



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks Department



DATE: September 22, 2014

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: October 2, 2014

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Carla Schoof, Community Programs Specialist
SUBJECT: Report on Volunteer and Community Programs

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and accept report.

BACKGROUND:

Program updates and items of interest to the Commission.

DISCUSSION:

Volunteer Activities

Volunteer Management System Implementation: The Department is working with Samaritan Technologies, a Utah-based vendor that designs and implements cloud-based volunteer recruitment and management systems.

Currently, the Department uses its website and email distribution lists to recruit volunteers as do our partners, which includes friends groups, Volunteer Horse Patrol and the local chapters of the California Native Plant Society. To tabulate volunteer attendance and hours, the Department manually enters data it collects from Park-led activities and numbers we receive from our partners. At more than 3,000 volunteers and 30,000 volunteer hours annually, this process has become time consuming and is not an effective way of collecting or analyzing volunteer activity.

Our park partners have been engaged during the design process and most are meeting with us and the vendor's team on a weekly basis to ensure that their volunteer opportunity postings and tracking needs are incorporated in the system design.

When fully implemented, the system will support our efforts to expand our engagement of the community in volunteer and stewardship activities by offering a variety of search

options based on date, time location, and the type of volunteer opportunity, such as those well suited for students, interns, scouts, and groups. The system also allows volunteer coordinators to use automated volunteer scheduling and messaging tools. Because tracking volunteer activity is ongoing either by volunteers or coordinators reporting activity, access to volunteer information will be more readily available. In addition, the system can track data through on-line reports that will be used to demonstrate efforts in the areas of habitat restoration, trail maintenance, and outreach and education.

The system is scheduled to be live in December. Accessing the system will be seamless as volunteers will continue to enter the Department's website to search volunteer opportunities. When they select the Volunteer tab they will enter the system designed by Samaritan which has the same layout and color schematic as the Department and County website.

Coastal Clean-Up Day, September 20:

Coyote Point: The bay cleanup was hosted by the Parks Department and CuriOdyssey. More than 80 volunteers, including groups from Gap Stores, Wells Fargo Bank, Oracle, Google and high schools students from Woodside, Capuchino, Burlingame and Notre Dame. Members of the National Charity League and Demolay South San Francisco Chapter community service groups also participated. The final tally of the amount of trash and recyclables collected was not complete in time for this report.

Mirada Surf Trail: Community members organized a cleanup day on the trail and north to the harbor. The total count of volunteers involved has not been finalized yet. This location was supported by Park Rangers who picked up and weighed trash which totaled 80 pounds of trash and 60 pounds of recycled material.

Upcoming Volunteer Activities

REI-Ridge Trail Event, Saturday, November 1, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.: This annual event is in partnership with the Bay Area Ridge Trail, REI, and the Trail Center. Trail volunteers are led by Park Rangers and volunteer trail crew leaders from the Trail Center. The work focuses on improving the segments of the Ridge Trail that connect Huddart and Wunderlich parks. Volunteers are treated to a free lunch from Chipotle.

Community Activities

Memorial Park 90th Anniversary celebration events continued through September:

September 13 - Bats! A presentation and night hike by Corky Quirk of the Yolo Basin Foundation drew a young and interested crowd. Corky brought three live bats to demonstrate how bat physiology is an advantage to these dusk feeders that rely on echolocation and wings that may look like those of birds but are used in a different fashion to help them navigate and hunt for the small insects they prefer. Corky used a sound device to let the audience hear the high-pitched sound bats make, but are not usually heard by humans.

September 27- BioBlitz: Teams of volunteer scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members will work together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible. BioBlitz partners included the California Native Plant Society, League of the Redwoods, California Academy of Sciences, Nerds for Nature, the Mycological Society, Sequoia Audubon Society, and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Observations and data collected at the event were recorded through a smartphone application, such as iNaturalist.

September 28 – Carts to Cars Event: The Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks held a unique fundraising event at the historic Folger Stable. The event's theme focused on the history of horsepower and how it has been used locally. The event was sold out and the money raised will benefit a range of improvement projects in both Huddart and Wunderlich parks as well as the Friends' educational programs.

Upcoming Community Activities

Take A Hike, Devil's Slide Trail, October 4: The final hike of the 2014 season will be at one of the Department's newest parks. Due to limited parking space, shuttles will be used to transport hike participants from San Pedro Valley Park to the south trailhead. We are notifying participants through email and Facebook and asking them to use an online reservation link for the hike:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/devils-slide-take-a-hike-tickets-13214343457>

Reservations will provide staff with an estimate of number of hikers and will assist in the scheduling of vans and preparation for the event. Participants who do not make a reservation will be accommodated and included in the hike.