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City Park Association Agrees To New Golf Course

State Budget Cuts Force Park To Find New Funding

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NEW ORLEANS -- Golf is a tradition that's been part of City Park for more than 80 years. The sport raises revenue for the park -- more than \$6 million a year -- but now the governor is looking to cut a chunk of the park's funding.

That's left park administrators scrambling to find a way to make more money, and the City Park Improvement Association agreed Tuesday to add another golf course to the park.

"He (Gov. Bobby Jindal) is recommending our state funding be cut almost 60 percent," said City Park manager Bob Becker. "So that is a huge loss for the park if it goes through, and if it goes through ... that tells all of us -- do more to raise revenue yourself."

The state funding could be reduced from \$2.5 million to \$1 million, and it's one of the reasons the CPIA wanted to add a new 18-hole golf course where the old east golf course used to be.

Kenneth Saari, who enjoys the park, likes the idea.

"In the future, the money that will be brought in by utilization by golfers of the park will enable further projects to take place that will enhance the park," Saari said.

The new golf course would cost about \$24 million and would be the first phase of the parks' plan to add more golf courses.

Phase 2 would expand the new 18-hole golf course and add a new nine-hole golf course. Opponents of the plan say it will reduce the park's green space used for fishing and various other activities. But park administrators say only 32 percent of the park's roughly 13,000 acres would be golf course space.

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"We understand that sentiment," Becker said. "These were golf courses. These are historic golf courses. It's not like they were not and we were converting some area of the park to golf. They've always been golf courses out there."

Funding for Phase 1 of the plan would be completed in 2011 or 2012 and the funding would come from FEMA, state funding and a partner, if the park administrators can find one.

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