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PARKS AND RECREATION

Sarasota County hires Benderson Park officer for new role

Nicole Rissler will start new county job on May 2

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Published: Monday, April 4, 2016 at 3:09 p.m.

A former director of sports for Visit Sarasota County and the current chief operating officer for the nonprofit that operates the county-owned Nathan Benderson Park sports venue has been hired by county government as deputy director of operations for Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources.



Nicole Rissler HERALD-TRIBUNE ARCHIVE

Nicole Rissler, the chief operating officer for the Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates, has been hired for a new role at the county overseeing several departments, including sports development and athletics; recreation and special events; natural area parks, preserves and trails; beaches and water access; and neighborhood parks and maintenance services. Rissler will report to Parks and Recreation and Natural Resources Director Carolyn Brown and is expected to start May 2.

"Nicole already has a great working relationship with the county and is very knowledgeable about how we operate from her experience with SANCA and Visit Sarasota County," Sarasota County Administrator Tom Harmer said in a statement. "We look forward to her joining the county's team and serving the community in this role."

Rissler has worked for Nathan Benderson Park since July, when she was hired as chief operating officer for the Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates. after three years working for Visit Sarasota County and the county sports commission. She made \$90,000 in her role at Nathan Benderson Park in 2016 and will make \$94,515 in her new role, a county spokesperson said Monday.

"My entire career has been about sports and recreation in some form or fashion," Rissler said Monday. "I have the expertise that lends itself to this kind of role."

Rissler has a bachelor's degree in sports and exercise science from Gettysburg College and earned her master's of business administration from Lynn University. She lives in Sarasota with her husband, Bob, a member of the Sarasota County Fire Department, and has two daughters, Taylor and Skylar. She has also worked for the Sarasota Family YMCA and the American Red Cross.

Though she will leave her position at Nathan Benderson Park, her new role will allow her to continue to work with the sports venue and park in some kind of oversight role, she said.

"We've done a lot of great things over the past year," Rissler said. "We've added staff

and important procedures and protocols. I think SANCA is in a really great place for the future. I will have an active role and interaction with them and the park.”

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