

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks Department



DATE: July 30, 2014

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: August 7, 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 June 5, 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. Execution of these plans is the responsibility of County Parks. We coordinated with the City of Pacifica to hire a consultant and draft a joint plan, which is the preference of the RWQCB. The consultant has gathered pertinent historical research and other information to draft the combined monitoring and BMP implementation plan that is almost complete. The draft is being circulated to relevant County staff for review and should be ready by August 12. The RWQCB expects the finalized plan by August 15, 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. In June Director Finley and the Natural Resource Manager (NRM) attended a meeting with the Natural Resource Coalition. During this meeting topics concerning program development, current and future opportunities for collaboration, and areas of concern were discussed. I invited the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) to

Edgewood Nature Preserve for a site visit and discussion concerning developing a natural resource program framework. MROSD is fully supportive of collaborating, sharing resources, and supporting the new program in any way. Additionally, the Bay Area Regional Open Space Council's Stewardship Working Group in collaboration with the California Rangeland Trust, and others hosted a Grazing Workshop that I attended. Grazing as a management tool, its challenges and BMPs were discussed. Some of the organizations at the event included East Bay Regional Parks District, Santa Clara Open Space District, and Peninsula Open Space Trust. Other meetings that I am regularly attending include the San Mateo County Weed Management Area and Fire Safe Council meeting, and the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan meetings.

GIS

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is an integral tool for resource management. In June Parks received confirmation that a grant was awarded to the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to provide a GIS intern to work directly with the NRM. This will provide an opportunity to formalize our GIS data needs, set up a Parks-specific GIS database, and outline the procedures and policies for data collection and GIS layer development. This is an important step in developing the Natural Resource Stewardship program. Additional work has been done over the last two months to collect GIS data from consultants and other sources for use in the GIS database. Over the last two months, meetings with the County's Information Services Department has led to constructive conversations about collaboration, access to current software (ArcGIS), and access to the County-wide database. This is an ongoing project.

Research

Other similar agencies such as MROSD and Marin County Open Space District have recently undergone a significant planning process for their Natural Resource programs. Over the last couple of months I have made a thorough review of these documents. These documents and others have been used to examine the various ways regional agencies approach natural resource stewardship and will help inform the framework and policies that are developed for the Natural Resource Stewardship program.

Grants

In July we applied for the 2015 Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant in the amount of \$200,000. The focus of this grant is to reduce high fire hazards in the Wildland Urban Interface, often called the WUI (pronounced woo-eee). Three project areas were identified throughout the County Parks system. Project locations include San Bruno Mountain State and County Park, Quarry County Park in the new Wicklow addition, and Wunderlich County Park.

District Activities

District I

In the last two weeks the NRM has met with the District Ranger and the Ranger III's charged with oversight of District I. The meeting discussed current natural resource management practices and the development of new policies, practices, and procedures for the protection and conservation of resources. Meetings were held with the North

County Fire District, *CALFIRE*, and Parks staff to discuss fuel reduction projects and opportunities for funding. These discussions lead the identification of three distinct projects that all agencies support. One project located in South San Francisco was included in the WUI grant mentioned above.

District II

Last week the NRM met with the District Ranger and the Ranger III's charged with oversight of District II. The meeting discussed current natural resource management practices and the development of new policies, practices, and procedures for the protection and conservation of resources. Meetings and site visits with District Ranger Kraemer concerning fuel reduction project in Wunderlich and Huddart County Parks have also been a top priority. These meetings have led to opportunities to collaborate and share data with the Golden Gate National Recreational Area on adjacent properties such as the Phleger Estate. An area within Wunderlich County Park was identified as a project for the WUI grant.

District III

During the last month the NRM met with the District Ranger and the Ranger III's charged with oversight of District III. The meeting discussed current natural resource management practices and the development of new policies, practices, and procedures for the protection and conservation of resources. Additional work in District III includes a very preliminary plant survey for the new Loma Mar property and a hazard tree inventory along the Creek Trail in Memorial County Park. Ranger Donigan and Ranger Zuker provided assistance to the NRM for this project. Ranger Schneider provided expert guidance for a site visit to a remote stand of endangered Santa Cruz cypress (*Cupressus abramsiana*). This site visit was in preparation for potential seed collection by the US Forest Service for storage at the USDA National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation, Fort Collins, Colorado.

District IV

On August 6, I will meet with the District Ranger and the Ranger III's charged with oversight of District III to address current natural resource management practices and the development of new policies, practices, and procedures for the protection and conservation of resources. I have been coordinating with District Ranger Scott on potential sewer issues identified in the Basin Plan Amendment by the RWQCB at San Pedro Valley Park. A jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) eradication and control project was implemented on Devil's Slide Trail. This project will continue to improve the natural landscape of this impressive new park and habitat for both native plants and animals in the area. Two additional projects have been identified to reduce fire hazards at San Pedro Valley County Park and in the new Wicklow addition of Quarry County Park. The latter is part of the WUI grant application.