Frequently Asked Questions about the pending **CLOSURE** of Gibson Ranch

1. Why is Gibson Ranch closing?

Gibson Ranch began a closing process beginning the first of October, 2009 as a compromise to closing the park entirely due to the severe budget challenges of Sacramento County. The crisis is far from over however. The 2010 & 2011 county budget and state budget look as threatening as last year's due to a number of factors including the national and worldwide recession. And even though Gibson Ranch has been partially spared a complete closure in the past, the future looks bleak as it is again set for the axe in July. The county must reassess its budget every January so it is imperative that we find new ways to fund the park on a consistent basis rather than rely on the fluctuating budget from the county. Sacramento County's charter and the extremely loose provisions apparently protecting the county's union employees above the needs of the taxpayers and community members are also making it impossible to pursue ordinary and common remedies. These remedies could be put into place in only a few days if the county and the union bargaining unit would allow it.

2. What will happen to Gibson Ranch if it closes?

The park is maintained by a department within Sacramento county called: Sacramento County Regional Parks. They are responsible for making sure the grounds, facilities and equipment are well kept and maintained. If Sacramento County Regional Parks no longer has funds to keep the park open then the land could revert to County Asset Management Department. Then, holding onto the land until there are more funds to give it back to Parks & Recreation is one option. But no one can say for certain what will happen to the land if the park closes.

3. Is there a land developer waiting to get its hands on this park for future development?

Most frequently asked question. The answer for now is NO. There is no evidence to prove that correct. In fact the park is an asset for developers in the area to attract new residents to the area. Unfortunately parks are seen as a "quality" of life, and not as a necessity. Therefore parks like this one are generally considered the first to close when considering severe budget cuts. However, because of the long-term failure of regional parks to maintain assets and successful day-to-day activities at Gibson, one now wonders whether the property may well be on the "chopping block" should the economy get much worse.

4. Who makes the decision of whether or not Gibson Ranch closes?

Sacramento County Regional Parks makes the first recommendation based on their budget predictions. The Regional Parks Director can only work with the money provided by the County Board of Supervisors from the county's general fund. At this time all five supervisors must ultimately make the grave decision. People can check out information about the county at www.saccounty.net <<http://www.saccounty.net/>>.

5. Who would be to blame for making this decision to close Gibson Ranch?

We would hope that none of our elected representatives from the county want to see Gibson Ranch close, even partially, however they will continue the daunting task of deciding where further cuts may have to be made immediately and certainly throughout 2010 & 2011. In the end, all of us may have to shoulder the blame of neglect. This is why reacquainting community members with this treasured asset is so important.

6. What other parks are up for consideration?

The county owns 14,000 acres of land. Some of it is undeveloped land that runs along I-5, other parks include but are not limited to: Discovery Park,

American River Parkway, and the Dry Creek Parkway, etc. Only parks that are run regionally are up for consideration. Local parks are run by each city or county and State Parks are run by the state. Basically, those regional parks that are able to fund the cost of maintaining themselves rather than drawing money away from the county have a better chance of making it through tough budget times.

7. How much money are we talking about here?

At this time it is difficult to say exactly how much is really needed to maintain Gibson Ranch. There are people within our community working on getting a clearer breakdown of the costs for just Gibson Ranch and examining alternative methods of funding and maintaining Gibson Ranch. But it is clear that there are numerous alternatives that would be closer to "real world" budgeting. The county's system has become more than bloated over the years and this has led us to where we are today... between a rock and a hard place. We need to explore some creative thinking to take us forward in a more fiduciary manner.

8. Don't my tax dollars go directly to the county?

Not necessarily, the money paid by tax payers goes to a lot of different things. Unfortunately, due to the growing number of areas within the county that have become a city in recent years (i.e. Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, etc.) we no longer get a percentage of funds from those areas to maintain our county parks. It might sound strange to you, but each city is not required to pay money towards county parks. So the pie we're working with to fund our park grows smaller and smaller.

9. How could this have happened?

The inattention of the taxpayer has allowed the county and specifically Regional Parks to become lazy with the people's assets. It is time that taxpayers and community members pay attention to the people who have responsibility for their tax dollars. After all... why have a park if you can't have it open for the community to use?

10. What can I do to help... NOW?

• **First pay attention!!!** One of the options being considered by the County Board of Supervisors is a partnership or a "realignment" of the responsibility for maintaining Gibson Ranch. The local Rio Linda/Elverta Park District could "save the day" by agreeing to "take over" the operation of the park, either temporarily or permanently. This decision is ultimately up to the locally-elected park board members and the local Parks Director. To date, they have not felt comfortable with the operating reference offered by the county.

• **Second, write letters** to your Representatives. Supervisors **Roger Dickinson, Roberta MacGlashan, Jimmie Yee, Don Nottoli, and Susan Peters.** All letters can be individually sent to 700 H Street, Suite 2450, Sacramento, CA 95814. This way the Board of Supervisors can see how many people are in favor of supporting the Rio Linda/Elverta Parks District solution to keeping Gibson Ranch open.

If you own a business and would like know how you can help, please contact Keith Weber at (916) 764-6054 for some win-win promotions for Gibson Ranch.

• Keep checking for updates at www.CommerceAndCommunity.com. And thank you, thank you, for any and all support!!! It is vital that we keep this park open for the enjoyment of our residents and for generations to come.

Points of Contact for Volunteers & Supporters
Voice Mail: 725-5652 • Email: keith@usaprintshops.com

www.CommerceAndCommunity.com
and **www.rlechamber.org**