

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

FROM: Dennis Shaffer, Executive Officer

DATE: November 1, 2022

SUBJECT: OC Parks Proposed Fee Schedule Update

On April 21, 1987, the County of Orange (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted Resolution No. 87-516, which required landowners and developers to offer archaeological and paleontological materials of interest that were discovered in conjunction with development permits to the County to promote the materials' scientific study and to display those materials for the education and enjoyment of the public.

As such, and to date, the County has collected more than six million artifacts, fossils, and associated documentation, referred to as the County of Orange Paleontology and Archaeology Collection (COPA Collection). The paleontology collection includes County fossils dating as far back as the Jurassic Period, over 145 million years ago, and the archaeology collection represents the largest assemblage of archaeological materials relating to the peopling of the County with accompanying notes, maps, and photos. The County has the responsibility, under federal and state laws and within its own resolutions, to care for and preserve the COPA Collection for current and future generations. OC Community Resources/OC Parks (OCCR/OC Parks) operates and manages the County's John D. Cooper Archaeological and Paleontological Center (Cooper Center) which has housed the COPA Collection since the 1970s.

On August 20, 2013, the Board approved and adopted the current OC Parks Fee Schedule (Fee Schedule), via Resolution No. 13-084. Since the adoption of the current Fee Schedule, OCCR/OC Parks has evaluated its Fee Schedule and desires to incorporate a new accession fee. An accession fee is a common industry-accepted fee charged by an institution at the time of acceptance of materials into its collection. This fee is designed to offset costs associated with the long-term storage and curation of archaeological and paleontological materials.

The proposed new accession fee under the revised Fee Schedule will offset costs incurred by OCCR/OC Parks in storing accepted materials in conditions that help preserve the materials in perpetuity. For example, the fee would offset costs incurred to purchase specialized storage equipment, maintain buildings, pay utilities, and pay staff costs for curating accepted materials. Curating these materials include staff verifying the locality, taxonomic and class-identifying information about the fossil or artifact, tagging and placing it in archival housings and cataloguing it in a national database to allow researchers to know what materials are available for study within the COPA Collection. Materials are then stored within OC Parks' facilities, such as the Cooper Center, or placed on public display, such as at the Clark Regional Park Interpretive Center, or loaned to other museums and institutions. This accession fee would assist in ensuring that the

materials offered to the County will be properly stored, managed and curated in a way that preserves their scientific, historical and cultural value.

OCCR/OC Parks is proposing the adoption of an updated Fee Schedule that includes one revision to add an accession fee of \$2,657.05 per 1.3 cubic foot of archaeological and paleontological material. The one-time fee is collected at the time of transfer of materials into the collection. OC Parks staff currently estimates a yearly intake of approximately 130 cubic feet of material.

In August 2022, Auditor-Controller's Cost, Revenue and Budget Unit completed a fee study review and found the proposed new fee of \$2,657.05 per 1.3 cubic foot to be reasonable and in line with the industry. The fee study consisted of two parts: 1) an estimate of the actual costs incurred by the County for keeping the collection and 2) a survey of fees charged by similar institutions. The proposed fee is consistent with other institutions throughout the State and is considered industry standard practice. The proposed fee is comparable to the San Bernardino County Museum's accession fee of \$2,575 per cubic foot, which was a result of a fee study they conducted in Fiscal Year 2017–2018.

The fee will ensure that the County can continue to accept materials into the COPA Collection and support ongoing stewardship and mitigation efforts. The COPA Collection is a treasured County resource, and the new fee will ensure that OCCR/OC Parks can sustainably curate, share and display archaeological and paleontological materials for current and future generations to enjoy.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed revised OC Parks Fee Schedule.

Dennis Shaffer

ATTACHMENT(S):

Attachment A – OC Parks Proposed Fee Schedule (redlined)