

Deputies can eject violators

County toughens park use regs

By TOM MORTON - Star-Tribune staff writer | Posted: Monday, April 26, 2010



A fisherman casts his line in the North Platte River just below the Grey Reef Dam on Saturday morning. Natrona County commissioners last week approved more stringent regulations on recreators that break rules in the county parks. (Kerry Huller/Star-Tribune)

Natrona County isn't playing around with bad behavior in its parks.

Until now, someone making too much noise or committing some other violation would receive a citation from a sheriff's deputy, appear in county court and pay a maximum \$100 fine if found guilty.

But that not only took too long, it didn't fix the problem at hand, Margaret Teevens of the parks department told county commissioners Tuesday.

So commissioners approved the department's proposed revisions to the 2005 rules and regulations that now allow deputies or other authorities to eject recreators behaving badly, and their vehicles, from that park immediately for up to six months, Teevens said.

The revised regulations also give county commissioners the authority to ban repeat offenders for even longer, she said.

"We're trying to make it fair for everyone," Teevens said.

Most of the revisions toughen park regulations.

The revisions, found at the county's website, include minor wording changes to the 2005 rules, the imposition of payment requirements for renting shelters and other facilities, limitations on the use of motorized personal vehicles, rules governing unattended property and other small changes.

Some of the major changes add teeth to the rules, such as charging \$100 an hour for the use of county equipment to extract a vehicle stuck off the road on Casper Mountain and in county parks, Teevens said.

Others arose from reckless behavior, such as videos posted on YouTube showing people jumping from the walls of Fremont Canyon, she said. The new rules ban bungee jumping and launching rope swings from bridges and rock faces.

The rules also ban skateboarding, bicycling, rollerblading and placing ramps at docks.

The revisions target those who want to claim a camping site as their own to the detriment of others, Teevens said.

Camping is permitted for a maximum of 10 days in any 30-day period, and camping equipment cannot be left unattended for more than 24 hours, she said.

The county also has taken a hard line against fireworks and making fires outside designated areas.

The new rules prohibit people from discarding lighted matches, tobacco products, paper and other flammable materials in the parks.

Specifically, the rules ban all smoking at Crimson Dawn on Casper Mountain because the trails are lined with wood chips, Teevens said.

Concerns about flammable material also extend to new rules about the slash pile area at Tower Hill Park, especially prohibiting dumping trash other than waste timber products on the pile.

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For more information

Log on to www.natrona.net and follow the links to the Road, Bridge and Parks Department.