

NEWS

Nov. 15, 2022

For Immediate Release

County Launches Effort to Expand Parks Access

Supervisors vote to provide annual passes for residents with low incomes

Redwood City — The Board of Supervisors today voted to provide an annual County Parks pass to individuals and families with low incomes.

The 5-0 vote will ensure all residents regardless of means have access to all County Parks.

“Every resident of San Mateo County deserves the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful parks, no matter their income,” Board President Don Horsley said. “The benefits of parks and just being outdoors are well known. Time in nature is healing and contributes to overall health and well being.”

The move opens up all 16,000 acres of County Parks – a size greater than the cities of San Mateo and Daly City combined – to individuals and families who are eligible for certain economic self-sufficiency programs. These include CalFresh, health insurance coverage and similar programs.

While the county is home to expensive real estate and high-paying tech and other careers, fully one in five individuals, or more than 150,000 people, will be eligible for a free Parks annual pass under what is called the Mariposa Program. Supervisors said the unanimous vote comes as part of a larger package of actions to improve equitable access to all County programs and services.

“The true beneficiaries will be the young people who will be able to enjoy our parks that offer so many adventures and fun activities,” said Supervisor Carole Groom. “Our goal is to set them up for a lifetime of experiences in the outdoors.”

San Mateo County’s Human Services Agency will collaborate with County Parks to enroll those who meet the eligibility criteria for qualifying programs and desire a pass. Learn

more about economic self-sufficiency programs in San Mateo County at <https://www.smcgov.org/hsa/public-assistance-programs>

Also at today's meeting, the Board voted 5-0 to raise the cost of an annual pass to \$72 from \$60. The price hike – equivalent to two additional park visits per year (day parking fees are \$6 per vehicle) will help to offset the cost of the Mariposa Program as well as provide new funding for youth programs. The increased fee for a park pass would become effective January 2023.

The Board also voted to “streamline” its self-proclaimed “convoluted” camping fees at Memorial County Park and develop separate resident and nonresident rates.

Moving forward, tent camping will cost \$40 for residents (\$45 for nonresidents) while trailer camping will cost \$45 for residents (\$50 for nonresidents). New camping rates would apply to the 2023 season beginning in May 2023.

###

