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

Tuesday, October 13th, 2026 5:00pm – 7:00pm Regular Meeting	**Simpkins Family Swim Center** **Community Rooms** 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062

10/13/2026 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting cancelled due to lack of quorum.

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Tuesday, October 13th, 2026 5:00pm – 7:00pm Regular Meeting	**Simpkins Family Swim Center** **Community Rooms** 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Agenda documents (including updates, revisions and additional materials) are available for review in person at the *Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms*, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, and electronically on the County's website, Parks and Recreation Commission, at:

https://parks.santacruzcountyca.gov/Home/AboutUs/ParksRecreationCommission

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

3. **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.

4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 8-9)

Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

6. **PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

7. **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**
   a. **County Park Friends: Parks For All** – County Park Friends Staff
   b. **Measure Q Program** – Clare Peabody, Senior Analyst
   c. **Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program**
   d. **Commissioner Report Guide** – Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha, PRC Liaison
   e. **Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Plan** – Nick de Sieyes, Chair

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Commissioner may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Commissioner pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

8. **Approve minutes from August 10th, 2026**……..…..... page 3.

9. **Consider Reports:**
   a. Aquatics Section Report……..……..……..... page 6.
   b. Arts and Cultural Services Report……..……..…..... page 7.
   c. Maintenance Section Report……..……..…..…..... page 9.
   d. Planning Section Report……..……..…….. page 11.
   e. Recreation Section Report……..…… page 16.
   f. Reservations Section Report……..……..…… page 19.
   g. Volunteer Section Report……..…….. page 20.

Written Correspondence Listing

I. Email from Kelley Fuller – Wildlife Protection at Quail Hollow County Park

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, December 14th, 2026

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

TRANSLATION SERVICES/SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCION
Spanish language translation is available on an as needed basis. Please make arrangements at least 72 hours in advance at the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; or by email at ParksCommission@parks.santacruzcountyca.gov.

Las sesiones de la Comisión de Parques y Recreación del Condado de Santa Cruz pueden ser traducidas del inglés al español y del español al inglés. Por favor, haga los arreglos con al menos 72 horas de antelación con el Departamento de Parques, Espacios Abiertos y Servicios Culturales, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA; o por correo electrónico a ParksCommission@parks.santacruzcountyca.gov.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, is an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 10th, 2026 5:00pm – 7:00pm Regular Meeting	**Simpkins Family Swim Center** **Community Rooms** 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062

DRAFT

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order by Vice-Chair Sanford at 5:08 PM.

   Present: Alexis Konevich (District 1), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), & Anne Less (District 5)

   Absent: Nick de Sieyes (District 2) & Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4)

   Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Juan Perez Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**
   Defer item 7(b) New Commissioner Outline & Structure to the next meeting on Tuesday, October 13th – Motion/Second: Sanford/Less
   AYES: 3
   NOES: 0
   ABSTAIN: 0
   ABSENT: 2

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 3 members of the public.

4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 8-9)
   Approved consent agenda – Motion/Second: Konevich/Less
   AYES: 3
   NOES: 0
   ABSTAIN: 0
   ABSENT: 2

Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

   District 1: Commissioner Konevich thanked the member of the public for speaking about Winkle Park and shared that she has heard discussions in local mom groups regarding the need for additional shade structures at District 1 parks. She noted concerns that some parks are hotter than expected, particularly due to new rubber surfacing. Commissioner Konevich also shared that Ryan Hoffman is planning a "Wheelie Good Time" event as part of general revitalization efforts at Felt Street County Park. Additionally, Alisha and Miko are fundraising to complete a mural at Farm County Park.

   District 2: Absent.

   District 3: Vice-Chair Sanford shared constituent feedback from a local youth sports nonprofit regarding the need for playing surfaces and fields in Santa Cruz County that remain accessible during the winter months. The organization emphasized the importance of providing a range of recreational opportunities

year-round and avoiding periods when youth have limited opportunities to participate in sports and activities due to weather.

District 4: Absent.

District 5: Commissioner Less shared that there is excitement surrounding the expansion at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park and Felton Covered Bridge County Park, while also noting constituent concerns regarding transportation and access. With construction on Highway 9 resulting in traffic rerouting and increased traffic passing by Quail Hollow, she suggested the Department consider additional signage to promote the park and encourage increased visitation. She also noted growing momentum around construction of the pump track and anticipated questions and concerns regarding safe access to the park and new pump track.

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gaffney discussed exploring shade structures and other strategies to address climate change, including vegetation management, and suggested that commissioners speak with their appointing Supervisor about the potential use of discretionary funds. He also noted that the department is exploring opportunities to expand year-round programming. Regarding the recently approved FY27 budget, he described a challenging process that required multiple revisions and additional reductions. He also discussed potential Measure Q funding and the County allocation proposal presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 25. The proposal included funding for the Parks Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program, Moran Lake Vegetation Management, and the Winkle Park Playground Replacement.

He also provided an update on recent County Parks activities. Summer programs served nearly 800 youth through Jr./Little Guards and swim lessons, with approximately 8,000 Swim Center check-ins. County Parks hosted two Light Up Night pool parties and participated in National Night Out. There will be a Full Moon Hike at Quail Hollow Ranch on August 22 and Parks & Rex on August 15. Spotlight Artist programming and art exhibitions are happening at various County facilities. Maintenance staff continued park improvements and wildfire fuel reduction efforts. A new maintenance truck was funded by RTC, and the Panther/Yellowbank bathroom was officially opened. Recruitment for Park Maintenance Workers is underway. Planning staff also continue to work on the Moran Lake Habitat Management Plan and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Study. Outdoor education programming continued with overnight camping and day trips at Greyhound Rock and seven outdoor education sessions at Quail Hollow Ranch.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Greyhound County Park** – Rob Tidmore, Principle Planner

Rod Tidmore provided an update on ongoing projects at Greyhound Rock County Park, including completed geologic investigations and site improvements, plans for low-cost overnight accommodations, and summer programming such as day trips, camping, and outdoor education programs.

Public Comment

- 2 members of the public.

~~b. **New Commissioner Report Outline & Structure** – Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha, PRC Liaison~~

Deferred to next meeting.

Consent Agenda

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8. Approve minutes from June 8th, 2026…….……..... page 3.

9. Consider Reports:

DRAFT

a. Aquatics Section Report……..……..……..... page 6.
b. Arts and Cultural Services Report……..……...…..... page 7.
c. Maintenance Section Report……..……..……..... page 9.
d. Planning Section Report……..……..…….. page 11.
e. Recreation Section Report……..…… page 16.
f. Reservations Section Report……...…..…… page 18.
g. Volunteer Section Report……..…….. page 19.

Written Correspondence Listing

I. None

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM *Tuesday*, October 13th, 2026

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

DRAFT

County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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

Date: October 1st, 2026

To: Parks and Recreation Commission

From: Anissa Childers, Aquatic Supervisor

Subject: Aquatics Section Report

Programming

This fall, we have continued to offer both Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Tuesday/Thursday **swim lessons** sessions, along with weekend lessons. These lessons have had over 175 participants, reflecting another strong season. In partnership with County Park Friends, we continued to offer swim lessons with our private contractor, Sunshine. These sessions had full enrollment and served a large portion of the community through swimming scholarships. We also offer **private contractor lessons** with Sunshine, Becky A. and Becky G. Their lessons have had 80 participants as of August. All three instructors have full rosters and are continually opening more lessons to accommodate for their high demand.

For children with a more advanced skill set we offer a swim team option known as the **Simpkins Sharks**. Our team has more than 30 members who attend practice on Tuesday/Thursday. During our Fall season we also offer **Noodle Ball**. This activity is meant to introduce participants to water polo in a fun and approachable way. As of August, we have had 21 participants.

Facility Usage and Adult Programming

Since August, the facility has recorded 9,223 membership check-ins, not including daily drop-in admissions, making overall facility usage even higher. Our adult programming also continued to see strong participation, with 1,703 Adult Fitness class check-ins and 985 Water Aerobics class check-ins.

Hiring and Training

Hiring has recently been on hold but starting this month, we are reopening lifeguard and head guard recruitments. We continue to train our staff during in-services. Since August we have had 4 in-services each focusing on a different lifeguarding skill and community need. Moving forward through Fall season, they will be held monthly and will continue to provide refreshers on the necessary skills for our lifeguards.

Upcoming Programming and Events

In August, we hosted our final **Light Up the Night** after-hours family pool party, which was a tremendous success with over 265 registered participants and 65 additional drop-in guests. We had an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from families, and hope to continue these events in the future.

We offer two aquatics camps in the Fall – Splashgiving and Winter Warriors. Both camps provide fun and safe environments to help children get comfortable in the water during Fall and Winter break, which is especially important for parents who are working during this time.

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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

Date: October 5, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Kathy DeWild, Arts Program Coordinator
Subject: Arts & Cultural & Interpretive Activities - Section Report

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Just in Time (JIT) Program

The 'Just In Time' (JIT) program is a community-initiated public art program that provides a process for approval of public art projects which are not initiated by the County and when funding is from non-County sources.



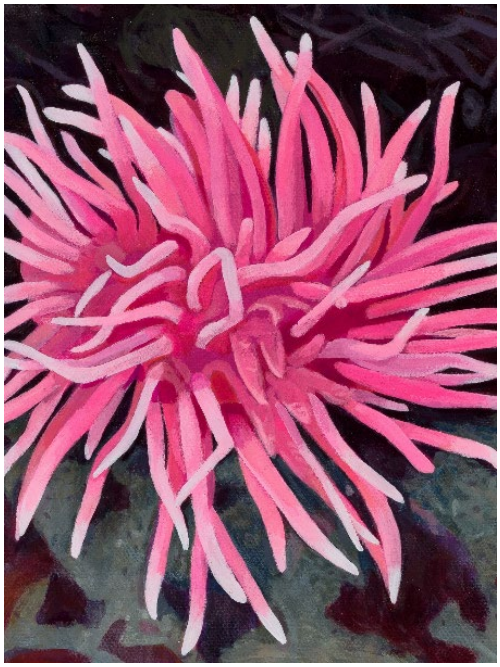
A local artist will soon begin work on a mural to beautify the retaining wall on Soquel Drive at Cunnison Lane, in front of The Farm Park. The new mural project is intended to address the current dilapidated, graffitied, wall. The artist and community members who spearheaded the effort and raised the funding hope to create beauty, demonstrate pride of care, and kick off new interest for the Farm Park that was once the epicenter of the organic food movement. The design honors this history, looks toward the future potential of the park, and will be created and cared for in a way that ensures the integrity of the piece for years to come. The image on the left is the artist's concept design.

Art Exhibitions

At 701 Ocean St. (1st & 5th floors)
Oct. 26 through early January 2027:
Painting, Drawing, Printmaking - Ross Sheehan
Acrylic Paintings - Vanessa Stafford
Photography - Katie Larson
Acrylic painting on canvas - Amy Moon Offermann-Sims
(pictured – "Hopkins' Rose Nudibranch")
Clay Sculpture - Brooke Matteson

At the Simpkins Family Swim Center/Live Oak Library Annex Oct. 19 through early January 2027:
Prints – Margaret Michel

At 500 Westridge Oct. 7 through early January 2027:
Photographs – Chad Williams





Pace Trail Public Art Project

Wyatt Hersey will be installing “Sandhills Sentinels” in mid-October along the recently opened Pace Trail.

Each of the four powder-coated steel sculptures that will be installed along the trail highlight an insect or plant endemic to the Sandhills habitat, which the Pace Trail traverses: Ben Lomond Spineflower, Ben Lomond Wallflower, Mount Hermon June Beetle, and Zayante Band-Winged Grasshopper. The names of each will be included at the bottom of the sculpture in both English and Spanish.

Quail Hollow Ranch Interpretive Activities

Brian Gundy brings For Goodness Snakes! to Quail Hollow on October 11th from 12:00-1:00 PM. In this exciting and interactive presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to see and hold a blue-tongued skink, black and white Tegu, four different kinds of ball pythons, and a 9-ft. albino Burmese python! Brian will discuss snake senses and how these animals live and interact with the wild.

Come join park docents for a quiet exploration of Quail Hollow Ranch under the moonlight, on Full Moon Hike, October 25th from 6:30-8:30 PM.

Beginning Birding – Join Park Docent Jim Maughn on November 8th from 8:00-10:00 AM for a leisurely hike through Quail Hollow Ranch County Park, in search of our fine, feathered friends.

Community Day at Quail Hollow Ranch

Join County Parks for a free family-friendly event at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park on Sunday, October 25th from 10:00 AM–2:00 PM.

The ranch house will be open for visitors and Park Docent Ken Kellman will have microscopes set up for viewing. Docent- and staff-led hikes include easy hikes on the Discovery Trail and a more challenging hike on the new Pace Trail. The Outdoor Education Center will host gardening and art activities. River Dogs of Boulder Creek will have hot dogs and beverages for sale. The day offers something for visitors of all ages, with opportunities to explore the outdoors, learn, create, and connect with fellow community members. Don't miss it!

Community Day Schedule of Activities



County of Santa Cruz

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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

Date: October 2nd, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jesse Williams, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Maintenance Section Report

North County: Highlands and Emeline Maintenance Shops

The North County maintenance team has been busy focusing on **Moran Lake County Park** tree work, drainage improvements, and vegetation management. This work is challenging due to the limited window between the end of nesting bird season on August 31 and the start of monarch butterfly overwintering and roosting season on October 1. To make the Moran Lake Eucalyptus Groves safe, as well as maintain a crucial habitat for the protected Monarch Butterfly, our crews have worked closely with tree contractors to ensure that we are ready for the butterflies to arrive as well as prepare for a potential El Niño winter.

Maintenance has also been busy with vegetation management and trail improvements at the **Miller Property**.

A new shower was installed at **the Hook** restroom area on East Cliff.

Irrigation modifications and improvements were necessary around the new pump track at **Felton Covered Bridge County Park**, to ensure the grass areas and all irrigation functioned correctly after the construction project was completed. Come check out to the new pump track, it is AWESOME!

Ongoing and focused maintenance around the **Yellowbank** parking lot up the north coast has been one of many new responsibilities for park maintenance.

Necessary repairs and replacements on multiple irrigation valve banks at **Anna Jean Cummings (AJC) County Park** have been an ongoing challenge to keep the playing fields in good shape. The maintenance team also replaced the booster pump for the irrigation system at AJC to improve water pressure.

Mid County: Simpkins and Felt Street Maintenance Shop

Mid County Maintenance has spent a lot of time at **Jose Avenue County Park** working on general beautification and facility upgrades in the restrooms. They have painted the inside of the bathrooms, ordered new fixtures such as toilets, sinks, urinals, and hand dryers. The picnic pavilion will be renovated, and the drinking fountain will be replaced. On the Pedestrian bridge between Harper Court and Jose Ave. Park, staff replaced boards and stained the bridge before the rainy season.

At the **Swim Center,** our maintenance team replaced the impeller on the 50M pump. This will increase the flow of water for when we backwash the pools, cutting down staff time and cleaning and balancing the chemicals in the pools for efficiently. The team is also responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the entire Simpkins Swim Center facility, including the **Parks Department offices** and the **Live Oak Library Annex**.

The maintenance team cleaned up encampments at **Brommer County Park** along the riparian corridor. The completed vegetation management and debris cleanup will help improve water quality along this corridor.

South County: Pinto Lake and Aptos Polo Grounds Maintenance Shops

The South County Maintenance team has been busy cleaning up a large Pine and Oak tree that fell near the trailers we have for our Park Host program at the **Burt Scott Estate**.

Staff located a leak at the **Freedom Annex**, in an area where it was difficult to make the repairs.

As part of our seasonal maintenance, the South County team cleaned up the landscape and mowed high weeds at the **Rountree Medium Facility**.

We recently started a Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program and one of our first projects is to start a restroom remodel at **Mesa Village County Park**.

At **Polo Grounds County Park**, renovations of Soccer Field C and the Pony League baseball field have been a summer long project and have yielded great results. All the athletic fields at Polo have now had significant renovations within the last 2 years!

Staff worked on erosion repairs on the **Pinto Lake County Park** trails. They added base rock and DG path fines to the areas that needed it the most to create safe walking paths through the park.

Seasonal Maintenance or Upcoming Maintenance County Wide

A new addition to our Operations and Maintenance is the implementation of a **Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program**. This program will allow specific staff members to focus on deferred maintenance projects and special priority construction projects in a full-time capacity. The two-person crew that has been identified will be working to address ongoing deferred maintenance issues that we have not had the time, the staff, or the money to address. This is an exciting program that we hope will have a positive and noticeable impact for the community and increase the quality and level of service that the public expects from the Parks Department. We will address maintenance projects such as restroom remodels, playground renovations, repairs to park facilities and infrastructure, as well as ongoing and much needed vegetation management throughout our parks systems in our open spaces. The maintenance team will also be working on vegetation management in some of our open spaces and trail systems in partnership with CalFire.

Maintenance Staffing Changes

The Parks Department is currently in the process of onboarding a Park Maintenance Worker I. This position will increase the maintenance team's capacity to address routine park maintenance, facility needs, vegetation management, and ongoing deferred maintenance work. Additional seasonal extra help staff will be used to help offset staffing changes associated with implementation of the Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program. Seasonal staff will provide additional flexibility to maintain day-to-day park operations while regular full-time maintenance staff are assigned to larger deferred maintenance and vegetation management projects.

Additional seasonal extra-help staff will be used to offset staffing changes associated with implementation of the Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program. Seasonal staff will provide flexibility to maintain day-to-day park operations while regular full-time maintenance staff focus on larger deferred maintenance and vegetation management projects.

Vehicle/Equipment Update

The Parks Department has added two additional maintenance trucks to its fleet to support the Deferred Maintenance Pilot Program. Additionally, a new truck has been purchased to replace a vehicle that was removed from service due to significant mechanical issues.

A new wide area mower has been ordered to support vegetation management. Additionally, new implements have been ordered for our existing Bobcat tractors. The implements will support a broad range of work, including vegetation management, tree and brush removal, excavation, drainage improvements, grading, site preparation, and general maintenance activities.

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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

Date: October 1, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Park Planners - Rob Tidmore & Zane Mortensen
Subject: Planning Section Report

Coastal Rail Trail

Segments 8-11: The Board of Supervisors approved a contract amendment with RRM Design Group on February 24th to begin work on the Interim Trail, including an analysis of Interim Trail designs. Draft designs of the Interim Trail are expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

Ecology Action is continuing to lead the non-infrastructure programming portion of the project, coordinating with 10 area schools on bicycle and pedestrian education classes, and the creation of a community incentive program that will target low-income monolingual Spanish speaking residents of Live Oak, Pleasure Point, and Capitola.

North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5): The Panther/Yellowbank parking lot and bathrooms are officially open to the public. The trail itself is still under construction and is closed to the public. The Davenport parking lot is now under construction, and the trail is expected to open to the public before the end of 2026.

Freedom Lake Restoration Plan






Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW), in partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks, is advancing restoration planning and implementation at Freedom Lake, a 22-acre lake largely overtaken by a floating vegetation mat since the mid-2000s. Recent work has included invasive vegetation removal and native habitat restoration in the upland riparian corridor, along with expanded technical studies such as a stream monitoring gage, inlet and outlet channel surveys, bathymetric mapping, water quality monitoring, and eDNA sampling to inform the biological review.

A draft Conceptual Restoration Alternatives Analysis has now been completed and reviewed, evaluating potential habitat enhancement, water quality improvement, and recreation strategies to guide future restoration and management decisions at Freedom Lake. Current planning efforts are focused on finalizing the scope of Phase 1 implementation, with the project team evaluating options that range from vegetation mat removal alone to a combined package that also includes construction of a boardwalk and observation deck. A key strategy under development is sequencing any boardwalk and deck

construction along the access corridor created by vegetation removal equipment, minimizing additional habitat disturbance and supporting a stronger net benefit case for streamlined permitting through CDFW and USFWS. Planning level cost estimates have been developed for each scope option, and the team is coordinating with engineering firms to refine those estimates ahead of a Board of Supervisors presentation. Next steps include finalizing the eDNA review, completing the Technical Advisory Committee process, beginning broader community engagement, and initiating formal coordination with regulatory agencies on the preferred permitting pathway.



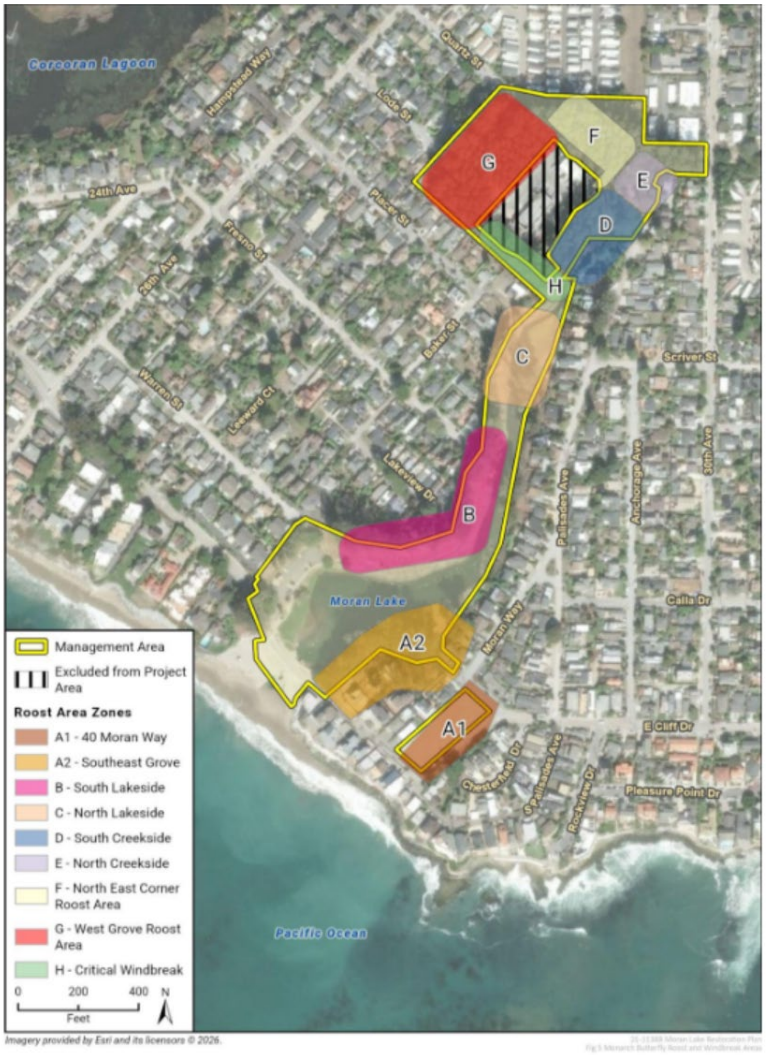
Greyhound Rock

Planning and conceptual design of the Environmental Education Center is underway. The project team participated in the Greyhound Rock Community Open House on Sunday, September 20th and shared initial concepts for the project with the approximately 35 community members who attended the Open House. Additional outreach and engagement will occur this year and in early 2027. Planning and preliminary design is expected to be complete before the end of 2027.

Moran Lake County Park

Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan (HMP): The Board of Supervisors approved the updated HMP at a public hearing on August 11, 2026, and the updated HMP is now in effect.

Habitat Management Work: Staff worked with County Parks' consulting arborist to compile a prioritized list of recommended tree and habitat management work for Fall 2026. The work is consistent with the approved HMP and will help protect public safety and monarch overwintering habitat by reducing the risk of tree and limb loss. It consists of ground level vegetation management and root-collar clearing throughout the habitat, drainage improvements in Areas A2, B, and C, and pruning trees in Areas A2, E, F, and H (refer to habitat map below for areas noted above). The habitat management work is currently ongoing and is scheduled to be complete before the Monarch overwintering seasonal restrictions are in place. The Board of Supervisors approved $250,000 in Measure Q funding for the tree pruning work in Areas A2 and E. The Santa Cruz County Sanitation District is paying for the cost of tree pruning in Areas F and H. Native tree planting around the lagoon and overwintering areas to improve monarch habitat and native biodiversity will be scheduled in late 2026 after the first rains make the soil suitable for planting.



40 Moran Way: Planting the site with native trees and shrubs is expected to occur in late 2026 after the onset of rains. County Parks have secured all of the native plants from area nurseries. The purchase of additional native Monterey Cypress trees were partially supported by a generous donation from the local chapter of the Sierra Club.

Pace Property Connection Trails

The Pace Property Connection Trails remain open for public use while the project team completes the final interpretive and visitor-serving elements of the project. During October, Santa Cruz County Parks will coordinate installation of the completed interpretive panels and public art throughout the property.

Because one of the interpretive panels is located within the sensitive Sandhill Habitat Area, the County coordinated with Jodi McGraw Consulting to provide environmental monitoring during associated ground-disturbing installation activities. Parks staff are also fabricating the remaining trail name signs and have ordered production of a tri-fold brochure to provide visitors with additional information about the property, trails, and natural resources.

These remaining improvements are intended to enhance the visitor experience and provide additional context about the site's natural and cultural features. The County will celebrate this major project milestone with a ribbon-cutting event on **Monday, October 26, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Quail Hollow Ranch**. Following installation of the remaining signage, interpretive features, and public art, the project will move into final closeout.

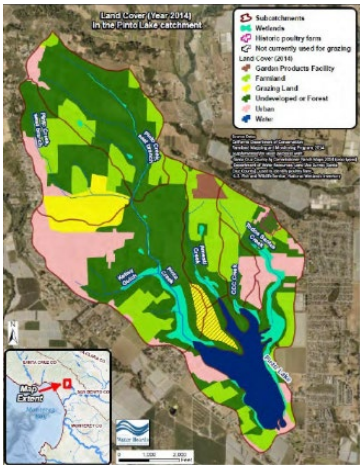


Pinto Lake

County Parks, in partnership with the City of Watsonville and County Environmental Health, continues to advance coordinated efforts to address long-standing water quality impairments at Pinto Lake. The lake is listed as impaired under the Clean Water Act for nutrients and cyanotoxins and is subject to a phosphorus Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) with a 2029 compliance target. Over the past year, partner agencies have expanded water quality and flow monitoring, along with hydrologic studies and water quality analysis, to better understand contaminant input sources and help identify and appropriately scale treatment alternatives that provide sustainable solutions to both internal loading and watershed contributions.

The County has received Measure Q funding to support a comprehensive tributary monitoring study, which will quantify streamflow, nutrient, and sediment loading across the lake's priority subcatchments and identify which areas are contributing most significantly to lake impairment. Following a competitive RFP process, the County has selected a consultant to carry out the study, with stream gages set to go in on the lake's four priority creeks before winter storms arrive. Results will be used to identify watershed priority areas and target future best management practice (BMP) implementation to the locations where it will have the greatest impact.

The County is also advancing its in-lake management approach, including updated bathymetric mapping and water quality analysis to inform the type and scale of an aeration system to complement planned in-lake phosphorus treatment. Together, these efforts are intended to better align in-lake treatment with upstream BMP implementation and support progress toward TMDL compliance.





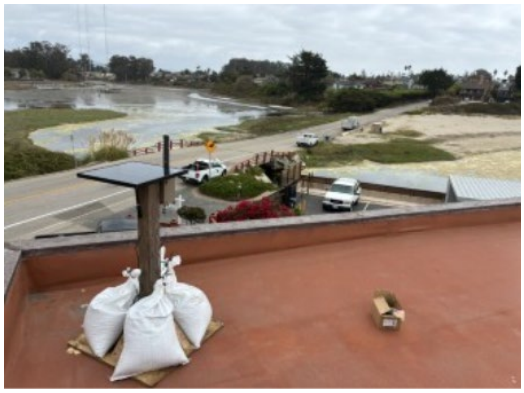


Santa Cruz Coastal Lagoons & East Cliff Drive Resiliency Study



With funding from the State Coastal Conservancy, County Parks is preparing a planning level feasibility study of nature based strategies to address sea level rise along East Cliff Drive at Schwan, Corcoran, and Moran Lagoons. The goal is to identify preferred adaptation strategies for each lagoon that protect coastal ecosystems, maintain coastal access, and keep critical infrastructure resilient.

Monitoring is ongoing in partnership with California State Parks and Santa Cruz County Environmental Health. ESA has completed topographic, bathymetric, and beach profile surveys, sediment and water quality sampling, and installed long term water level, water quality, and camera monitoring at each site. Monitoring will continue through the coming winter, and the Existing Conditions Report has been completed to establish the project's technical foundation.



Using the first year of monitoring data, ESA is now developing models for each lagoon that will simulate lagoon mouth conditions and water levels under existing conditions and future sea level rise scenarios based on the State's 2024 guidance. In parallel, the project team has begun framing the Preliminary Adaptation Strategies report. The draft framework organizes options into protection, accommodation, and retreat within an adaptation pathways approach, and sets evaluation criteria covering engineering, environmental, policy, social, and economic considerations.

Phase 1 community engagement has been successfully completed and included the first Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, three Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meetings representing environmental, recreation, and neighborhood/business interests, community tabling events at the Live Oak Farmers Market and Pleasure Point Street Fair, and Community Workshop #1 held on June 25, 2026. The project website serves as the central hub for project information, technical documents, meeting materials, and updates, and an online survey remains open for community feedback and update signups. Input from Phase 1 is shaping the project vision and the range of alternatives, and preliminary adaptation strategies will be presented for public feedback at Community Workshop #2 and additional tabling in the next phase of engagement.



Valle del Pájaro

Master planning for Valle del Pájaro is in its final phase, with the Project Manager and consultant leading the effort and community engagement continuing to shape the plan throughout.





Over the course of the process the County, in partnership with County Parks Friends (CPF) and guided by the community engagement framework, hosted a series of on-site and off-site workshops to gather community feedback on park concept options. Attendance and participation were strong throughout. CPF also administered a community survey over the summer, bringing it to community events and targeted meetings with key community groups to meet residents where they are and reach those who are less frequently heard from.

On September 12, the project held its fourth and final workshop, a community celebration sharing the updated park concept shaped by workshop and survey input. The consultant is now incorporating that feedback into the final Master Plan, which is expected to be completed in October. Looking ahead, County Parks is pursuing a Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program (SPP) Round 5 grant, with the application due in December 2026. The final Master Plan will serve as the foundation for that application and future funding efforts.



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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Date: October 1, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments

The County Parks and Recreation Department continues to strengthen partnerships with local agencies and organizations to expand access to engaging, active, and community-focused programs.

The Mall Walkers program, offered through an ongoing partnership with Capitola Mall, continues to provide a consistent opportunity for community members to stay active. Walking sessions are held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30 to 11:00 AM.

The Department is also partnering with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, South County Task Force, District Attorney's Office, and Probation Department to host the **annual Trunk or Treat events on October 23rd, 2026**. These free community events bring together local agencies to provide safe and family-friendly Halloween activities. The Live Oak event will be held at the Sheriff's Headquarters, 5200 Soquel Drive, beginning at 4:00 PM, while the South County event will take place at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds beginning at 3:00 PM.



On September 26th, the Department hosted the **Super Simpkins Kids Triathlon** at the Simpkins Family Swim Center. The event provided children ages 3–12 with an opportunity to participate in a fun, active swim, bike, and run course. The Department was supported by community partners, including Ecology Action (Modo), helping promote healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and positive youth recreation experiences.

Parks staff also held a **Community Open House at Greyhound Rock County Park** on Sunday, September 20th. North County community members attended and provided their feedback on plans for an Environmental Education Center and low-cost cabin accommodation project at the property. Planning for the future project is just beginning and there will be additional opportunities for public input on the project in the next few months. This planning work is funded by a grant from Coastal Conservancy. Staff enjoyed sharing with the public the new interim program options, including field trips and select overnight options.

Outdoor Education staff are collaborating with County Park Friends to host an overnight camping experience for youth from the Live Oak area at Greyhound Rock from October 2nd–4th. This three-day experience will provide participants with opportunities to explore the outdoors, develop camping skills, and build confidence through hands-on activities in a coastal setting. The outdoor education team have hosted over a dozen day field trips for youth from its launch in June 2026 and this will be the third overnight camp hosted at Greyhound

Rock. Throughout the program, youth will participate in outdoor education activities focused on coastal ecology, environmental stewardship, wildlife observation, and Leave No Trace principles.

Participants will also learn basic camping skills, including tent setup, campsite organization, outdoor safety, and responsible use of natural resources. Campers will work together to prepare meals while learning the fundamentals of outdoor cooking, including meal planning, food preparation, camp kitchen safety, and proper food storage. The overnight experience is designed to encourage teamwork, independence, and connection to the natural environment while providing youth with meaningful opportunities to experience camping and outdoor recreation. Staff will also incorporate guided hikes, exploration, group activities, and opportunities for participants to learn about the unique coastal habitats and natural resources surrounding Greyhound Rock.

Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements



The fall season began with the continuation of the department's **After-School Child Enrichment (ACE) programs** at Mar Vista Elementary and Rio del Mar Elementary Schools. Offered Monday through Friday from 2:00-6:00 PM, the programs are provided in partnership with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Extended Learning Opportunity Program (ELOP) and currently serve approximately 90 students. The Recreation team has also expanded its support in South County by providing staff to assist with the ELOP after-school program at McQuiddy Middle School.

Looking ahead, staff are preparing for **winter recreation camps** at four County locations: Highlands County Park, Quail Hollow Ranch County Park, Mesa Village County Park, and Aptos Village County Park. Winter camps will provide youth with a variety of engaging enrichment opportunities, including games, arts and crafts, sports, cooking activities, and local field trips.

County Parks also continues to expand recreation opportunities for **active adults** through community partnerships. This fall, the County extended its partnership with El Palomar Ballroom to continue offering Big East Swing and Cha-Cha dance classes at Aptos Village Park. Staff are also finalizing a contract to offer a Kickboxing Cardio class for adults at Aptos Village Park, further expanding fitness and wellness offerings.

In August, our recreation team held its first **Spanish for Young Learners Program** where each week participants ages 3-5 years old got to learn Spanish with fun filled lessons. This bilingual program focused on learning colors, numbers, days of the weeks, seasons and more with weekly Spanish lessons, songs and games at the Simpkins Family Swim Center Live Oak Community Rooms.



We also launched our first fall Super Tots Sports program, offering soccer lessons, drills, and games for ages 3–5. Programs continue to see steady participation at Highlands County Park, Brommer Street County Park, Simpkins Community Rooms, and Pinto Lake County Park, supporting early physical literacy and active play. The next Super Tots Sports Skills & Drills program begins in October.

The Youth Gymnastics Program also continued to grow. Programming at Highlands County Park now regularly engages participants ages 1–12, and due to increasing demand, the team is preparing to expand gymnastics offerings to Mid County in the Simpkins Community Rooms, further increasing accessibility for families.

Marketing Efforts

The Department is currently in the process of developing the Winter and Spring Activity Guide, which will highlight upcoming seasonal programs scheduled to take place between December 2026 and May 2027. As part of ongoing marketing efforts, the team continues to produce bilingual flyers in both Spanish and English and regularly updates social media platforms to promote events and programs to the broader community. In

addition to the activity guide, the recreation team is working on developing marketing and branding materials for the Fall/Winter offerings through banners and yard signs as a branding & promoting strategy.

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Date: October 2, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Garrett Smart, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Reservations Section Report

Parks and Rex Dog Pool Party Success

This year's Parks and Rex Dog Pool Party at Simpkins Family Swim Center was well attended and ran smoothly from start to finish. The event brought in 415 participants, supported by about 40 staff and volunteers on site. A total of $14,515.00 was raised, making this another strong year for the fundraiser. The overall response from the community was positive, and the event continued to serve as an enjoyable summer tradition for families and their dogs.



Park Service Officer (PSO) Team Update

Our three recently hired Park Service Officers have settled into their roles effectively. Each has begun taking independent shifts and contributing to daily park operations with reliability and professionalism. Their support has strengthened our ability to maintain safe, welcoming spaces and provide consistent service across our parks and facilities. This added coverage also allows us to better support community events and reservations throughout the year.

Winter Wonderland – December 12

Planning has begun for this year's Winter Wonderland event. The program will include a ticketed holiday breakfast along with free arts and crafts and children's activities. This is a family-friendly event that we are pleased to offer again, and staff are preparing to deliver a simple, welcoming, and community-centered celebration for the holiday season.

Special Events Update

We still host a wide variety of other groups' special events in our parks throughout the year. These events reflect strong community partnerships and steady interest in the use of our spaces for both public celebrations and meaningful causes. Recent and upcoming events include Gourmet Grazing, organized by the Santa Cruz Cancer Benefit Group; a new Felton Covered Bridge Night Market currently in development; Ben Lomond Scottish Day; and the Felton Covered Bridge Holiday Market. Each event brings unique opportunities for community engagement and demonstrates how our facilities support a wide range of activities, traditions, and local organizations.

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Date: October 1, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Julianna Vargas, Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Section Report



Volunteer Coordinator Position Filled

My name is Julianna Vargas, and I recently joined Santa Cruz County Parks as the new Volunteer Program Coordinator. I hold a Master of Public Administration and previously worked with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, where I helped develop and implement a state-mandated reentry program for individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community.

As I step into this role, I look forward to building on the strong volunteer work already happening throughout our parks. A key focus will be supporting our existing volunteer projects and the dedicated volunteers who make them possible, while also working with staff and community partners to identify and create new opportunities for volunteerism throughout the County. I am excited to help strengthen these connections and make it easier for community members to find meaningful ways to contribute to our parks.

Anna Jean Cummings County Park

We are currently collaborating with lead volunteers to add more invasive plant management dates to the volunteer calendar and revitalize the monthly volunteer activity. Join us to remove invasive plants along the trails on **Saturday, October 17th at 9:00 A.M**.

RSVP here

Felton Discovery County Park

Please join us for our upcoming Felton Discovery Park Volunteer Garden Work party on October 24th!

RSVP here: Sign Up Sheet

CDI Litter Abatement

Parks is supporting a CDI grant focused on litter abatement at coastal access points, waterways, and illegal dumping sites throughout the county. We are working on developing volunteer cleanup events beginning in October and look forward to this partnership as an opportunity to engage additional community members while improving and caring for County Parks and surrounding areas.

Park Hosts

We are planning to open recruitment for additional Park Hosts in mid-October. We are currently seeking additional hosts for **Greyhound Rock County Park** and **Pinto Lake County Park** and are excited to continue growing the Park Host Program in the coming months.

South County Satellite Office

Parks is currently working to establish a South County satellite office at Pinto Lake County Park to better serve the South County community. This will provide a more accessible local presence for Parks operations and create additional opportunities to connect with residents, community organizations, and volunteers in the area. The volunteer component of this effort will focus on making it easier for South County residents to learn about and participate in volunteer opportunities within their local parks.

Click here to visit the Santa Cruz County Parks website to view the Volunteer Calendar and sign up for volunteer opportunities!