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Fwd: Council File 12-0899-S - Park Rangers

1 message

Debra George <debraleegeorge@gmail.com>
To: adam.lid@lacity.org

Mon, Oct 7, 2013 at 7:21 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Chris Trent <christ8620@aol.com>
To: tom.labonge <tom.labonge@lacity.org>; rebecca.valdez <rebecca.valdez@lacity.org>; paul.koretz <paul.koretz@lacity.org>; councilmember.martinez <councilmember.martinez@lacity.org>
Subject: Council File 12-0899-S - Park Rangers

October 5th, 2013

Council File 12-0899-S1
Re: Park Rangers,

Dear Committee and Council members,

I am writing in hopes of addressing a serious need for an increase in Park Rangers, and specifically, at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve. As a naturalist and photographer I have truly been lucky to witness and photograph the vast array of wildlife that frequents this area, particularly the many species of migratory birds. This is one of the very best areas to witness these animals and one of the very few places left in Los Angeles to support the animals' migration and for the people of Los Angeles to have the opportunity to view them.

That's the way it's supposed to work. Over the last year, I have witnessed lewd behavior, illegal fishing, epic trash dumping, cars being driven illegally over protected areas, human defecation, pit bulls let loose to attack the shorebirds and various other types of illegal and illicit behavior (all of which I have captured in photos, should anyone want hard documentation). The police have been notified on specific occurrences of these events, but usually the time it takes for a response (if there is one) is longer than any of these events actually take place, so little is done. I have several photographer and nature enthusiasts that refuse to go there because they've either encountered these problems personally or have been told by friends of these issues. Being scared (of either physical harm or scared of what you might see) to go to a wildlife reserve is NOT how it's supposed to work. There are MANY signs posted restricting these activities, but I've come to realize that many of these individuals know that there is ABSOLUTELY NO ENFORCEMENT of these laws, so in practice, these signs are virtually meaningless. Many of these "thugs" have actually approached myself and photographer friends concerned that we might be "taking their picture while they're committing a crime", so it's been impossible even to just "ignore" what's going on. They even seek us out on occasion.

While having LAPD "at a phone call away" is great, it's only part of what's needed and not the best single solution in this case. In the last year of being at Sepulveda 2 or 3 days a week for 5-8 hours at a time, I have seen EXACTLY ZERO Park Rangers. I know from experience that parks and wildlife reserves that are regularly patrolled by Rangers have virtually NONE of this activity going on. Park Ranger patrols WORK. In this case, all it would take would be occasional shakedowns and random "walk throughs" by a Ranger or two and things would change drastically. I know from experience seeing it happen elsewhere. Fear of enforcement and a showing of authority onsite works, always.

So I ask you, as a user and proponent of these unique areas to keep them safe and functioning properly for the animals and for the lucky people that get to experience them. Please find a way to increase Park Ranger patrols at Sepulveda, and elsewhere as these problems exist everywhere there is lack of authority on site.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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