

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks Department



DATE: January 22, 2015

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: February 5, 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

Annual Volunteer Event, December 6: The Department hosted the annual volunteer event at San Pedro Valley with more than 70 volunteers being recognized for their contributions during the past year. In addition to Department Director Marlene Finley and Superintendent Scott Lombardi, members of the Board of Supervisors Dave Pine, Carole Groom and Don Horsley acknowledged the dedication of volunteers who do so much to support parks. Marlene Finley and Dave Pine noted impressive statistics about Park volunteers, such as more than 28,000 volunteer hours provided in 2013-14 and an average of 300 individual volunteers in Parks each month. Close to 1,800 volunteer hours were dedicated to trail maintenance, hundreds of hours to trail patrol on foot and horse, 5,500 hours to habitat work and hundreds of adults and students were educated about the historic and natural features of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Huddart and Wunderlich parks, Edgewood Park, and San Pedro Valley Park. Marlene Finley welcomed the Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors, our newest volunteers group, and thanked them for the outstanding assistance they provided at the opening of the trail in March.

The following individuals were recognized for their commitment to volunteer leadership, project management, and education and for longevity of service:

Marshall Lim, Trail Patrol Program
Shirley Drye, Friends of San Pedro Valley
Mike Bushue, Volunteer Horse Patrol
Jenna Kinghorn, Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
Gene Walker and Julie Wallin, Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich
Kathy Gesley, Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors
Laurie Alexander, Friends of Edgewood

Volunteer Groups Continue Service in Parks: The Department continues to build relationships with groups that commit to regular service and ongoing projects in the parks. In spite of the cold and sometimes wet weather, the following groups were in parks this fall and winter: Salesforce, College of San Mateo, German American School, Nativity School, and Peninsula Temple Shalom.

Upcoming Volunteer Activities

New Volunteer Position – Special Events: As the Department begins to implement new programs to foster citizen science, community engagement, and environmental education, we plan to call on volunteers to assist us. The Special Events Volunteer will help with event planning and set-up, support staff and visitors during the program, and assist with clean-up.

Volunteers must be at least 15 year old, be willing to represent the Department and wear a volunteer uniform and can commit to a minimum of four hours each month. This is a good opportunity for someone who is interested in or curious about a career in park service. Prospective volunteers can visit the parks website or contact Ranger Katherine Wright.

Community Activities

Special Invitation Event at the Reserve: On January 20, the Department hosted a special night tidepool event for San Mateo County employees at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. Before the sun set, visitors had a chance to see the improvements to the parking lot and the recently installed video equipment which shows “This is Fitzgerald Marine Reserve.” The chance to see the vibrant colors of sea anemones, octopus, sea stars and other marine life contrasted against the dark sky is a unique way to experience the Reserve.

Upcoming Community Activities

Take A Hike 2015: The new season of Take A Hike begins with a kick-off event on Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m. at Flood Park in Menlo Park. Participants will receive t-shirts, the 2015 Take A Hike schedule and learn about park news and upcoming events. A healthy morning snack of juice, fruit and yogurt will be served.

Family Fun Days at the Reserve: Plan on breakfast at the Reserve along with hands-on activities and morning tidepooling. Stop by the tables at the top of the ramp for a quick

snack of coffee, juice and fruit before you explore the intertidal zone! Scheduled dates are Sunday, Jan 25, 2015, 8am - 10 am and Saturday, Feb 14, 2015, 9am - 11am.

BioBlitz at Coyote Point, April 25: Plans are already underway for the Department's second BioBlitz—this time at Coyote Point. Many of our partners from our first event will join us again: Sequoia Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society and the California Academy of Sciences. CuriOdyssey is our on-site partner and will provide the room for post survey information sharing. At this event, scientists, naturalist, students and volunteers will conduct a field study of Coyote Point. Data collected will be posted on iNaturalist, an observation and photo sharing website.

Movie Night at Flood Park, May 8, 6 – 8 p.m.: Planning for our first movie night in a park is off to a great start with the Friends of Flood Park, Sheriff's Activity League and youth sports groups already agreeing to help. Visit SMCoParks.org as the date nears to learn what movie will be shown.