

City of Crystal River officials announce enforcement of user fees

User fee enforcement for parking & boat launching at City parks set to begin on March 4

Crystal River, FL – The City of Crystal River rolled out a plan for user fees at two popular City parks and two City owned boat ramps in December of 2015, but allowed residents and visitors a three month grace period before they enforced violations. Enforcement of parking fees begins on March 4. Guests of Hunter Springs Park and Kings Bay Park will pay for parking, while boat owners using the Pete's Pier or NW 3rd Ave boat ramps will pay for use of the launch.

City officials have been contemplating how to best recoup revenue from users of these four City maintained facilities since 2014. Many City residents have complained of visitors utilizing City parks at the expense of City exclusively. Then after surveying users at these facilities it was found that less than 30% of users were city residents. The remaining 70% of users are primarily of out of town tourists and Citrus County residents outside of City limits. These user fees are to limit the financial burden of City Tax Payers and move some of the costs to people living outside Crystal River.

Maintenance, upkeep and patrols of City owned parks and boat ramps are solely funded by City taxes. The City has two free parking lots located at the corner NE 3rd St/NE1st Ave and NE 1st Ave/NE 5th Street that are within a 3 block walk of Hunter Springs and Kings Bay Park.

Parking rates at Kings Bay Park and Hunter Springs Park are \$1.00 for each of hours or guests can park all day for \$5.00. Kings Bay Park allows kayak trailer parking up to 8feet in length for \$7.50 a day. Enforcement will take place during park hours of operation, sun-up to sundown. Boat ramp launch charges are \$5.00 per boat at Pete's Pier and \$7.50 per boat at NW 3rd Ave.

The grant funding avenues that were used to purchase or modify city parks prevent the City from offering a City resident or Citrus County resident discount. However, the City is offering non-commercial and a commercial annual passes which offer unlimited access to all four facilities and their amenities. These passes are per vehicle and are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase. Non-commercial annual passes are available for \$50.00 which equates to less than \$1.00 per week. Commercial businesses that use any of these city locations for operational use, such as kayaks, canoes and paddleboards, can purchase an annual permit for \$100.00 per commercial vehicle.

Parking violations range from \$25.00 to \$30.00 for most violations and are based on Chapter 15 Sec.15-44 Violation and Fine Schedule in City code. Non-commercial annual passes and commercial passes can be purchased at City Hall located at 123 NW US Highway 19. Visit the City website at www.crystalriverfl.org or call 352-795-4216 for further information.