



Conejo Recreation & Park District

GENERAL MANAGER
Jim Friedl

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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DATE: November 5, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Friedl, General Manager

SUBJECT: Thousand Oaks Rotary Club Chili Cook-Off and Craft Brew Festival – 2027
Annual Agreement and Permit Conditions, Conejo Creek Park

RECOMMENDATION

1. Determine that the Thousand Oaks Rotary Club Chili Cook-Off and Craft Brew Festival (CHILI COOK-OFF) for 2027 is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
2. Authorize the General Manager to execute the CHILI COOK-OFF Agreement for 2027.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

For the Board consideration and approval, District staff believes the event qualifies for a Class 23 Categorical Exemption, pursuant to Section 15323 of the CEQA Guidelines. Class 23 exemptions include normal operations of existing facilities for public gatherings for which the facilities were designed, where there is a past history of the facility being used for the same or similar kind of purpose. In this instance, the facilities at the Conejo Creek Complex, specifically the event at Conejo Creek North and parking at Conejo Creek South, were designed to hold large scale community-wide events and parking for such events.

The facilities have been used in various combinations, including all of them together, to support similar size events (historical data gathered from Placer.ai [visitation software]), newspaper reports, self-reporting, and staff estimates - see the following Historical Large Event Visitation Table which includes Conejo Valley Days, Chili Cook-off, Persian New Year, Arbor Earth Day, Bark in the Park, and Wild Oaks / OAKHEART Country Music Festival. CHILI COOK-OFF, as proposed, fits within the scope and scale of these traditional and annual large-scale community events.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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HISTORICAL LARGE EVENT VISITATION

Event	2025*	2024*	2023*	2022*	Pre-2020
Conejo Valley Days (10 days)	29.4K	35.2K	41.1K	60.5K	10-72.6K
Chili Cook-Off	10K	12K	10K	12.2K	5-7K
Persian New Year	3K	n/a	6.8K	4.8K	8-10K
Arbor Earth Day	2.8K	2.9K	n/a	n/a	5K
Bark in the Park	2.8K	3.9K	4.2K	4.1K	3K
Wild Oaks / Oakheart Country Music Festival	d/o	d/o	9.6K	d/o	8-12K

**Data provided by Placer.ai*

n/a denotes no data available for that year

d/o denotes the event did not occur that year

Thus, based on the foregoing, staff finds and recommends the board determine that the CHILI COOK-OFF is a usual community event and that there are no “unusual circumstances” presented by the event as proposed which would affect the determination that CHILI COOK-OFF qualifies for a categorical exemption.

DISCUSSION

In an effort to balance the potential impact to the significant landscaping and capital improvements to the park site with the overall community benefit of the CHILI COOK-OFF, and balancing resident input with CHILI COOK-OFF requests, staff has communicated with CHILI COOK-OFF representatives to discuss the Annual Agreement and Permit Conditions for the 2027 CHILI COOK-OFF (Exhibit 1). The goal of the discussions was to provide a venue at a reasonable fee while minimizing damage and downtime at the site.

The attached 2027 CHILI COOK-OFF Agreement and Permit Conditions are substantially similar to the previous years’ agreements. Highlights from the 2027 CHILI COOK-OFF Agreement and Permit Conditions include:

- Event to be conducted at Conejo Creek North on Sunday, May 2, 2027, and open to the public from 11:00am to 5:00pm.
- Additional parking will be available at Conejo Creek South.
- Payment to the District is a total of \$4,775 as follows:
 - \$450 per day at Conejo Creek North (one day/non-exclusive) for initial set-up and preparation the day before the event,
 - \$3,200 per day at Conejo Creek North (one day),
 - \$825 per day for parking at Conejo Creek South (one day),
 - \$300 per day for use of the Sage Room at the Goebel Adult Community Center (one day).

Staff recommends executing the 2027 CHILI COOK-OFF Agreement as the community derives a benefit from this well-run and organized event; in past years, the event has generated over \$100,000 for various Rotary charities.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPLIANCE

Meets 2026 Strategic Plan Goal 4.6: Build, maintain, and support relationships with local organizations engaged in activities consistent with the District's mission. Look for collaborative opportunities to expand services and fill unmet needs.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "ALJ 11/2", is positioned above the printed name.

Andrew J. Mooney, Director
Parks & Planning