

## **Soda Lakes Ski School, Marina and Concession Operations**

### **Project Summary**

#### **Project Background**

The concessionaire agreement for the operation of the Soda Lakes Ski School and Marina expires at the conclusion of the 2018 season upon the retirement of the current operator. The City of Lakewood issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new operator for an initial five-year term.

Currently, Little Soda Lake operates as a waterski school. The marina, located on Big Soda Lake, offers non-motorized boat rentals including paddleboats, paddle boards, canoes and kayaks. Demand for services at Big Soda Lake is at an all-time high; the marina operation is one of the busiest in Lakewood's recreational portfolio and overall, demand for water activities has increased dramatically in the last few years. Over the last five year time frame, Bear Creek Lake Park (BCLP) usage has increased by close to 100,000 and almost all of that increase is attributable to the demand for waterfront activities.

In the RFP, the City stipulated that services shall include the operation of Little Soda Lake as a public use waterski facility to include instruction for waterskiing, wakeboarding and similar activities. It also stipulated that the operation include open and reservation slots for waterski time, that the concessionaire furnish equipment for water skiing for people of all levels, from beginner to expert, that the water ski school be open seven days per week, mid-May through mid-September.

In the RFP, the City also stipulated that the concessionaire operate the Big Soda Lake Swim Beach concession stand to include sales of food, snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

Finally, the RFP addressed the Big Soda Lake Marina operation, which may include sailing, canoeing, standup paddle boarding and similar water sport classes on Big Soda Lake. It also requires the concessionaire to provide a minimum inventory of rental equipment including 8 paddleboats, 8 canoes/kayaks and 40 standup paddleboards.

#### **Future Plans**

The City has selected Rocky Mountain Paddleboard as the concessionaire for the Little Soda Lake waterski school, Swim Beach concession stand and Big Soda Lake Marina operation. Rocky Mountain Paddleboard has extensive experience in managing busy, non-motorized boat rental facilities and is an area leader in the type of programming desired at Big Soda Lake and in demand by Lakewood residents. Rocky Mountain Paddleboard has committed to hiring experienced managers and employees to oversee the waterski facility and to ensure that ski

operations remain strong. The company is hopeful that a number of existing ski school employees will remain with the operation. As is the case with all City agreements, this one will be reviewed annually for performance, compliance and overall fit for the community's needs.

The City is excited to bring Rocky Mountain Paddleboard into the operational team at Bear Creek Lake Park and to work collaboratively with them to make the most efficient use of the space at both Big and Little Soda Lakes. As the City is experiencing growing demands across the system, we are striving to strike the appropriate balance in meeting the expressed recreational priorities of Lakewood residents. During this initial five-year term, City staff will work closely with park users and Rocky Mountain Paddleboard staff to assess the use of all waterfront activities and make determinations about future shifts in time allotments for varying recreational pursuits.

### **Project Timeline**

Rocky Mountain Paddleboard will begin operating the Little Soda Lake ski school, Swim Beach concession stand and Big Soda Lake Marina operation in time for the 2019 season to commence.

Stay up to date at [Lakewood.org/BCLP](http://Lakewood.org/BCLP) and call 303-697-6159 for more information.