



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks Department



DATE: September 21, 2015

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: October 1, 2015

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Carla Schoof, Community Programs Specialist
SUBJECT: Report on Volunteer and Community Programs

RECOMMENDATION:
Review and accept report.

BACKGROUND:
This report is to update the Commission on Volunteer and Community Program activities and events.

DISCUSSION:

Volunteer Activities

The amount of volunteer hours contributed to San Mateo County Parks in 2014-15 totaled 30,340 hours. This represents an increase in volunteer activity compared to the 27,900 hours reported last year. Approximately half of this volunteer activity is generated by the Friends and partner groups that support parks on an ongoing basis in roles such as docent-led hikes and tours, habitat restoration and trail improvement, education and visitor center hosts, special event and speaker series events, and trail patrols.

Upcoming Volunteer Events

Saturday, November 7, Ridge Trail Work Day, Huddart Park: This work day on the Bay Area Ridge Trail brings together volunteers with the Trail Center, Ridge Trail, REI and San Mateo County Parks to improve the segment of the Ridge Trail that connects Huddart to Wunderlich Parks. This is the third consecutive year of joining forces to ensure that the Ridge Trail is accessible and ready for use in the coming winter months. Traditionally, the group also comes together in June to perform trail maintenance.

Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Naturalist Training begins January 2016: The 10-class training program covers marine biology, ecology and interpretive strategies and

prepares the volunteers to lead group visits to the Reserve. Prospective volunteers can visit the Friends' website at www.fitzgeraldreserve.org to learn more about the training. December 15 is the deadline to register for the training.

Saturday, December 5: Volunteer Recognition Event: Save the date for our volunteer recognition event at the Carriage House in Wunderlich Park. Further details will be announced soon.

Community Engagement Activities

August 22, Family Nature Event: Bats, Memorial Park: Corky Quirk from Northern California Bats shared her knowledge and some of her flying nocturnal friends with participants to teach about the mysteries of bats and the role they play in our ecosystem. Approximately 60 curious children and adults attended.

August 28, Movie Night in Quarry Park: More than 250 people brought their lawn chairs to the quarry floor of the park to watch Despicable Me 2. In partnership with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Activity League, who provided the screen and popcorn machine, we provided an outdoor movie experience to a community that does not have a movie theater.

Update: Reimagine Flood Park: On September 1, the Department hosted a third community meeting to gather input on the redesign of Flood County Park. Attendees were excited to see the conceptual park designs which were based on the park features and priorities stated in earlier meetings and through a survey. The goal of this recent meeting was to identify a preferred design from among three designs presented and to garner details on how the designs might be improved. More than 150 people were in attendance and provided the input and direction needed to further refine the designs.

Information gathered from previous meetings and the survey showed the following:

- A preference for a natural character for the Park
- A focus on promoting healthy lifestyle, preserving existing trees and creating community gathering spaces and expanding the types of park use.

High priority use areas:

- Unique play area
- Picnic sites
- Walking/exercise trails
- A demonstration garden
- Large event space for farmers' markets, movies, concerts and weddings
- A ballfield

Medium priority uses:

- Community building
- Basketball
- Splash ad
- Softball/Practice
- Soccer
- Dog facilities
- Sand volleyball

Moving forward, the project team, which includes park staff and community representatives, will work with project consultants Gates + Associates to develop a design that will be presented at community preview meetings before going to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

September 12, Family Nature Hike – Geology of Earthquakes, Sawyer Camp Trail: On this 2-mile-hike, led by Ranger Wright, visitors learned what earthquakes are, why they happen, and how we can prepare for living in an earthquake fault zone! The hikers even walked across the infamous San Andreas Fault.

September 19, POST, Friends and Parks Event: The Peninsula Open Space Trust, Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks and San Mateo County Parks partnered to offer a family friendly event that featured three hikes, hands-on youth activities and story time. Of the more than 60 people who attended, approximately half had not been to Huddart Park before.

Visitor Study/Partnership with SFSU Begins: In partnership with San Francisco State University, the Parks Department is conducting a study of visitor use and constraints. The San Francisco State University team is comprised of Professors Nina S. Roberts and Patrick Tierney, both researchers and instructors with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at the University, Research Associate and Lecturer, Ruby Turalba and two undergraduate research assistants.

The purpose of this project is to examine attitudes, experiences, use patterns, and preferences of park users and identify any barriers that may prevent those who either don't visit the parks or do so infrequently. This information will assist the Department in more effectively engaging park users and in identifying the best ways to reach those who aren't familiar with our parks. At the same time, we expect to gain an understanding of what new services or programs people would like to see offered and perspectives about value and paying for new features.

The methods of data gathering will include literature search coupled with multiple focus groups held throughout the County along with in-park surveys. Study results and a final report is expected in early 2016.

Upcoming Community Activities

- Take A Hike, October 3, 9 a.m., Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve
- Day of the Horse, October 10, 10 a.m. Woodside Town Hall
- Movie in the Park, October 17, 6 p.m., Coyote Point Recreation Area

Communications

Print and Electronic Media Outreach: The Department used a variety of vehicles to inform the public about park services and events in August and September.

- Press Releases:
 - Flood Park Community Meeting, August 20
 - Edgewood Park, PG&E Pipeline Work Effect on Trails, August 26
 - Measure A Grant Helps Design, Build Ravenswood Bay Trail, August 31
 - BioBlitz at San Pedro Valley Park (Sep. 26), September 15
- Facebook:
 - Take A Hike with Dr. Kapur at Coyote Point, August 1
 - Junior Naturalist Camp at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Begins, August 3
 - Take A Hike, New York Times Article: Mental and Physical Benefits of Outdoor Walking (link to Parks website), August 3
 - Movie Night at Coyote Point, Vote for Movie, August 7
 - Red Flag Warning – List of Parks Closed, August 8
 - Little Libraries in San Mateo County Parks, August 11
 - August 28 Movie Night in Quarry Park, August 12
 - Family Nature Event, Bats at Memorial Park, August 20
 - Throw Back Thursday, Sanchez Adobe, August 20
 - Reimagine Flood Park Meeting Event, August 20
 - Take A Hike at Huddart Park (Sep. 5) August 25
 - Movie Night at Quarry Park – Photo, August 28
 - Take A Hike at Huddart – Trail Announcements, September 3
 - Take A Hike at Edgewood (event posting), September 10
 - Coastal Clean-Up (event posting Sep. 19), September 10
 - Throw Back Thursday, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve/Moss Beach, Red Star Stage Line bus photo, September 10
 - Coastal Clean-Up Day Reminder, September 15
- Twitter:
 - Take A Hike with Dr. Kapur at Coyote Point Recreation Area, August 1
 - Red Flag Warning Closes Some San Mateo County Parks, August 7
 - Movie Night at Coyote Point, Voting Begins, August 7
 - Junipero Serra Park Reopens, August 15
 - Reimagine Flood Park Community Meeting, August 27
 - Response to inquiry about Ravenswood Trail, September 1