

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Parks Department



**DATE:** May 26, 2015

**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** June 4, 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:**

Volunteer and Community Program updates and items of interest to the Commission.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Volunteer Activities**

National Volunteer Week Recognition: In addition to the annual volunteer event that usually occurs in the Fall, the Department makes a point to recognize the work of volunteers during the third week in April which is National Volunteer Week. Banners acknowledging work done by volunteers and National Volunteer Week hung at each park that is supported by volunteers. The banners remained hanging through the following week, which included Earth Day and generates a significant amount of volunteer hours.

Earth Day Volunteer Activities: Beach clean ups on the coast and bay on April 18 drew 150 volunteers and yielded 3 cubic yards of trash. Throughout the following week, numerous groups celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day by volunteering in a San Mateo County Park, including GoPro, Novartis, Salesforce, Burlingame High School, the Gap, PG&E, Common Interest, Student Conservation Association, and ECC. Some of the projects included trail repair work, cleaning and raking play areas and campground areas, spreading wood chips and painting tables. On April 25, as part of Comcast Cares Day more than 200 volunteers tackled various projects, including painting restrooms, weeding the perimeter of the 21-acre-park, and raking volleyball courts, horseshoe pits and patanque courts. In addition to the 125 volunteers from Comcast, volunteers from the Sheriff's Activity League, Menlo Legends Baseball team, and

members of the Church of Latter Day Saints, painted restrooms and garbage and recycling bins, planted plants at the park entrance, spread chips in the playground and improved the infield of the ball diamond.

### **Upcoming Volunteer Event**

National Trail Day, June 06, 2015, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Bay Area Ridge Trail Cleanup - Skyline Trail

Help clear natural debris and widen this trail that is part of the Bay Area Ridge trail and connects Huddart and Wunderlich parks. This event will be led by experienced volunteers from the Trail Center and Park staff.

Volunteers should dress in layers, wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes and bring a hat and refillable water bottle. Limited parking near the work site is available so it's advisable that volunteers carpool.

For more information and to register, visit [www.trailcenter.org](http://www.trailcenter.org).

### **Community Activities**

Take A Hike Partnership Brings More than 200 to May 2 Hike: Our partnership with the San Mateo County Health System is helping more County residents learn about the hike program and visit parks they may not be able to reach on their own. At the May hike, the Health System secured funding to transport approximately 150 East Palo Alto students and their families to San Pedro Valley Park.

Friendship Park Anniversary Celebration, May 2: Last April, Parks, the Sheriff's Activity League, Redwood City Rotary, Kaboom, Shutterfly, and numerous other groups came together to build a new play structure and garden beds on a parcel of land owned by the San Francisco Water Public Utilities Commission and managed by Parks. This May many of the partners reunited to celebrate a successful year. There are now more than 30 gardeners who tend productive beds that produce fruits, vegetables and flowers. Neighborhood children come in and out of the park to use the play structure or the benches sponsored by Redwood City Rotary. The anniversary celebration included a DJ, Zumba class, arts and craft stations and recognition of the Park's success park by Board of Supervisor Warren Slocum.

Coyote Point Park Welcomes Citizen Scientists to Department's Second BioBlitz: Last year, San Mateo County Parks hosted its first BioBlitz at Memorial Park in the redwood forest. More than 60 citizen scientists made over 1000 observations on iNaturalist and recorded 220 species. The second BioBlitz was held at Coyote Point Park in San Mateo which looks out to the San Francisco Bay. More than 50 citizen scientists explored the park and documented over 500 observations and recorded 209 species.

Through BioBlitz events such as these, we invite the community to partner with us to increase our knowledge of the species within our parks. In turn the data collected can be used to educate visitors and help inform park management decisions. For this BioBlitz, we partnered with field experts, including the Sequoia Audubon Society, CuriOdyssey, San Francisco Mycological Society, California Academy of Sciences and the California Native Plant Society. Our next BioBlitz is scheduled for September 26 at San Pedro Valley Park.

Department Hosts First Movie in the Park: More than 100 people attended the Department's first movie night in Flood Park on May 8. Movie goers either brought in a picnic dinner or purchased food from Izzy's Cheesesteaks food truck. The Sheriff's Activity League, our partner for this event, provided a state-of-the-art inflatable screen to show the movie and a popcorn machine, which helped make the evening a true outdoor movie experience.

Family Nature Hike -- All About Birds: Knowing how to what to look unique features to look for when identifying different bird species can make a trail hike even more fun, especially for young hikers. With that in mind, the Department hosted a family nature hike with a focus on birds, their body parts, how to describe bird features and make observations. Twenty participants attended this event led by Katherine Wright, interpretive specialist.

Reimagine Flood Park, Community Meeting: The first community meeting to hear what community members would like to see in a redesigned Flood Park was held on May 20 at the Menlo Park Recreation Center. Approximately 50 people heard about the Park's history and project goals as presented by Director Finley and consulting firm Gates + Associates. The attendees participated in a variety of survey methods to indicate what park characteristics are of value to them. In addition to the meeting format, those not able to attend meetings will soon be able to participate in an on-line survey posted on the Department's website.

### **Upcoming Community Activities**

Reimagine Flood Park, Second Community Meeting, June 23: The second community meeting to gather ideas about Flood Park will be held at the North Fair Oaks Community Center at 2600 Middlefield Road, Redwood City beginning at 6:30 p.m. Spanish translation and child care services will be available.

### **Communications**

Print and Electronic Media Outreach: The Department consistently uses a variety of vehicles to inform the general public and park users about park services and events.

- 2013-14 Annual Report: The eight-page report details department accomplishments realized during the reporting period, financial data and key projects or activities in each park. This is the first annual report issued by the Department.
- Press Releases: Four press releases were issued since March:

- BioBlitz at Coyote Point Park, April 25
- Installation of New Water System Prompts Temporary Use of Chemical Toilets at Memorial Park (print and electronic media coverage)
- Parks Seeks Community Ideas in Redesign of Flood Park (print coverage)
- Cal Fire Training Exercises in Two County Parks
- Facebook:
  - Moss Beach Park Update, May 26, 2015
  - Mystery Monday Quiz, Match photo to park location, May 25
  - Through Back Thursday, Merchant Marine Training at Coyote Point, May 21
  - Flood Park Community Meeting, May 16
  - Sam McDonald Park History, May 14
  - Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Summer Camp promotion, May 12
  - Green Valley Trail Project On-Line Survey Announcement, May 11
  - Flood Park Movie Night, May 8
  - Throw Back Thursday Pescadero Creek Park, May 7
  - Keeping Parks Open Despite Drought, May 1
  - BioBlitz Results, April 30
  - Memorial County Park Largest Tree, April 24
  - GoPro Volunteer Video, April 23
  - Take A Hike, May 2 promotion, April 21
  - All About Birds Program, April 21
- Twitter:
  - Update on Moss Beach Playground, May 26
  - Trail Closure on Sawyer Camp Trail, May 19
  - Flood Park Community Meeting, May 19
  - Movie Night at Flood, May 8
  - Through Back Thursdays, every Thursday a photo and history brief is posted
  - Comcast Cares Day, April 25
  - Arbor Day Celebration – Largest Tree, April 24
  - GoPro Volunteer Video – April 23
  - BioBlitz Promotion, April 21
  - Earth Day Volunteer Activity, April 18
  - Ralston Bike Trail Opens, April 11
  - Ollie Mayer Overlook Dedication, April 4
  - Take A Hike Promotion, April 1