

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PARKS DEPARTMENT

DATE: February 6, 2020

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director  
**SUBJECT:** Parks Update: December 2019 – January 2020

**Highlights**

As the peak visitor season has come to an end, the Department is refocusing its efforts on maintenance of facilities and infrastructure and preparing the parks for winter storms. This includes cleaning, repairing, and replacing culverts; re-rocking trails and roads; and removing hazardous trees.

The fire fuel reduction projects at Huddart Park and Quarry Park, which were led by CAL FIRE, have concluded and the Department's attention has shifted to ensuring the treated areas are maintained and that invasive species do not regrow in the project area. The Department was also able to host a Fire Ecology Education Hike. This hike enabled the Department's Interpretive Ranger and Natural Resource Manager to lead members of the public through the project area in Huddart Park and discuss the importance of conducting large-scale fuel reduction project. It also presented members of the public with the opportunity to inform the Department of their support and/or concerns for these types of projects.

Construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at Memorial Park continues to progress. It is estimated to be completed by end of Summer 2020. Additionally, the access trail to the Potable Water System's pump house facility at Pescadero Creek was re-built. This trail provides critical access to the water treatment system infrastructure by Pescadero Creek. A leak was also discovered that affected the potable water storage for Memorial Park. Over the next eight days, emergency repairs were made, and the water system again meets compliance. Our maintenance unit has also been busy at Memorial Park. They completed two major road improvement projects in Memorial Park. Ridge Road leading into the Jack Brooks Horse Camp was resurfaced and the Gorge Road was also improved and resurfaced.

Lastly, the Department would like to thank the almost 7,000 people who attended our over 175 events in 2019! It was a pleasure sharing the parks with so many people and the Department looks forward to many more memorable moments in 2020.

### **Parks items presented to the Board of Supervisors**

The following matter is an item the Parks Commission recommended the Department present to the Board of Supervisors for consideration:

On December 10, 2019, Rangers Mario Nastari and Kevin O'Brien presented an update on Memorial Park Improvements to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors was enthused to receive the presentation and happy to support the Department's efforts.

## **Park Updates**

### **Coyote Point Marina**

#### **Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects**

Three bicycle repair stations were donated by REI and installed by an Eagle Scout and his troop in the Marina.

#### **Facility and Infrastructure Improvements**

On-going efforts to remove derelict vessels from the Marina continue. One wooden sailboat sank in its slip. The boat was raised and towed out for demolition. Between 90% and 100% of the costs associated with disposing of these vessels is covered by a California Boating and Waterways Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Grant. The grant pays 90% of hard costs and the Marina is allowed "in-kind" contributions for vessel storage and work involved in preparing the vessels for demolition.

Marina staff continue with ongoing dock maintenance and repairs as needed. They also rebuilt the pump at the sewage pump out station.

The new marina management software is live and will be used for February billing.

### **Coyote Point Recreation Area**

#### **Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects**

There were three group volunteer activities at Coyote Point in January. On January 2, the Interpretive Staff hosted the Sheriff's Activity League for a beach clean-up day. The Kiwanis Club worked in the park on January 18 and removed storm debris broom. And on January 20, the Volunteer Scouts were hosted by the Natural Resources Management program for a beach clean-up day and worked on the PG&E restoration area.

#### **Facility and Infrastructure Improvements**

Storm drains, culverts and gutters have been cleaned out at Coyote Point in preparation for winter storms. This is standard practice for the Department's winterization process.

The Coyote Point Fire Pump and Water Distribution Project began on August 26. In November, work was paused while the Department waited for the delivery of the pump. Work resumed when the pump arrived on December 23. The department anticipates completion of the project by the end of February.

A bicycle repair station that was donated by REI was installed on December 27, 2019 at the intersection of Coyote Point Drive and the San Francisco Bay Trail, near the Yacht Club. The bicycle repair station provides tools necessary to fix and maintain bicycles while on trails.

#### Staff Updates

Ranger Laurel Finnegan returned to District 1 from special assignment on December 9, 2019.

Ranger Kevin O'Brien is on a temporary work out of class assignment assisting Superintendent Lombardi with Capital Projects.

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

##### Natural Resource Management

Many trees fell along the Crystal Springs Trail, Sawyer Camp segment during December winter storms. Field staff cut up the trees and chipped the branches, which were then distributed along the trail shoulders.

Field staff removed several hazardous tree limbs that were hanging over the trail on the Sawyer Camp segment and the San Andreas segment.

##### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

Storm drains, culverts, and gutters have been cleaned out along the trail in preparation for winter storms. This is standard practice for the Department's winterization process.

Phase two of the Crystal Springs Trail fence project began on December 9, 2019, with an estimated completion date of the middle of February. The project includes replacing 7,027 linear feet of fence along the Sawyer Camp segment and the San Andreas segments.

Two bicycle repair stations that were donated by REI were installed in January; one at the entrance of Sawyer Camp Trail at 950 Skyline Boulevard, and the other one at the Jepson Laurel area 3.5-miles into Sawyer Camp Trail.

#### **Devil's Slide – No report at this time**

#### **Edgewood Park and Nature Preserve**

### Natural Resource Management

Field staff have been winterizing trails by clearing drains, repairing culverts, and improving water bars to ensure the trails drain properly during the rainy season. This is standard practice for the Department's winterization process.

PG&E cleared the vegetation under the high voltage lines that run along the southern border of the park and by the Sunset gate.

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

A plumbing contractor worked to install new valves and lift one of the 5,000-gallon water tanks for the fire suppression water tanks that supply the fire hydrant at the Education Center at Edgewood Park.

PG&E installed a split rail fence along Sunset Trail and Ridgeview Trail to keep the public out of the area they cleared of vegetation so new trails aren't established.

Field staff installed a bicycle repair station at the intersection of Canada Road and Edgewood Road. This serves as a repair station for the many cyclists that ride along these two roads.



### Park and Park Office Closures

PG&E crews repaired a gas main at Edgewood Park that required the entrance to the park to be temporarily closed. There was limited access to the inner parking lot from December 10-13.

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

#### Natural Resource Management

Twenty Cypress trees in the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve's Cypress grove were pruned and raised because they were damaged during the winter storms and presented a hazard to park visitors.

#### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

In response to a neighbor's concern about erosion, field staff added a culvert extension at Seal Cove Steps. The culvert extension should reduce the rate of erosion by the steps.

### **Flood Park**

#### Natural Resource Management

Field staff cleared drains and drainage paths in preparation for the rainy season. This is part of the Department's annual winterization process.

### **Friendship Park – No report at this time**

### **Huddart Park**

#### Park Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects

The Woodside Ramble trail run was held on December 18, 2019 with 400 runners participating. Participants ran along trails in Huddart Park and along the Skyline Trail to Wunderlich Park.

#### Natural Resource Management

Field staff have cleared numerous downed trees that resulted from winter storms and were blocking trail access. Trees were also cleared from the Dean, Crystal Springs, and Bay Tree trails.

Field staff hiked the trails throughout the park and cleared culverts, repaired water bars, and cleaned out drains to prepare the trails for winter rains. This is part of the Department's annual park winterization process.

#### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

At the Toyon Group Campground, field staff repaired breaks in the potable water distribution system. These distribution lines also provide water to the restrooms and drinking fountains at the campsites and drinking fountains in the nearby picnic areas.

Field staff mapped the potable water distribution system in Huddart Park to facilitate future replacement of the obsolete water distribution lines. This is part of the Department's effort to upgrade infrastructure that has exceeded its useful life.

Field staff installed a bicycle repair station that was donated by REI at the Woodside store. It serves as a repair station for cyclists in need of repairs.

Game cameras were installed throughout Huddart Park. Below is an example of what has recently been viewed in the park!



#### Staff Updates

Ranger Rogelio Castaneda is on a temporary Work-Out-of-Class assignment as Parks Superintendent.

Ranger Joel Cervantes is on a temporary Work-Out-of-Class assignment as Ranger IV.

Ranger Dylan Hofflander is on a temporary Work-Out-of-Class assignment as Ranger III

District II welcomes new Ranger transfer Blake Marsh to the team.

#### **Junipero Serra Park**

### Natural Resource Management

In mid-December, field staff attended a training led by the Department's arborist and CAL FIRE to learn how to use a three-person fire crew to create defensible space between the park and residences. They removed brush and trees less than 10 inches in diameter. This work was done on the south side of the park along Terrace Drive in Millbrae.

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

All restrooms will be painted over the next couple of months. It is expected that this project will be completed by summer.

### Public Safety and Social Service Activity

Field staff have cleared trees off the trails and service roads that were downed in the winter storms. They were removed, chipped, and used as mulch to prevent weeds from growing.

## **Memorial Park**

### Natural Resource Management

A tree contractor removed several trees that were leaning over the trestle that supports various utility lines. These tree removals were part of a proactive measure, in coordination with the Department's arborist, to mitigate the risk of damage to facilities and infrastructure from possible tree failures.

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, the San Francisco Mycological Society conducted their permitted "Fungus Foray" to study mushrooms and fungi growing within Memorial Park

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

Field staff re-built the access trail to the potable water system's pump house facility that washed out last winter. This trail is critical for accessing the water treatment system's infrastructure. With these repairs, the water operators will have additional access to the pump station, where water is drawn from Pescadero Creek and pumped to the water treatment plant for treatment and distribution.

Contractors installed security cameras on the exterior of the Ranger Station/Visitor Center and Gatehouse buildings located at the entrance of the park. These camera installations are a security measure to protect against potential theft and vandalism to the park.

On December 11, 2019, the Parks Water Operator became aware of a large leak that was affecting the potable water supply for the entire park. After field staff conducted an exhaustive search of the entire water distribution system, the leak was located, and expert plumbers were called in to conduct emergency repairs to the water main. As a result of this leak, the park was temporarily closed while the plumbing repairs took place



and the necessary measures were taken to maintain compliance with the water system (see pictures below).







Routine maintenance of the water treatment plant occurred to calibrate hardware, improve software, test filtration media, and upgrade the chlorine analyzer. This work was done by the Department's Water Operator.

Contractors replaced five hundred linear feet of the wastewater collection system in Huckleberry Flats that was found to have failed. Although this work is completed, Huckleberry Flats will remain closed for the time being, until the Wastewater Treatment Plant construction is finished.

Field staff installed a new bicycle repair station at the front entrance of Memorial Park. These stations, donated by REI, are equipped with a variety of tools for bicyclists to conduct simple repairs and maintenance on their bicycles. With the number of bicyclists that travel along Pescadero Creek Road, these stations are expected to be well received by the public.

Field staff continue to replace picnic tables in the Sequoia Flats Campground. The old wooden tables have deteriorated over the years and field staff have focused on replacing the very worst tables first. Currently they have completed nearly all of Section B of the campground. The Tan Oak Day Use Picnic Area will be the next area of focus for table replacement.

### **Mirada Surf – No report at this time**

### **Moss Beach Park**

Playground Solutions continued the construction and installation of the Moss Beach Playground. The project is set to be complete and opened in March.

### **Pescadero Creek Park**

#### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

Contractors successfully made minor culvert repairs to the Harwood Creek Crossing after a small underground spring was found to have caused minimal drainage and erosion issues during winter rains.

After receiving notification from dedicated trail users, field staff cleared and removed downed trees from sections of the following trails: Tarwater, Canyon, Bear Ridge, Pomponio, and Shingle Mill trail. This work was closely coordinated by the Department's arborist.

Field staff also repaired damaged culverts and drainage systems along the Camp Pomponio Road (see pictures below)



-Before-



-After-



## **Pillar Point Bluff**

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

Field staff repaired the water bars along the Jean Lauer Trail. Water bars are strategically placed to divert water off the trail and prevent erosion. When it rains the sediment carried by the water being diverted off the trail stays at the base of the dip, filling it. So before and during the rainy season the gradual slope must be re-established. There are a lot of these on every trail and they often fail before they can be cleared. Those that fail erode away and have to be repaired.

A licensed surveyor completed the surveying and mapping of Pillar Point Bluff. The project defined the park boundaries and land titles. Field staff met with the contractor in early January and installed markers at park property boundaries.

## **Quarry Park**

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

A fencing contractor put a new fence around the Quarry Park Playground. They removed the old post and rail fence and installed a 4-foot high galvanized chain link fence. The new fence is 750-feet in length, coated with green vinyl, and will separate the playground from the designated and signed dog areas.

Field staff built and installed four new planter boxes inside the Quarry Park Community Garden. They also built a shed which garden volunteers then painted.

## **Sam McDonald Park**

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

Field staff installed a new bicycle repair station at the main parking lot across from the Visitor Center (see pictures below). This is an important service for bicyclists who ride on Pescadero Creek Road as it is the only place for miles that has a rest area with drinking water, shelter, and restrooms.



The Parks Maintenance Division conducted maintenance work on Towne/Gorge Fire Road. This is a steep and narrow, mile long unpaved road, that leads through the redwood forest from the County Service Area #7 Water Treatment Plant to the Jack Books Horse Camp. Over time, rocky roads become displaced and erode away with storms and wear and tear. The Maintenance Division did a great job of preparing the road. They added the needed base rock and watered and compacted it properly to shape the road, which will allow it to drain properly maintain its integrity for years to come.

## **San Bruno Mountain**

### Parks Events, Programs and Volunteer Projects

In mid-December, to help with erosion control, the volunteer coordinator and field staff planted 100 plants adjacent to the Old Guadalupe Trail Culvert Replacement Project.

### Natural Resource Management

In mid-January, the Natural Resources program manager conducted a plant identification training with field staff. This knowledge will be useful to field staff when they begin mowing in the spring and summer months.

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

The bench in the parking lot was removed, re-furbished, and re-installed.

Commencement of the project to pave the main parking lot and drive aisle, is dependent on two weeks of dry weather. In the meantime, the contractor has started removing the old ADA ramps and installing new ADA ramps in the two parking lots.

The estimated timeline for the paving work to be done is February 4-14, and the parking lot will be closed to all vehicle traffic during this period. Signs have been posted in the park announcing the closure. Park facilities will remain open for walk-in use. The paving contractors will have access by using the electric gate onto Radio Road (which is not affected by the paving project).

## **Sanchez Adobe**

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

PG&E connected the new visitor center to electrical services on the weekend of January 18. The new visitor center now has permanent power.

The Parks Foundation generously granted Parks \$40,000 for landscaping at Sanchez Adobe. A landscape design is being developed by the department. The landscaping is expected to be completed by the end of April.

## **San Pedro Valley Park**

### Natural Resource Management

All trails were inspected before the first storms in December. Culverts and drain dips were inspected and cleared to minimize flooding and erosion. This is standard practice for the Department's winterization process.

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

The park received two electric bikes through a grant obtained by the Office of Sustainability. Field staff were trained on bike safety and have been using them to patrol San Pedro Valley.

## **Tunitas Creek Beach**

### Natural Resource Management

Western Snowy Plover counts have increased to an average of ten to fifteen birds a day. The Pacific Coast population of Western Snowy Plovers have been in decline for several years, due to a loss of habitat and disturbances due to development and other human pressures. In 1993, the population of Western Snowy Plovers was listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the federal Endangered Species Act. The western snowy plover is listed as a “species of special concern” by the State of California.

## **Wunderlich Park**

### Natural Resource Management

A tree contractor removed a large hazard tree near the bridge, at the entrance to the Wunderlich parking lot.

Field staff worked with contractors from the Timber Harvest Project at Wunderlich park to improve failing trail conditions caused by over-saturated soils. Culverts were cleared and water bars were built along Meadow and Loop trails.

### Facility and Infrastructure Improvement

The bridge along Bear Gulch Trail was completed and reopened to hikers and equestrians.





### Park and Park Office Closures

Due to unstable riding conditions caused by over-saturated soils, portions of the Loop Trail, Madrone Trail, and Redwood Trail are closed to equestrians until further notice.

## **Updates from Special Units**

### **Maintenance Unit – plus pictures**

#### Facility and Infrastructure Improvements

The maintenance unit completed two major road improvement projects in Pescadero Creek Park. Ridge Road leading into the Jack Brooks Horse Camp was resurfaced with base rock for the entire 1.5-mile length. The Gorge Road was also improved and resurfaced with base rock for its nearly 1-mile length. These two projects consumed most of the unit's time in December. These projects have greatly improved access and safety for public use.



The maintenance unit received a new backhoe and bulldozer. These two pieces of equipment are great additions to the Department's heavy equipment fleet. They are replacing much older pieces of equipment and are better suited for the Department's current needs. They are also more environmentally friendly.

#### Staff Updates

The maintenance unit has filled the two Ranger II positions with Iuliu Cepeha and Kevin Kazazz. The maintenance unit looks forward to having them work with the crew.

#### **Natural Resource Management Program**

In addition to the Natural Resource Management (NRM) activities listed for each of the parks, the NRM program has been overseeing and working on the following projects:

The NRM program hired three Natural Resource Management Interns to support the Parks Stewardship Corps volunteer program and conduct on-the-ground habitat restoration and invasive species control. They will work with the department for six months.

Following the completion of the fuel reduction projects at Quarry Park and Huddart Park, focus has shifted to ensuring that the treated areas are maintained and that invasive weeds are kept under control.

NRM is coordinating with vegetation management contractors to conduct invasive species management work for *Oxalis pes-caprae* (Bermuda Buttercup) present at Pillar Point Bluff and San Bruno Mountain. This is a high priority invasive species that the Department is working toward controlling.

The bid process for the construction phase of the Dark Gulch Sediment Reduction Project will occur in mid-February, with contracting anticipated to be finalized by March. Construction may begin as early as May 1, depending on weather conditions.

San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan – vegetation management activities continue, with contractors to completing scrub removal and broom removal for the benefit of listed butterfly habitat at the park. San Bruno elfin surveys will begin in April.

Wildlife camera trapping at Junipero Serra Park is underway, as a comparison study for the on-leash dog pilot program. Pre-pilot camera trapping efforts at Pillar Point Bluff will be initiated in February. NRM continues to participate in other pilot-program survey efforts and advise on the natural resources within the parks where dog recreation is occurring or proposed.

The hiring process is underway for an additional Natural Resource Specialist I for the NRM team, with the vacancy anticipated to be filled as early as the first week of February.

## **Parks Planning**

Flood Park Landscape Plan Revised EIR – Changes to the Landscape Plan based on revised ball field configurations are being evaluated. The total number of trees that could be removed is being assessed, and the peak projections will be reevaluated.

Quarry Park Master Plan – Because dog management policies proposing dog use at Quarry Park have been drafted for the Board of Supervisors consideration at a March 2020 meeting, the Master Plan is being updated for future public meetings.

The Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail Feasibility Study has been nominated for a State Parks Trail and Greenways Award by the City of Pacifica.

## **Projects**

### **Quarry Park Utility Improvements**

- Potable Water, Electricity, and Sewer Design Plans – A dump station for the Corp Yard has been added and permitting is being initiated. Ranger residences will be built later.

Pillar Point Bluff Survey – The survey has been completed and property boundary markers staked to demarcate County Park's boundaries for vegetation management purposes.

## **Administrative and Financial Services**

Every year, the County Manager's Office requires all County departments to make projections for their revenues and expenditures through the end of the fiscal year and report estimated Fund Balances. This exercise allows the Board of Supervisors to identify County needs and available resources for upcoming budgets, including the mid-term FY 2020-21 budget.

After performing revenue and expenditure projections, it is anticipated that all the budget units that make up the Parks Department will end the fiscal year with a positive Fund Balance variance or a variance that is unchanged from the Fund Balances that were previously budgeted and approved by the Board of Supervisors for FY 2019-20. Overall, the Department is anticipated to end FY 2019-20 positively due to several vacancies that have since been filled and projects expected to continue beyond June 30, 2020, including the Coyote Point Eastern Promenade, Memorial Park Facility Improvement, and Reimagine Flood Park projects.

The County Manager's FY 2019-20 mid-year report will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 28, 2020.

The Parks Department will update its FY 2019-20 mid-year performance dashboards on January 27, 2020. Please visit <https://performance.smcgov.org/> to review Parks' FY 2019-20 mid-year performance update.

Updates provided by:

Pricilla Alvarez, Ranger IV  
Mark Bettis, Harbormaster  
German Castaneda, Ranger III  
Joe Immethun, Ranger III  
Mark Rogers, Ranger III  
Kevin Scott, Ranger IV  
David Vasquez, Ranger IV

Staff Reports from:

Sam Herzberg, Senior Planner  
Hannah Ormshaw, Manager, Natural Resource Management Program  
Stuart Smith, Volunteer Coordinator  
Katherine Wright, Ranger III, SMC Parks Interpretive Program  
Rolando Jorquera, Administrative Services Manager