

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PARKS DEPARTMENT



DATE: June 6, 2019

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Peggy Jensen, Interim Parks Director  
**SUBJECT:** Parks Update: April 2019 – May 2019

## Highlights

During the months of April and May, the Parks Department hosted night hikes, field trips for preschool and kindergarteners, and Junior Ranger events. The Department, in collaboration with the Parks Foundation, County Health System and the San Mateo County Libraries hosted a ParkRx (prescription) event for 75 children and adults at Huddart Park. And the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and the Rangers at Fitzgerald planned and hosted a fantastic celebration for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reserve which was attended by over 500 guests.

Over the last two months, staff have prepared trails and camp sites for summer visitors. Trees have been trimmed, some have been removed and fuel reduction projects are being planned throughout the park system.

Coyote Point and Junipero Serra Rangers are preparing for the on-leash dog access pilots which will start in those parks June 15, 2019. Informational signs are being posted, dog waste bag stations are being installed, information/education cards for visitors are being printed and plans to close trails to dogs adjacent to the CuriOdyssey grounds are underway. At Junipero Serra, new fencing around the playgrounds will be installed in early June. Rangers have also been trained on the enforcement of the new dog ordinance and a kick-off event welcoming dogs to these two parks is being planned for Friday evening June 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 at Junipero Serra Park.

## Park Updates

### Coyote Point Marina

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: First Friday Social was held for all marina tenants at the Yacht Club on May 3. The marina office is now selling ice, bait, and snack foods. This will increase revenue and provide additional services to marina tenants.

Natural Resource Management: The California Invasive Plant Council is working with volunteers from CuriOdyssey to eradicate invasive *Limonium ramosissimum* (LIRA) in and around the marina. LIRA is a non-native species of Algerian sea lavender native to the Mediterranean. Field staff continue to eradicate fennel and ice plant on the jetty and center berm. Daily string cutting is occurring to minimize the spread and growth of weeds. A Park Aide rescued a stranded leopard shark from the mud flat east of the Yacht Club and returned it to deeper water. The Department has observed an increase in stranded and dead sharks and staff are documenting these sightings with the appropriate parties.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Five derelict vessels have been surrendered to the Department for appropriate disposal. These boats will be sold at auction or demolished. 100% of the costs associated with these efforts will be reimbursed through a Division of Boating and Waterways grant. A contract has been executed for services to construct a keyless entry system at Coyote Point Park to improve access for marina tenants outside of normal business hours. Construction will begin the week of May 27 and is expected to conclude by the end of July. Grant applications were submitted to the Division of Boating and Waterways for funds to refurbish or replace the 20-year-old Harbor Patrol Boat.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: Routine water patrols to ensure compliance with all safety regulations within the marina and in areas immediately adjacent to the marina are ongoing.

Staff Updates: The Marina has hired one park aide and is now fully staffed. The Marina is recruiting for Ranger II due to an internal transfer. Recruitment for a permanent Harbormaster has opened.

### Coyote Point Recreation Area

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects at Coyote Point Park: Hands on Bay Area, one of the Department's largest volunteer organizations, hosted a PG&E volunteer group of approximately 60 people. The Junior Ranger Kick-off event had 50 kids and their parents in attendance. Twenty-three people

volunteered for the two beach clean-up events held at Coyote Point Park. Over 390 volunteers participated in the Earth Day Beach Clean-up event.

Natural Resource Management: A large hazardous Eucalyptus tree was removed from the Eastern promenade by the Maintenance Unit. A tree contractor continued on-going management of Eucalyptus trees around the Captain's House and Bay Trail. Field staff continue to remove Fennel, Oxalis, and Bristly Ox Tongue along roads, trails and on islands at Coyote Point Park. In preparation for the on-leash dog pilot throughout Coyote Point, camera traps are being installed adjacent to CuriOydessy and field staff have done baseline data collection around sensitive habitat, species, and other environmental factors. This baseline data will be part of the pilot evaluation.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: San Mateo Fishing Pier fencing was vandalized to gain access. The fencing was repaired with assistance from the maintenance division.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: Training for Dog Ordinance Enforcement was held on May 8.

Staff Updates: Park Ranger IV Laurel Finnegan transferred to District I to replace retired Ranger Ty Kang.

Park and Park Office Closures: Beach Group picnic sites were closed for drain box installation to enhance drainage and reduce flooding.

### **Crystal Springs Trail/Sawyer Camp Trail/San Andreas Trail/South of Dam**

Natural Resource Management: Poison Oak was cut and treated along Sawyer Camp Trail. Sawyer Camp Trail was closed from April 14 to 19 for fire fuel reduction activities.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Contractors continued replacing security fencing along Sawyer Camp Trail. It is anticipated to be completed in early June. A blocked culvert on Crystal Springs Trail, which was flooding the trail and making it impassable for some users, was repaired. No flooding has occurred since it was repaired.

### **Devil's Slide**

Natural Resource Management: Excess Pride of Madeira, a flowering plant native to the island of Madeira, Portugal, was removed from the north end parking area.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff installed a solar powered panel and weatherproof storage box at the southern parking lot to store and charge the trail ambassador's radios and other equipment.

## **Edgewood Park and Nature Preserve**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: Night hikes were held on March 15 and April 19. Both hikes had approximately 20 people participate.

Natural Resource Management: Field staff brushed back poison oak from along the Sylvan, Baywood Glen and Edgewood trails. Coyote brush was cleared from the park entrance to improve vehicular visibility of Edgewood Road. The natural resources park aide supported efforts to string cut sensitive habitat in support of the bay checkerspot butterflies, a federally threatened species.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: Field staff contacted the California Highway Patrol and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office to request increased patrols along Edgewood Road due to an increase in vehicular traffic on the weekends.

## **Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and Pillar Point Bluffs**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: The 50-year anniversary celebration of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve was on Saturday, May 11, with approximately 500 people attending. The event included awards, a proclamation and speakers that talked about the Reserve and its history. It was a great success!

Natural Resource Management: To date, there are approximately 50 new born harbor seal pups within the reserve proper. The Maintenance Unit performed tree maintenance with the aerial bucket truck at the Reserve.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: The visitor center siding has been replaced to extend the life of the building. A security gate was installed at the front of the main ramp to the tide pools. It has helped to prevent unauthorized access before and after parks hour. The County arborist is working with District IV staff to identify appropriate measures to address potential tree safety concerns in the iconic Monterey Cypress Grove.

## **Flood Park**

Natural Resource Management: Mowing and string cutting is on-going throughout the park to manage the overgrowth of vegetation.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Wiring and conduits have been installed for security cameras at the park. Cameras will be installed at the corporation yard to observe the parking area in lot 1 and at the gatehouse for traffic entering and exiting the park.

## **Friendship Park**

Natural Resource Management: String cutting and weeding is on-going throughout the park to manage the overgrowth of vegetation.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvement: A shade structure was installed over one of the picnic tables in preparation for summer.

## **Huddart Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: 40 people attended a Wellness Hike on March 23 on the Dean and Crystal Springs trails. Peninsula Open Space Trust held a Family Day in the Redwood Picnic Area on March 30. Field staff led a hike for attendees along the Bay Tree Trail. Inside Trail Racing had a trail run on April 7 and approximately 250 runners participated. The ParkRx Community Nature Day was held at the Oak area on April 20 with field staff leading a hike along the Redwood Nature Trail for the event. Forty-five people attend a Bioblitz on April 27<sup>th</sup> and used a software application on their phone to identify flora and fauna in our parks.

Natural Resource Management: The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and CalFire conducted a fire fuel reduction project in the Toyon Group Camping area. Mowing and string cutting is ongoing throughout the park to manage the overgrowth of vegetation. Field staff removed a large fallen Madrone tree along the Dean Trail. Natural resource staff are working with CalFire to identify boundary markings on King's Mountain Road for the environmental review of the proposed shaded fuel breaks. This is part of Governor Newsome's executive order to expedite tree clearing and forest management work.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: A split-rail fence was repaired at the AIDS Memorial in the Madrone area. A water leak was repaired by field staff at the Archery Range parking area. Base rock was laid around restrooms at the Meadows to improve the condition of the service road. Field staff are filling pot holes throughout the park with asphalt patch in preparation for peak visitor season. The old plumbing shed at Huddart Park has been remodeled by the Maintenance Unit into four new offices. Siding was replaced, and a new roof was added. The interior drywall, was painted and laminate flooring was installed, and the office has been wired for internet.

Park and Park Office Closures: Bicycle Sunday was closed on March 10 due to rain, and on Easter Sunday, April 21, due to limited holiday staff.

## **Junipero Serra Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: On May 1, district staff had a conference call with Interim Parks Director, Peggy Jensen, regarding the recommended on-leash dog pilot program. Junipero Serra Park was one of the parks selected for the six-month pilot program that will begin June 15.

Natural Resource Management: In March and April, a tree service company pruned several heritage trees in the De Anza and Meadow picnic areas and parking lots. Because the Department arborist trained the crews on how to prune the trees correctly, work was done at no cost to the Department. On March 26, field staff cleared trees off the trails in Junipero Serra Park that were downed due to storms. On April 24, a tree service company removed four hazardous trees near the shop area, five pine trees adjacent to Terrace Drive in Millbrae, and trimmed a Cypress Tree in the same area. The trees were inspected by the parks Department arborist before removal. Natural resource staff have concluded baseline wildlife camera trapping in Junipero Serra County Park to support the Dog Working Group efforts to pilot dog recreation opportunities in our parks. Field staff have also implemented baseline data collection efforts concerning sensitive habitat, species, and other environmental factors.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: On April 4, a plumbing contractor replaced a section of 6" sewer line that was 90% blocked by tree roots. The work was completed within several hours. The project was paid for with Measure K funds. On May 3, contractors removed the swing set in the Meadow View Playground due to rusted posts. It was replaced with a new, regulatory compliant swing set. This project was also funded by Measure K.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: On April 20, a sinkhole was discovered on the main road before the Willow Shelter. A 36" culvert collapsed under the roadway causing the sinkhole to form. The sinkhole was approximately 5' wide and 3-4' deep in some areas. Due to safety concerns the roadway was closed and only the De Anza reservation area and drop-in areas remained open.

Staff Updates: On April 17, Rangers Priscilla Alvarez, Lisa Di Lorenzo, and Blake Marsh attended the in-house Dog Ordinance Enforcement training at Coyote Point Park. On May 8, Rangers Iuliu Cepeha and Danny Healy attended the in-house Dog Ordinance Enforcement training at San Pedro Valley Park.

Park and Park Office Closures: On April 22, reservation sites were closed due to the sinkhole (Bay View Shelter, Willow Shelter and Buckeye). The trails remain open for hiking.

## **Memorial Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: The volunteer trail crew from the Trail Center worked on the Mount Ellen and Pomponio Canyon Trails on Saturday, April 11. Camping season kicked off on Mother's Day weekend. The Azalea campground was sold out. For the rest of the season, Ranger's will focus on providing direct visitor services.

Natural Resource Management: Field staff continue tree trimming and removal work throughout all camping and day use areas in collaboration with the Department arborist in preparation for peak visitor season. The natural resource manager coordinated with District III and the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to provide support for the water line replacement projects in Huckleberry Flat.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff installed and rebuilt wooden tables and bollards in the campgrounds. Field staff installed new signs for each campsite in the Sequoia Campground. New windows, doors, and plumbing fixtures were installed at the Ranger Station, projects that the Parks Foundation helped fund.

Staff Updates: Ranger II Travis Hanson was selected for the new ranger transfer opportunity to District III.

## **Moss Beach Park**

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff have started demolition on the playground structures which are unsafe and no longer compliant. The contract for the new playground equipment is on the June 4<sup>th</sup> Board agenda and construction is expected to begin in the fall.

## **Pescadero Creek Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: On Saturday, May 4, Take-A-Hike was hosted on the Old Haul Road with approximately 60 people attending.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff cleared the overgrowth along the Towne Fire Road leading to the Jones Gulch Trail intersection. General trail clearing, and trail work continued throughout the park.

## **Pigeon Point Bluffs**

Natural Resource Management: Stewardship Corps hosted a weeding event at the picturesque bluff overlooking the historic Pigeon Point lighthouse targeting invasive bristly ox-tongue.

## **Pillar Point Bluff**

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Property boundaries have been surveyed and the Department is waiting for title reports to complete the full survey. Once completed, boundary markers will be installed, and fuel breaks will be constructed along the property's boundary to create defensible spaces in case of a fire.

Natural Resource Management: The County arborist provided guidance regarding the thinning of a stand of invasive Monterey pine located at Pillar Point Bluff's coastal terrace prairie and scrub habitat. The Parks Department was awarded a \$55,649 California Department of Agriculture grant to address high priority infestations of Bermuda buttercup in the winters of 2020 and 2021 at Pillar Point County Park and San Bruno Mountain County Park.

## **Quarry Park, Mirada East and West**

Natural Resource Management: Natural resource staff are working with CalFire to identify additional areas appropriate for shaded fuel breaks. Work includes boundary marking for the proposed shaded fuel break and environmental review and support. This is part of the Governor Newsome's executive order to expedite tree clearing and forest management work.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Design plans have been completed for Quarry Park non-potable water improvements, and the permits applications have been submitted. Design plans for potable water, sewer, and electrical utility improvements are being prepared. The Quarry Park Master Plan is in final review and will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission at the August meeting.

## **Sam McDonald Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: The Jack Brooks Horse Camp workday took place on Saturday, April 20 in preparation for the season opening on May 1. Peninsula Open Space Trust conducted donor hikes to the Alpine Cabin on Saturday, April 27.



Natural Resource Management: Tree management work took place in the Tarwater Trail Camp and throughout the park.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff cleared trails and removed downed trees throughout the park. Road maintenance work was done along the Uncle Man Road leading to the youth camps.

## **San Bruno Mountain**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: Ariel Cherbowsky, Program Director of San Bruno Mountain Watch reported that the neighboring schools listed below had field trips in the park:

- March 7, John F Kennedy Elementary, 20 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 12, John F Kennedy Elementary, 22 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 14, John F Kennedy Elementary, 48 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 19, John F Kennedy Elementary, 21 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 21, George Washington Elementary School, 54 students, (Bog Trail, Guadalupe Road Trail, and Saddle Loop)
- March 22, Skyline College, 28 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 28, John F Kennedy Elementary, 49 students, (San Bruno Mountain Dunes)
- March 29, George Washington Elementary School, 59 students, (Bog Trail, Guadalupe Road Trail, and Saddle Loop)

On April 6, 40 people attended the first Take-A-hike of the season. Supervisor Canepa welcomed the hikers who were offered two hiking options, the Summit Loop and the Saddle Loop trails. Half of the participants were County employees qualifying for the Wellness Program points. On April 17, the Department held the first-ever weekday Take-A-Hike. The 30 participants were welcomed by Supervisor David Canepa and the sign-up sheet indicated that 90% of the hikers were current county employees qualifying for Wellness Program points. These hikers were also offered hikes on the Summit Loop and the Saddle Loop trails.

Natural Resource Management: On April 24, tree contractors removed hazardous eucalyptus trees and dead eucalyptus limbs off the Ridge Trail Fire Road. The trees were leaning towards the parking lot of the Montessori School in South San Francisco. This project was funded by Measure K. The natural resource staff hosted the annual San Bruno Mountain field tour on May 30. The

event was well attended by US Fish and Wildlife Service staff. This park was also selected as the Weed Management Area's annual Picnic in the Weeds location which was hosted by San Bruno Mountain Watch and attended by natural resource management staff to share our approach to weed management at the property. The current mission blue butterfly flight season on San Bruno Mountain is nearing completion and staff are out monitoring on a weekly basis through early June.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Field staff began to mow field areas and string cut on the single-track trails to reduce fire fuel and provide hikers a well-maintained trail. On April 30, maintenance district staff began replacing 2" x 6" rails in the day camp amphitheater. The original wood rails had cracks and were rotten. This project was paid for by Measure K funds. On May 2, a fence contractor began removing some of the old cyclone fence along Airport Boulevard at San Bruno Mountain. This project will be funded by Measure K. Razor wire will be installed on 100' of fence to prevent unauthorized access to the park and protect sensitive habitat.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: On April 21, Easter Sunday, the park was full of picnickers. All the drop-in tables were taken by mid-morning and the parking lots were almost full. On April 27, 20 Boy Scouts and their leaders camped in the Day Camp Area overnight.

## **San Pedro Valley Park/ Sanchez Adobe**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: Restoration Day and Trail Day had between 3-6 participants for each event. The Friends of San Pedro Valley had an event with Wildmind Science Learning (formerly Wildlife Associates), a non-profit that cares for non-releasable animals. They provide enriching educational programs that inspire and nurture empathy, understanding and respect for all living things. The attendance was around 40 people, most of which were children. On May 11, there was an education event on growing native plants.

Natural Resource Management: The fuel break at Park Pacific in San Pedro Valley, which stretches approximately 1000-feet long, is almost completed.

- a. Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Work is progressing on the Sanchez Adobe museum. Energy saving LED lights were installed around the San Pedro Valley maintenance yard and the storage areas in the Corporation yard. An eye wash station was installed in the corporation yard by the Maintenance division. Fence and gate repair to the corporation yard and Weiler Lot were completed by a fence contractor.

Staff Updates: Ranger Hanson transferred to District III and Ranger Tolmasoff has returned to District IV.

## **Tunitas Creek Beach**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: Peninsula Open Space Trust has had several fundraiser events on the property. Funds raised will eventually become available to the Department to assist in the management and operation of the property as a county park. Parks staff joined around 50 Tunitas area residents for a beach clean-up on Earth Day.

Natural Resource Management: Western snowy plover surveys continue into the early part of the breeding season at Tunitas Creek Beach. Additional protection measures such as symbolic fencing and educational signage will be installed to help educate the public about this threatened species.

Public Safety and Social Service Activity: Field staff are gearing up for summer hours and scheduling late shifts for holiday weekends. They will be keeping watch for illegal and unauthorized activities.

## **Wunderlich Park**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: A group of 25 volunteers from Oracle worked on pulling invasive weeds throughout the park on April 27. Forty volunteers from PG&E were at the park on April 30 pulling invasive weeds.

Natural Resource Management: Field staff removed fallen trees from the Alambique Trail and along the Bear Gulch Trail. Field staff continue with mowing and string cutting throughout the park. The natural resource management team has approved the final eucalyptus removal plan for the oak restoration work at Wunderlich County Park by PG&E. This is the final step in getting this project officially approved and ready to begin later this summer.

Facility and Infrastructure Improvement: Drainage improvements to the horse turnouts have been completed. A broken water pipe was repaired by field staff near the Blacksmith building. Upgrades and improvements to the Carriage House are nearing completion. The Carriage House is expected to be available for use in June.

## **Updates from Special Units**

### **Maintenance Unit**

Facility and Infrastructure Improvements: Projects completed by the Maintenance Unit are included in the individual parks summaries. A new swap truck for the Maintenance Unit has been built. Swap trucks are dump trucks that have interchangeable boxes for the back. The Department's swap truck has a debris box and a large water tank and will be used for hauling and road repair work.

### **Natural Resource Management**

Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects: The natural resource management team is participating in the county-wide Vegetation Mapping effort. When the project is complete, data will be publicly available via the Open Data Portal.

Staff Updates: The Natural Resource Manager, Ramona Arechiga will be resigning her position in June as she and her family will be relocating to the Sierra. A recruitment for her replacement has been opened. The Natural Resource program is also hiring a Natural Resource Specialist 1. Recent trainings include: the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network Invasive Species Workshop, a Fire Weather Research Workshop and a Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District rare plant protocol training

### **Parks Planning**

Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail: On June 4, the Feasibility Study for the Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration. Doug McConnell's Open Road show debuted a segment about the Heritage Trail Feasibility Study April 14, 2019. A two-part, 10-minute documentary about the Heritage Trail and Sanchez Adobe has been filmed and will debut at the Sanchez Adobe Interpretive Center opening in the fall of 2019. Interpretive signs are being designed for the Pillar Point Bluffs and Sanchez Adobe.

#### Updates provided by:

Pricilla Alvarez, Ranger IV  
Ramona Arechiga, Natural Resources Manager  
Mark Bettis, Harbormaster  
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