



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Parks Department



**DATE:** September 22, 2014

**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** October 2, 2014

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Ramona Arechiga, Natural Resource Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Natural Resource Manager Report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and accept report.

**BACKGROUND:**

This report covers research and activities since the Commission's August 7, 2014 meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

**County-wide Initiatives**

**Stormwater**

San Pedro Creek and Pacifica State Beach Bacteria TMDL (total maximum daily load) Monitoring and Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Plans are required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) as part of the Basin Plan Amendment. The finalized plan was submitted to the RWQCB on August 15, 2014. Follow-up revisions have been requested by the RWQCB and will be completed in coordination with the City of Pacifica by October 20, 2014.

**Building the Natural Resource Stewardship Program**

**Collaboration**

Meetings with relevant stakeholders, Friends' groups, and staff concerning current natural resource management practices and concerns have been ongoing since March. Outreach has been made to various other agencies and non-profit groups to develop a relationship and identify ways to collaborate on natural resource management issues. Discussions with the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District concerning invasive species and sediment issues have occurred and will be detailed further by District. Collaboration on a small mowing project between the Parks Department and

the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) recently occurred at the new Wicklow addition to Quarry Park. Potential for long-term maintenance sharing agreements with adjacent agencies will be investigated to leverage effective use of resources. Additional collaboration with PG&E on transmission line access, including road improvements and hazard tree removals, began in August and cover two Districts. Earlier this month I spoke at the Peninsula Open Space Trust's Volunteer Kick-off event where I had a terrific opportunity to network and highlight the important collaboration between our two agencies. Two additional opportunities for natural resource management developed from that event; potential collaboration with Filoli concerning the potential heirloom apple varieties at Loma Mar, and joining the efforts of the California Phenology Project as a citizen research project on climate change. For more information please visit <https://www.usanpn.org/cpp/about>.

### GIS

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) has selected the GIS intern to work directly with the Parks Department's Natural Resource Management (NRM) program. Rachelle Hedges, a UC Berkeley Masters of Forestry student, will be working twenty hours a week on GIS issues for the NRM program. Rachelle has great field experience including being a crew leader for SCA. We also have a volunteer who is working towards creating a GIS database, identifying gaps in data, and creating a schema for data cleaning, processing, and filing for the incoming intern. To date the volunteer has donated 304 hours of time to research, documentation, evaluation, and the creation of data models for our GIS program. We have secured access to much of the necessary software and tool sets required to use GIS including ArcGIS 10.2.1 software, an ArcGIS Online account, and we are continuing to collect GIS data from previous contractors. Over the month of August, we participated in developing a trails data standard with other agencies nationwide in a project called OpenTrails. This has been in collaboration with the County's Open Data Liaison. A pilot open data event will be tested during the upcoming BioBlitz scheduled for Saturday, September 27. This is an ongoing project.

### Research

A variety of research activities have been authorized in our Parks recently. A couple of the more exciting research activities that have been approved include raptor monitoring by the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory and Steelhead and coho salmon surveys in San Pedro Valley by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (they observed at least one adult steelhead!) Additionally, a project to collect seed from the endangered, small stature Santa Cruz cypress tree (*Cupressus abramsiana*) is under review. The US Forest Service is working to collect and conserve seed from this and other rare, threatened, and endangered western cypress trees at the National Center for Genetic Resource Preservation Center in Fort Collins, Colorado.

### Grants

Cecily Harris and I have been coordinating on upcoming grant opportunities for continued restoration of San Vicente Creek and other potential projects in the future.

## **District Activities**

### District I

Meetings with PG&E have occurred to provide additional road improvements to transmission lines located on San Bruno Mountain State and County Park. PG&E is interested in helping the County improve and maintain roads, provide road brushing and Integrated Vegetation Management recommendations, and with fuel reduction projects where it improves and protects interests of both agencies. Work on Radio Road and Fire Roads 2 and 3 are anticipated later this fall.

### District II

Meetings with District Ranger Kraemer and PG&E have occurred to improve emergency vehicle access and road improvements along Richards Road in Huddart County Park. Ranger Kraemer initiated this partnership with PG&E and it has developed into a meaningful relationship system-wide. A Memorandum of Agreement was entered into between the Department and the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority for their installation of a rain gauge as part of their watershed early warning system for flood events. The week of September 29, the Department has collaborated with the California Forest Pest Council to host a training event concerning common urban forest pests and diseases. Susan J. Frankel and other experts in the field made a preliminary visit to Huddart Park and provided important information concerning Sudden Oak Death symptoms and diagnostics and potential research opportunities and partnerships concerning treatments for this problem.

### District III

Over the last several months planning efforts for the first Department- hosted BioBlitz have been ongoing. This is a citizen science focused event where participants will spend two and a half hours in Memorial County Park photo-documenting all the different species they find. This event is in partnership with the California Academy of Sciences, Nerds for Nature, Save the Redwoods League, Sequoia Audubon, California Native Plant Society, and the Mycological Society of San Francisco. It will be a fantastic day of fun and observational science!

### District IV

Submission of the peregrine monitoring report concerning Devil's Slide Trail's resident pair of falcons was submitted in August. Coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to further investigate the second nesting site is underway. A collaboration concerning mowing along a 0.2 mile stretch between GGNRA and Parks was implemented in September. Requests for Proposals concerning the two projects slated for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve were released on September 5, 2014. Proposal review will begin next week and urban forester, Peter Ehrlich of The Presidio Trust, has agreed to participate in the review process.

### District V

Restoration of 1.17 acres south of Pigeon Point Lighthouse is in the pre-implementation stages to provide protection of a 1B.2 listed species, goldfields (*Lasthenia californica* spp. *macrantha*) and restore native bluff community vegetation. This project was started



in 2013. District Ranger Kang will be overseeing the installation of the protective guardrail and fencing that will protect the larger 14-acre site from additional degradation. Senior Planner Herzberg worked with a contractor to develop a restoration plan aimed at reestablishing a native bluff plant community and protecting the perennial goldfields. I will oversee the restoration work later this fall.

Close up of Perennial Goldfields individuals on the edge of dirt road  
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