

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Parks Department



DATE: March 30, 2017

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: April 6, 2017

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Sarah Birkeland, Acting Parks Director
SUBJECT: Director's Report

BUSINESS SERVICES

FY 2017-2019 Budget

Parks provided a five-year capital projects plan to the Board of Supervisors at its March 28 capital projects study session.

Parks is to receive \$2.2 million per fiscal year in Measure K funding for non-discretionary activities needed - hazard removal, trail and road maintenance, playground equipment maintenance and replacement, civil engineering contracts for the Memorial Park Water Treatment Plant replacement, and invasive plant treatment in high-priority areas - to keep county parks open, protect public safety and maintain environmental quality.

Parks is to receive \$3 million per fiscal year in new Measure K funding for parks capital projects. High priority projects are Pescadero Old Haul Road, Reimagine Flood Park, Green Valley Trail, Wunderlich Hay Barn, and the Huddart Park Water Supply System.

Parks also is to receive county general fund one-time funding of \$1.75 million toward the Memorial Park Wastewater and Potable Water System Replacement and the Crystal Springs Trail "Close the Gap" project.

Transfer of Capital Projects

Historically, the Department of Public Works (DPW) has been in charge of all capital improvement projects and received the funding for those projects on behalf of county departments, including parks. Starting in FY 2017-2018, all capital improvement projects, not needing DPW's Civil Engineering Division's expertise, will be transferred for management to respective departments.

Through this transfer, our department will get nineteen capital projects for management.

This will increase the work load for our fiscal unit in the areas of accounts payable, budget monitoring, contracts, asset depreciation, project monitoring and other accounting activities.

The Department's budget request for additional park rangers and a community program specialist was denied. The County Manager requested additional information justifying the need for an accountant and a plumber position before deciding.

Net County Cost

The department received additional net county costs adjustments from the County Manager's Office for increases in county departmental charges, such as facility rent, information technology, telephones, radio, human resources, general liability, county dispatch, vehicle fleet, and county security charges. In completing the budgets for each park and park district, we are finding that funding requests are exceeding the target set by the County Manager's Office for net county cost. We are looking closely at expenditures and revenues to effectively meet the net county cost target.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Stewardship Corps

Over the last two months, 126 volunteers, both adults and youth, including the Redwood City Sheriff's Activities League, Polaris Club's Adidas Strike Attack (girls' volleyball team), Boy Scout Troop 175 from Foster City, and Afero, participated in corps activities. Volunteers planted nearly 3100 plants during the winter. March activities focused on invasive plant removal from the planting sites.

New Student Conservation Association Intern

Through the department's agreement with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), Erik Schmielt, SCA Senior GIS Intern, began working with our team on March 6. Erik has already developed smartform application to facilitate easier data collection and storage.

Butterfly Monitoring

San Bruno Mountain mission blue butterfly monitoring began on March 28 and will continue through mid-May.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

At Coyote Point Recreation Area, College of San Mateo students did two volunteer activities to remove broom and other weeds, and two new play elements were installed at the Beach Group Area Playground.

At Edgewood Park and Nature Preserve, volunteers are monitoring several sites for Thornmint and counts are positive. Volunteers have also released Bay Checkerspot butterfly larvae in the wildflower meadow. Wildflowers are blooming and volunteers are leading wildflower walks.

At Huddart Park, 100-plus hazardous trees were removed or trimmed per arborist recommendations. Fuel reduction activities continue in the developed areas at the

center of the park. At Wunderlich Park, the final stage of the fuel reduction project along Highway 84 has been completed and restoration planting of native oak trees will occur next year. This was a collaborative project involving County Parks and County Fire Safe Committee, Woodside Fire, and Caltrans.

Through funding from the Crumb Clean Program grant, Memorial Park will have Naturalists on board this summer to help with educational efforts in support of protection for the Marbled murrelet, an endangered seabird that nests in the park.

Seal pupping season has started at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. Staff has been monitoring the population and closing beach area to the public while the animals are hauled out to rest.

Parks Maintenance Section constructed new work sheds at Memorial Park and the parks electrician finished installing all new LED lights at the San Pedro Valley Park shop and Visitor Center.

Maintenance and parks staff have been busy with cleanup after the winter rain and wind storms. The damage included fallen trees, flooding, and erosion. At Coyote Point Recreation Area, a slide eroded part of the cliff area below the Merchant Marine overlook – the area is being monitored. Flooding occurred at the Jepson Laurel site on the Crystal Springs Trail. Part of the Alambique Trail, Huddart Park, was lost due to landslide. Old Haul Road, Sam McDonald Park, failed due to a massive landslide. Picnic areas in Memorial Park were flooded and flooding affected the wastewater treatment plant. Quarry Park had a landslide at the junction of Middle Ridge Trail and the reservoir road requiring the area to be closed until cleanup could occur. Parallel but outside the Devil's Slide Trail, a significant crack appeared that is being monitored daily. At San Bruno Mountain, a collapsed culvert at the intersection of Old Guadalupe Trail and the Day Camp Fire Road caused a sinkhole that required closure of the trail and is being monitored.

PLANNING

Crystal Springs Regional Trail Interpretation Plan

Intern Ali Skapyak, a graduate student in Urban and Regional Planning at San Jose State, is developing an interpretation plan for the Crystal Springs Regional Trail. This project involves researching historic documents, using the Parks' Visitor Park Visitor Survey results, making site visits, and communicating with relevant resource contacts. The Final Interpretive Plan will identify opportunities for modes of communication to different audiences, and the most effective ways to convey information. This Plan has the potential to be used as a template for developing similar plans for other regional trails in San Mateo County. This project will be completed by May 2017.

Flood Park Landscape Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

A traffic impact study has been prepared, and a structural engineer is evaluating the stability of the adobe structures as part of a historic structures impact analysis. The draft EIR is anticipated to be released in April for a 45-day comment period.

McKesson Land Dedication - San Bruno Mountain

Seven parcels totaling 51.5 acres will be considered for dedication to the San Bruno Mountain State and County Park by the Board of Supervisors at its May 16 meeting.

Quarry Park Improvements and Master Plan

A Coastal Development Permit application for the removal and replacement of a tool shed for the community garden, new trail construction to a vista point off Dolphine Fire Road and new storage sheds will be considered at the Planning Commission's May 10, 2017 meeting.

Consultants are gathering information and reviewing background documents for the development of a Master Plan for the park. Public hearings for this planning are May 16, July 25 and October 3, 2017.

PROGRAMS

Interpretive Programs

On February 11, Park Rangers Finnegan, MacCurdy and Wright led 25 people on a nature hike identifying fungus and lichen at Wunderlich Park.

Park Ranger Wright led 15 people on a biographical history hike about Sam McDonald at Sam McDonald Park in honor of Black History Month on February 18th.

Nature Trail panels were installed at Junipero Serra Park along the Live Oak Nature Trail.

On March 4, *Breakfast at the Reserve Day* was attended by 75 visitors at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. This educational event focused on protecting the resident Pacific harbor seals, whose pupping season was.

Parks and sponsors California Academy of Sciences, the Sequoia Audubon Society, and the San Bruno City Library held a BioBlitz at Junipero Serra Park, Saturday, on March 25, attended by 45 people. The participants' observations identified 225 species at the park.

PROJECTS

Coyote Point Marina Dredging

PCBs have been found in the top layer of sediment. State and federal agencies are requiring additional water quality sampling to determine the location of where dredged spoils can be disposed. We received a report that a small area of eel grass, a popular habitat for fish, was seen in the east basin. A type of marine plant life was found in the area and samples were sent for testing. If this is eel grass, and the area is within 150 feet of the project boundary, additional measures will be taken to protect the area during the course of the project. The Board of Supervisors will consider putting the project out to bid at its April 25, 2017 meeting in order to complete dredging this summer.

VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dog Management Committee Receives Community Comments

The Dog Management Committee hosted a series of community meetings in February in South San Francisco, Belmont and Pacifica to inform residents about the Committee's work and its timeline. The meetings also provided the community an opportunity to share their thoughts on dogs in San Mateo County Parks and ask questions. Approximately, 70 people attended the meetings. In addition, more than 130 emails have been received through the Dog Management Committee email address. Community comments along with data that has been collected and presented to the Committee will be used as the committee begins to develop recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Park Shuttle Ridership Grows with Improved Weather

The combination of dry weather and Park Shuttle promotion efforts appear to be contributing factors for an increase in Park Shuttle use. During the month of February, 89 passengers used the Park Shuttle to reach Edgewood and Wunderlich Parks. The Department now offers a group scheduling service for the Park Shuttle that assists groups in planning their park outing using the shuttle. The services range from providing suggested hike routes to scheduling guided hikes or visitor center tours by park volunteers. When possible, we also work to accommodate large groups by scheduling a driver for the park passenger van or an additional shuttle vehicle.

New Community Programs Brochure Introduced

A new community program brochure was introduced in early March to reflect the many and growing opportunities provided by the department and intended to help connect more people with parks. The brochure lists volunteer, educational and community activities for an entire quarter and will be distributed at community events.

Career Days

Park Ranger Wright presented at career days for Hillsdale High School and Woodside High School reaching over 80 high school sophomore and juniors.