



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

(831) 454-7901 FAX: (831) 454-7940 TDD/TTY: call 711

JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA

Monday, June 12, 2023
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

Alternate Meeting Location:
Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
Live Oak Service Center Community Room
5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any person may address the Commission during its Oral Communication period. Speakers must not exceed three (3) minutes in length or the time limit established by the Chair, and individuals may speak only once during Oral Communications. All Oral Communication must be directed to an item listed on today's Consent Agenda, Closed Session Agenda, yet to be heard on Regular Agenda, or a topic not on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commission members will not take actions or respond immediately to any Oral communication presented regarding topics not on the agenda but may choose to follow up later, either individually, or on a subsequent Commission Agenda. Oral communications will normally be received by the Commission for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Commission, the Oral Communication period may be continued to the last item on the agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve minutes from February 6, 2023.....Page 2-3
- b. Consider Reports:
 - 1.Aquatics Section ReportPage 4
 - 2.Maintenance Section Report.....Page 5
 - 3.Planning Section Report.....Page 6-7
 - 3.Recreation Section Report.....Page 8-9
 - 4.Reservations Section ReportPage 10
 - 5.Volunteer Section Report.....Page 11-14

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

VII. REGULAR AGENDA – Action Items

VIII. REGULAR AGENDA – Information Items

- a. Deputy Director Rebecca Hurley will present an update on the Parks Strategic Plan
- b. Discuss possible workshop covering duties and goals for Parks Commissioners

IX. NEXT MEETING: Monday August 14, 2023, 5:00 p.m. Location to be announced in public notice.

X. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE LISTING

XI. ADJOURNMENT



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PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of February 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
Virtual via Zoom

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Monica Martinez, Maggie Duncan-Merrell, Martha Victoria Vega, Tricia Wiltshire Potts, Katherine Lee
Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Noah Ross, Rebecca Hurley

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

1. Motion to move regular item a to beginning of meeting (Duncan-Merrell/Lee 5/0)
 - a. Commissioner Duncan-Merrell resigned from the commission and left the meeting.
2. Move agenda forward as modified (Wiltshire/Lee 4/0)

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Vivian Fenner-Evans Subject: Expressed concerns of disc golf safety at Pinto Lake County Park
2. Jean Brocklebank Subject: Expressed concerns over pruning of trees in 1st district parks.
3. Mariah Roberts Subject: Spoke on County Park Friends programming updates, specifically ParksRx. Spoke on fundraising accomplishments for Floral and Willowbrook Parks. County Park Friends is hiring a Director of Healthy Places position.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Approve Minutes of December 5, 2022 (Lee/Wiltshire 4/0)

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Lee 1st District: Reported on progress of Anna Jean Cummings Park tree plantings. Discussed recent storms.

Wiltshire 2nd District: Mentioned stargazing club. Noted recent storms. Tree down at Hidden Beach Park. Thanked partners for recent County Park Friends fundraising recent park projects.

Vega 4th District: Spoke on storms and damage. Noted incoming federal funding. Talked of recent visits from state and federal officials. Noted constituents have raised questions about how to inquire about park maintenance.

Martinez 5th District: Thanked commissioners for detailed reports. Noted recent north county community events. Discussed how storms impacted parks and community, specifically Felton Covered Bridge.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Noted desire to improve public outreach options on department website

- Spoke of recent storms and Parks staff's roles in response and recovery
- Discussed that FEMA process will take time and that we will provide updates throughout the year
- Thanked Park Maintenance staff specifically for their work in storm response
- Ben Lomond, Moran Lake, and Heart of Soquel Parks were hit the hardest by recent storms and will take the longest to recover.
- Over \$8,000,000 in County Park damages alone
- Swim Center slated to reopen fully by June 2023
- Poet Laureate appointed
- Willowbrook Memorial construction underway

VII. REGULAR AGENDA – Action Items

- a. Motion: Appoint Commissioner Monica Martinez to chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission (Duncan-Merrell/Vega 5/0)
- b. Motion: Appoint Commissioner Martha Victoria-Vega to vicechair of the Parks and Recreation Commission (Martinez/Lee 5/0)
- c. Motion to approve draft schedule as modified - to meet quarterly only, removing April and October 2023 meeting dates (Martinez/Lee 4/0)

VIII. REGULAR AGENDA – Info Items

- a. Introduction of Mariana Colibri-Urgo, Park Planner III
 - i. Discussed strategic plan updates and working group

IX. NEXT MEETING: Monday April 10th 5:00-7:00 p.m.

X. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE LISTING

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m. (Vega/Lee 5/0)



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 12th, 2023
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Max Friedmann, Aquatics Supervisor
Subject: Aquatics Section Report

Simpkins Summer Programing

- The Swim Center is currently open 7 days a week, 6am-7:30pm M-F and 9am-4pm on the weekends.
- The Swim Center is offering youth programming such as swim lessons, Junior Guards, and Little Guards.
- The Swim Center offers Low Stimulation hours every Wednesday from 3-5pm. This program is geared for folks with adaptive needs that benefit from a quieter environment while using our pools.
- The Swim Center is collaborating with County Parks Friends to host swim lessons for their Young Outdoor Leaders group through the summer.
- The Swim Center is in the process of onboarding 16 new Lifeguards. Including these 16 new guards the Swim Center has hired 36 Lifeguards since the Fall of 2022.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 12, 2023
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jesse Williams, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Maintenance Section Report

County Wide

- Park Maintenance Worker III recruitment is open and scheduled to close Friday, June 2, 2023.
- Repairs are underway at Heart of Soquel after the significant flood damage from January storms 2023. New decomposed granite pathways have been installed and walkways have been refurbished.
- Maintenance staff have started to repair coastal beach access points, starting with 26th Avenue stairs.
- New Park Host at Pinto Lake County Park, Isbell Kent.
- Maintenance staff are busy keeping up with fully booked center rentals and special events every weekend.
- The maintenance staff is working with the Sheriff Department to utilize their Work Release Program.

South County

- Maintenance removed a fallen tree across the wedding lawn at Aptos Village Park.
- Maintenance staff are keeping up with high weed mowing at Polo Grounds, Seascape, and Pinto Lake County Parks.

Mid County

- Construction on the Live Oak Library Annex continues.
- On Demand hot water heaters were installed in the back locker rooms at Simpkins Family Swim Center.

North County

- Installed new wood Fibar surfacing in the playgrounds at Felton Covered Bridge and Ben Lomond Parks.
- Maintenance staff are keeping up with high weed mowing at Anna Jean Cummings and Chanticleer County Parks.
- A new fence is being installed at Ben Lomond Park along the riverbank.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 7, 2023
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Planning Section - Rob Tidmore, Mariana Urgo, and Mike Pruitt
Subject: Planning Section Status Report

Anna Jean Cummings Mitigation Plantings

Restoration plantings were completed earlier this year. Due to the rains, the ground has been too saturated to install the fencing. Once the area dries, protective fencing will be installed. Confluence is maintaining and monitoring the plantings for the next 4 years.

Coastal Rail Trail

The North Coast Rail Trail, a 7.5 mile segment of trail from Davenport to Wilder Ranch is being led by the RTC. The project is fully funded and is expected to start construction in the next year. When complete, RTC will contract with County Parks and County Community Development and Infrastructure (CDI) to operate and maintain the trail. Parks staff met with RTC staff in the field in May 2023 to review and provide comments on design plans for the North Coast Rail Trail so that staff can better operate and maintain the trail.

The Santa Cruz City Council certified the Final EIR for Segments 8/9 on March 20, 2023. The RTC, as a responsible agency, accepted the City's EIR on May 4, 2023. A Cooperative Agreement between the City, County, and RTC is currently being negotiated. Once complete, it will go to the Board of Supervisors for approval, along with acceptance of the City's EIR.

Technical studies for CEQA and NEPA are ongoing for Segments 10/11. The draft EIR is scheduled for public review in October 2023, with certification expected in March 2024.

Floral Playground Renovation

County Park Friends has raised \$285,000 for the playground project. Additional funding from District 1 is expected as part of the current budget process and will be complete by the end of June. Once funding is confirmed, the department will put out an RFP for a consultant to complete the design and bid package. Once the consultant is on board, staff will hold another community meeting to seek feedback on final playground design options. The project is expected to be complete in Fall 2024.

Hidden Beach

County Parks accepted ownership of five parcels adjacent to the park from the Coastal Conservancy in May. County Parks will accept a \$590,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy for a new restroom at the June 13 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Moran Lake

The Mission of the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services is to provide safe, well designed and maintained parks and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for our diverse community

County Parks is reviewing the 60% design development plan set, as well as the draft Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan. A meeting with regulatory agencies and Monarch experts to review the draft HMP is planned for June/July. Public circulation and review of the draft HMP will occur later in the summer or early fall.

North Coast Facilities and Management Plan

The Working Group met in January 2023 to review public comments from Fall 2022 engagement and review a draft list of priority capital projects. During that meeting, it was determined that additional info was needed on existing conditions and agency capital improvement plans. The consultant is working to refine the draft project list for further review by the Working Group, expected in July.

Pace Property Trails

County Parks was awarded a \$210,000 grant from CA State Parks for construction of two new trails totaling 2.5 miles on the Pace Property with interpretive signage. The trails will connect to the existing trails at Quail Hollow Ranch, expanding public access to this unique ecosystem. The trails will be laid out to minimize impacts to the sensitive habitat in the area.

South County Parkland Acquisition

County Parks is negotiating with the owner to purchase the property via owner-provided financing.

Willowbrook

Mercoza, Inc. from San Jose was awarded the contract for the memorial seating area project. Construction has started on the project and is expected to be complete prior to June 2023.

The flagpole project was awarded to Innovate Concrete Inc. Construction on the project is 95% complete. Only the installation of the flagpole remains, which is expected to be installed by the end of June.

Plans for the playground project are finalized. Award of the installation contract is scheduled for the June 13 Board of Supervisors meeting. Demolition of the existing playground will be bid separately. Construction is expected to start this summer.

Strategic Plan 5-year Update

Deputy Director Hurley will be providing a verbal update on this project.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 5, 2023
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Learning and Enrichment Camps

- We have continued to offer our Learning and Enrichment Camps at La Selva Beach Clubhouse and Mar Vista Elementary school. The Pajaro Valley Unified School District has contracted out the services of the SC County Parks, Open Spaces and Cultural Services Department to offer afterschool extended learning services to 60 youth ranging from TK-6th grade. Contract has extended until the end of 23-24 calendar school year. In addition, the Rio Del Mar Elementary School has also reached out to the Department to offer after school programs starting this fall semester.
- Programs operate Monday-Friday from 2pm-6pm, except for Wednesdays re-structured days which run from 12:30pm-6pm. Staff secured an alternative site at Rio Del Mar Elementary to host after-school programs as La Selva Beach Clubhouse will be under construction in the coming months under the new contract.

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments

- The recreation team has been working with the Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley to host a 3 on 3 "Hoops for Health" basketball tournament for youth and adults. Event funds will support Watsonville Community Hospital. The event is co-sponsored by the office of Senator John Laird, Reggie Stephens Foundation, Tribe 1st, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, City of Watsonville, and the Santa Cruz County Parks Department. Event is scheduled has been postponed until the Fall 2023.
- Parks staff have embarked in a partnership with the County Parks Friends non-profit. The recreation team is assisting with transportation and positive recreational experiences through the partnership, offerings collaboration and ideas to explore the great outdoors through a series of excursions to local state and nearby county parks programs throughout the county.
- Turning the Tide Grant – concluded on March 4th, 2023. The program provided 26 youth and 5 youth mentors in the South County coastal stewardship and water safety components alongside with the City of Watsonville Parks & Community Services Department.

Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements

- Capitola Mall continues hosing the Mall Walkers with a place to meet and exercise for free.
- The Capitola Branch Library agreement between both organizations hosts the Bridge Club for active adults on Mondays from 10:30-12pm.
- The SC County team secured an arts contract with an independent contractor to teach watercolor pain classes for adults.
- National Academy of Athletics will be teaching youth sports camp throughout the summer months for a total of 8 weeks.

Marketing Efforts

- The Department is gathering information for its Fall 2023 bilingual Spanish/English activity guide to highlight the fall activities hosted by our department. The next activity guide will highlight the summer 2023 months covering Sept-Dec.
- The Department has continued to create marketing flyers in both Spanish/English and social media posts and updates.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 12, 2023
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Reservations/Facilities Section Report

Events:

With the increased power outages, extreme weather, road closures and often power safety shut off events at our venues, our team invested in batteries back up systems for our venues in the SLV area. We also updated the curtains at the Highlands House.

Staffing:

Our Recreation Supervisor has moved into a new role within the Department. Recruitment for the vacant position is underway. We have added two new Park Service Officers this season to our growing team. Both new staff are also being trained to support our in-office reservations and events in the field.

Fields and Courts:

Athletic Fields reservations were strong for the spring season; however, many weeks of delays and rain credits were issued due to the extended storm season.

Sport Courts are continuing to see a rise in request for reservations, especially in our Pickleball Courts. Over the next six months, we will be piloting a new reservations system specific to court sports that we anticipate will help our community members and staff team.

Picnic Areas:

We have over 10 reservations for the newly added Felton Covered Bridge Reservable Picnic Area this year. Considerations for additional reservable picnic areas are in discussion with our maintenance team.

Community

Our Department was awarded a Grant from the San Andres Regional Center to help grow our capacity and understanding in serving all members of our community through a Social Rec Grant, entitled Belonging in Santa Cruz County.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

Date: June 12, 2023 (March, April, May)
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Margaret Ingraham, Volunteer Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Program Report

Aldridge Lane Park

We have a new volunteer who is helping to keep the arena groomed and in good riding condition for equestrians.

We have scheduled a Community Volunteer day on July 8th from 10 – 1:00pm. Corralitos Market will be donating hot dogs which we will cook for the volunteers.

Anna Jean Cummings Park

The 8th graders of Westlake Charter School in Sacramento come to our County every year for a field trip. During their stay they participate in a community service project. This year 86 8th graders and their chaperones volunteered at AJ and we had a very productive day working on the edge of the turf to uncover the wooden border. Some of the students we lead up into the park to pull invasive French Broom.

Davenport

12 volunteers from Whole Foods cleaned up litter on Davenport Beach and the parking lots. Several bags of litter were collected in 2 hours!

Felton Discovery Park

The Friends of Felton Library received recognition at the Be The Difference Awards, which is hosted by the Volunteer Center. They were recognized for their volunteerism in support of the library and the Felton Discovery Park. The Friends organize and lead monthly volunteer days in the park helping to keep the park beautiful and safe. The community volunteer days are the first Saturday of every month from 9-11.

Highlands County Park

We had 44 volunteers join Athena Lynch, Corpsmember with the California Conservation Corps Watershed Stewards Program at Highlands park. Athena and local volunteer Linda Skeff, lead the volunteers in removal of invasive plants and also planted hundreds of native plants to improve the habitat in the park near the upper San Lorenzo river.

Pinto Lake County Park

We have a new Park Host at Pinto Lake County Park, her name is Isabel Kent and goes by Iszy. She is originally from Connecticut, but moved cross country to pursue her

degree and graduated from Saint Mary's College in 2021 with a BS in Biology, with an emphasis in Ecology and Conservation Science. After falling in love with California's diverse environment, she decided to continue field work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, conducting escapement surveys for fall-run Chinook salmon on the American River in Sacramento for the past two seasons. She also worked with the CDFW Aquatic Bioassessment Lab, traveling the state to conduct riparian water quality and habitat surveys. This work gave her the opportunity to visit and explore many national, state, and local parks, and she decided that's where she wanted to continue her work. Aside from investing her time into the park, she enjoys hiking new trails, exploring beaches, and spending down time with her cat.

We have 3 new volunteers at Pinto:

- A high school student needing to obtain his community service hours requirement for high school
- A community member who will be helping with some painting projects
- A community member who will help us edit and research content for our Pinto Lake Volunteer

The Disc Golf volunteers regularly schedule trail maintenance days and work with our Parks maintenance staff to keep the back trails and disc golf course safe and playable.

Quail Hollow Ranch

We had our annual **Volunteer Recognition Ceremony** for the volunteers that give so much to Quail. We recognized all the hours volunteers spent at the park in 2022 and gave out our special volunteer pins. We also had special acknowledgements for 2 long-time dedicated volunteers at Quail.

Over 25 volunteers attended along with County representatives and Parks staff.

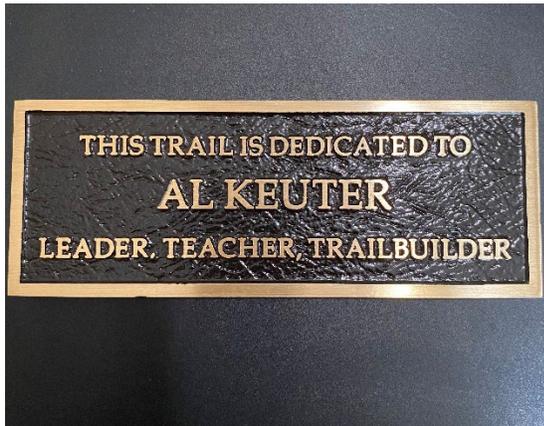
In 2022, total volunteer hours at Quail were 3,469!

Total Habitat Restoration hours were 565.

Total Trail Crew hours were 342.

Linda Brodman was recognized for leading Habitat Restoration teams at Quail for over 20 years.

Al Keuter was honored with a trail dedication for over 20 years of volunteerism at Quail. The dedication sign will be installed at the entrance to the Wood Rat trail which Al built almost single handedly. He eventually received other volunteer assistance on the wood rat trail to complete it and they now maintain it and all the other trails at Quail. Al established the volunteer trail crew and over the years it has grown. The trail crew meets every Tuesday morning from 9-12. Al has been essential to the maintenance of the trails at Quail over the years as well as his recording of much of the plant life at Quail. Al is still involved with our Quail Hollow Ranch County Park he just doesn't get out as often to do the hard work.



Al Keuter

We recently were part of **National Trails Day** which was organized in our County by the Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship. At quail we had over 30 volunteers who helped fix the Discovery Loop from the damage from the winter storms. Some of our regular trail crew volunteers lead small groups along the trail. Maintenance staff help prepare for the day and delivered tons of material needed for the work. The volunteers raked, graded and moved tons of material up and down the trail. Come take a stroll the trail is in great shape!



Volunteers and staff along the Discovery Loop

We had the **Young Outdoor Leaders** come to Quail Hollow Ranch County Park twice, once in April and once in May. The Young Outdoor Leader Program was established by County Park Friends to provide service learning, career pathways, and leadership opportunities to the youths of Live Oak. Through collaboration with County Park Friends, we were able to help facilitate access to Quail Hollow Ranch and provide a total of 71.5 volunteer hours to those enrolled in this program! We had a total of 26 people, including children and their parents, helping to prime and paint a fence line at Quail Hollow Ranch that needed sprucing. Aniko Millan of County Park Friends brought her horses to give an educational talk about horse safety and etiquette following one of the painting days, and the YOLs were able to enjoy a hands-on learning experience adjacent to the stables at Quail Hollow! The Young Outdoor Leaders and those at County Park Friends helped us enhance our park while experiencing the excitement of the outdoors in a new environment!



Young Outdoor Leaders painting at Quail

Program Coordinator, Kathy DeWild has been busy working with some of the volunteers and docents to offer **interpretive programs** again at Quail. She has brought back the following programs: Snakes Alive, Full Moon Walk, Forbidden Sandhills, Gardening and the History Talks.

We have 2 new volunteers that will be trained to open and host the Visitor Center.

The Nest Box program volunteers are in full swing.

The Habitat Restoration Team meets regularly.

The Santa Cruz Astronomy club offers monthly star gazing at Quail and is free to the public. In May they had 18 community members and 7 volunteers to share the night sky. June 9th is the next stargazing party, arrive before dark and stay until 11 if the sky is clear.

Scott Creek Beach

The Tai Kappa Epsilon Fraternity showed up with 18 members and spent a total of 54 hours removing invasive Ice Plant from the dunes and clearing the viewing platform of sand to make it accessible.

Workability Volunteers at Anna Jean Cummings and Willowbrook Park

The workability student volunteers contributed over 300 hours in our Parks this year. They are done for the summer but plan to be back next year!

Park Host Program

Our Park Hosts at Quail Hollow Ranch Park had to leave their position so we are currently recruiting for that location.

Details about our Park Host at our Pinto Lake Park are under our report about Pinto Lake in this update.