



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, August 11th, 2025
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

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 9-10)

Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

6. **PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

7. **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. Partnership Wins in Action – County Park Friends.
- b. Countywide Trails Update & Plan – Rob Tidmore, Parks Principle Planner.
- c. Update on Moran Tree Work.

8. **SUBCOMMITTEE ORAL REPORTS**

- a. Parks and Recreation Commission 2024-25 Work Plan

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.

9. **Approve minutes from May 12th, 2025.**..... page 3.
10. **Consider Reports:**
- a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 7.
 - b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... page 9.
 - c. Maintenance Section Report..... page 11.
 - d. Planning Section Report..... page 13.
 - e. Recreation Section Report..... page 17.
 - f. Reservations Section Report..... page 19.
 - g. Volunteer Section Report..... page 20.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. None.

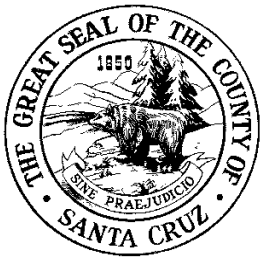
Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM *Tuesday*, October 14th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

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, are 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, May 12th, 2025
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL Meeting called to order at 5:03PM.

Present: Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4)

Absent: Alexis Konevich (District 1)

Vacant: District 5

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

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS No modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS Three members of the public.

Jean Brocklebank: Represented Friends of Corcoran Lagoon Beach and provided an overview of their work. Expressed appreciation for the Coastal Lagoons and E. Cliff Drive Resiliency Study grant. Highlighted educational outreach and ambassador efforts during nesting season. Invited commissioners to visit the group's website for more information.

Mariah Roberts, Executive Director of County Park Friends: Shared that CPF just completed their Strategic Plan and invited the commission to review it on their website and share it with others. Thanked the commission for their help last year spreading the word about CPF's end-of-year campaign. Through all the sharing and communication, they were able to raise \$70k for their access grant scholarship program.

Lynn Dunn: Spoke about concerns regarding ADA compliance in the Live Oak Library Annex and the study room reservation system. Addressed her findings and actions she's taken to work with staff to resolve the issues.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (items 9-10)

Motion to approve: de Sieyes/2nd: Hernandez/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

District 1: Absent.

District 2: Met with Supervisor De Serpa and some members of the public at a small piece of property that is part of the Aptos Village Project. Got to talk about what they would like to see the park become that could better the community.

District 3: Quiet, nothing to report.

District 4: There was a coastal clean-up in District 4. While she was not able to attend, there was great community turnout and help from many organizations like Ecology Action, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, and Supervisor Hernandez.

District 5: Vacant.

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Parks has had several recent successes, despite ongoing County government tensions. Over 500 kids participated in Spring Break programs, and a new Outdoor Education Center quietly opened at Quail Hollow Ranch. In partnership with County Park Friends and the Coastal Conservancy, the Hidden Beach County Park Restroom Project was completed, improving accessibility to the park and beach. A Feasibility Study at the Coastal Lagoons is also underway in collaboration with the Coastal Conservancy.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Discussion on Water Quality Issues at Pinto Lake County Park

Rob Tidmore, Parks Principal Planner, reported that Pinto Lake contains microsystem algae, which produces a neurotoxin harmful to animals in high doses. Algae levels rise in warmer months, limiting recreation. The Regional Water Control Board has set a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the lake, as nutrient runoff from nearby agriculture may be fueling the algae growth. Parks has contracted BlueWater Science to review past studies and identify data gaps for further action.

- **Commissioner de Sieres** asked for clarification if phosphorous was the contaminant of concern. Phosphorous and Nitrogen are contributing to large amounts of microalgae.
- **Commissioner Hernandez:** *Can the neurotoxin created by the microsystem algae affect people and how is it toxic (touch, consumption, etc.)?* The neurotoxin poses a danger, if consumed.

b. Oral Presentation on the ongoing projects at Moran Lake County Park.

Rob Tidmore, Parks Principal Planner, provided an update on ongoing projects at Moran Lake County Park. These include the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan (MBHMP) update, tree trimming, native tree planting, and drainage improvements. The MBHMP update process, which began in 2022, involved collaboration with stakeholders, consultants, and monarch experts, resulting in a public draft released in Summer 2024. The wind study examined how the tree canopy impacts wind protection for monarch overwintering sites and recommended tree management actions to reduce tree failure risk while preserving monarch habitat. Funding from County Risk Management and the wind study findings will support tree work starting in late May. The continuation of native tree planting and drainage improvements from last year will also proceed.

- **Public comments:**
 - One member of the public expressed appreciation towards the updates to the MBHMP and restoration to County biological resources.
 - A Placer Street Resident shared concerns about tree trimming plans and the amount that has been done on Placer Street.
 - Another Placer Street Resident thanked the Parks Department for the work that they are doing in the Moran Lake area.
 - *One member of the public asked if the trimming that is beginning later this month, would reduce trees to 70' or 80' height.* Rob Tidmore clarified that the work is to reduce height and canopy volume to a safe height that reduces the possibility of the tree falling. The wind study

used the 70' measurement as a model, but that height may not be possible at this time because a large reduction to a tree's height could cause health concerns to the tree itself.

c. Informational Overview of the Santa Cruz County Parks Proposed FY2025-26 Budget.

Director Gaffney provided a brief overview of the Santa Cruz County Parks Department for Fiscal Year 2025-26. He explained the expenditures and revenues of the department, as well as some of the major changes in the different divisions that will be affecting the budget. Since the budget has not been presented to or approved by the Board of Supervisors, it may be subject to some changes prior to its finalization for the year.

- **Vice-Chair Sanford:** *With the concern expressed about water and field usage, have you considered the use of artificial turf?* The Parks Department has considered it over the years and recently revisited the potential. There is a benefit to making the change, but the initial construction costs are proving to be a barrier.
- **Commissioner de Sieyes:** *Were there any capital projects included in this budget?* No, the capital projects budget is still being worked through.
- **Public Comments:**
 - *One member of the public asked if the department received any of the impact fees that had been collected and where they are accounted for.* The impact fees have started to be collected, but some of the calculations are being reevaluated. There is a new statute that does not allow Parks to collect the fees until the entire project is signed off. The impact fees are being collected in one spending bucket, to increase the project possibilities.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Select the name of the new South County Park for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent, shared name options for the new South County Park. She explained that County Parks and County Park Friends worked with a naming committee and a youth Park Project Group to develop six potential names. Students at Alianza Charter School voted on them, and the top three were presented to the Commission for consideration:

“Pajaro Valley County Park” (Valle del Pajaro County Park)

“La Flor del Valle County Park”

“Valle Verde County Park”

- **Commissioner de Sieyes** asked for further clarification on what the students from Alianza School voted for. “Pajaro Valley County Park” was the name that was presented and the students expressed an interest in the name but translating it to Spanish. Staff then presented the name in Spanish as a fourth option and the students voted for it.
- **Vice-Chair Sanford:** *How binding is this name choice? Could a donor make a difference in the name choice?* The Commission is making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to accept this as the park name. Donors would not have a final say in the name of the County Park.
- **Commissioner Hernandez** asked for more information on the history of the area. *Since this park is in the outskirts of town, is it still considered Pajaro Valley?* Yes, when the Spaniards arrived in the area, they saw a statute of a bird and chose to refer to this area as the Pajaro Valley.
- **Commissioner Hernandez** also voiced a concern for the name “Valle Verde” and its association with gangs in the area.

Motion to support “Valle del Pajaro County Park” as the name for the new South County Park located on Whiting Rd.: Hernandez/**2nd**: de Sieyes/All in favor.

- b. Review and accept the amended Parks Commission Work Plan 2024-25..... page 3.

Motion to approve the amended work plan: de Sieyes/**2nd**: Hernandez/All in favor.

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.

- 9. **Approve minutes from April 14th, 2025**..... pages 4-6.
- 10. **Consider Reports:**
 - a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 7.
 - b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... pages 8-9.
 - c. Maintenance Section Report..... pages 10-11.
 - d. Planning Section Report.....pages 12-15.
 - e. Recreation Section Report.....page 16.
 - f. Reservations Section Report..... page 17.
 - g. Volunteer Section Report..... pages 18-20.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. Emails from Lynn Dunn expressing concerns and findings regarding ADA compliance in the Live Oak Library Annex.
- II. Copy of letter from Sierra Club California to the Senate Appropriations Committee in Support of AB 616.

Adjournment **Motion** to adjourn at 6:41PM: Sanford/**2nd**: de Sieyes/All in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, August 11th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.



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DIRECTOR

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

Date: August 4, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Anissa Childers, Aquatic Supervisor
Subject: Aquatic Section Report

From May to now, we've had a strong and successful summer, with a consistently busy pool deck and high participation across all our programs:

Junior Guard & Little Guard Programs

Both programs saw excellent growth this year.

- Junior Guard Program (Ages 7–13): 415 participants from June through August — up from 360 last summer.
- Little Guard Program (Ages 5–6): 188 participants — up from 150 in 2024

We were fortunate to have five Junior Guard volunteers assisting with the program and supporting our team.

Private Swim Lessons

Private lessons remain in high demand.

- Our two long-time private contractors were fully booked, serving 59 participants.
- A third private contractor joined us in June and has already worked with 22 families.

Swim Lesson Instructor Training

We ran our semi-annual Swim Lesson Instructor Training from May 27 to June 6, training 18 new instructors. To support their development, we offered discounted swim lessons to the public, which received an outstanding response with 288 participants enrolled.

Group Swim Lessons

Group swim lessons have continued to thrive with 783 participants enrolled so far this summer.

Pool Rentals & Community Events

- We hosted 12 schools for private pool rentals as part of their end-of-year celebrations.
- We also held two free community swim days for Memorial Day and Independence Day, which were very well received.

Adult Fitness Programs

Adult Fitness continues to be one of our most popular offerings:

- Classes are held Monday/Wednesday/Friday at 6:00–7:15 AM and 7:15–8:30 AM, and Saturday at 9:00 AM.
- We've had a total of 2,372 participants enrolled in these sessions this summer.

- Due to the popularity of these classes, we've hired a new private contractor who will launch a new noon workout on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Fall Lifeguarding Courses

Looking ahead to fall, we have four Lifeguarding classes scheduled.

Due to strong demand and consistent instructor availability, we are increasing capacity from 10 to 20 participants per class to help more individuals become certified lifeguards.

Coming Soon - Simpkins Swim Club!

There has been a lot of interest in having a swim team through Simpkins. We are starting off small, but hopefully with advertising and word of mouth, we can grow into a large program for the community.



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Date: August 4, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Kathy DeWild, Arts Programs Coordinator
Subject: Arts & Cultural Services Section Report

Percent for Art Public Art Projects

Juvenile Hall - The County Arts Commission approved the selection panel's recommendation of public artist for the Juvenile Hall Facility. The artist's proposal and agreement will go to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration in September.



Shaun Logan completed a public art mural on the new restroom building at **Hidden Beach Park** (photo on the left). The mural features what a park visitor might see as they make their way down the path to the beach: Monterey Bay, the seawall, flowers, a breaking wave, foliage and a songbird. He also designed way-finding signs to direct park visitors to the beach, and beachgoers to the restroom facility.

Justin Francavilla completed the public art project at **Floral Park**. The "Life of the Tide Pool Party" features tide-pool dwelling creatures on two bronze sculptures and a bronze plaque (photo on the right). The plaque offers park visitors the opportunity to make a rubbing of the artwork with crayons and paper, taking their own copy of the art home.



Exhibitions



The annual **County Employee Art Exhibition** is now showing on the first floor of the County Government Center on Ocean Street. Employees from many county departments participate each year, showing a diverse array of artworks including sculptures, jewelry, paintings, prints, photographs, digital media, and more. Drop by and check it out Monday through Friday, 8AM-5PM.

Coming soon! An **exhibition highlighting surf history in Live Oak at the Simpkins Family Swim Center/Live Oak Library Annex** from September 5 through January 25, 2026. The exhibit is in conjunction with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History's (MAH) exhibition, **Princes of Surf 2025: He'e Nalu Santa Cruz**, which is on view through January 4, 2026 at the MAH.



Spotlight Award for Emerging Artists

Through the Spotlight Award, the County Arts Commission publicly recognizes individuals who have achieved a high level of excellence and creativity in their work, but who have not received widespread acknowledgment of their talent. This annual award recognizes younger artists as well as those who are discovering their artistic voice later in life for work in the following mediums: visual art, performing arts, and literary arts.

The 2025 recipients pictured here, are: Katie Simpson - mixed-media paintings; Priscilla Martinez - mixed-media paintings & digital graphic design; and Kara Saiki - paper mâché masks. The awardees' work is featured at an exhibition on the 5th floor of the County Government Center through October 14.

Ben Lomond Park Mural – JIT Project

Local artist Yeshe Jackson completed a mural on the restroom exterior at Ben Lomond County Park in early June. Among the beautiful trees and river imagery are lots of fun characters for park visitors to find – including Waldo!

This JIT (Just In Time) public art project was spearheaded and funded by the Ben Lomond Village Alliance. JIT is a community-initiated public art program; it provides a process for approval of public art projects located on County property or easements, and the funding comes from non-County sources (i.e. community funded).





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Date: July 29th, 2025
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 mowed the large Eucalyptus lot at the Emeline campus for weed control and fire prevention.

Maintenance has been sand dressing and leveling the fields at Anna Jean Cummings Park, this effort also includes gopher abatement, irrigation adjustments and repairs, seeding and fertilizing.

Quail Hollow Ranch and Anna Jean Cummings Parks received seasonal mowing of the open spaces for fire prevention, this was scheduled for after ground nesting birds have fledged.

The remaining Eucalyptus trees at Moran Way and East Cliff have been removed from the lot and stumps are being ground. The next steps are to grade the area for drainage, and replant with native trees and shrubs for mitigation of removed trees.

A new drinking fountain was installed at Floral County Park next to the playground. Native plantings have been planted around the playground with support from our maintenance team.

The Miller Property in Boulder Creek has a newly installed parking area, split rail fencing, signage, and picnic areas, all completed by our Park Maintenance staff.

The North Coast Beaches are very busy this time of year, Maintenance is spending a lot of time cleaning up garbage and restrooms as well as reestablishing our responsibility at Greyhound Rock by reinstalling park rules signs, changing locks, and opening the vault toilets for public use.

The maintenance team recently replaced the shower valves at Pleasure Point and the Hook. They are also preparing the Moran Lake County Park restroom for full interior and exterior painting, along with new fixtures, lighting, and doors. Additionally, the team helped to install educational signs about tide pools at several coastal access points along East Cliff Drive (Pleasure Point, 38th, The Hook). The team assisted our great volunteers for a day of chainsaw work on the Pace trail at Quail Hollow Ranch. Look out for Yellow Jackets this time of year!

Mid County, Simpkins and Felt Street Maintenance Shop

Maintenance staff spread new wood chips around the Live Oak Library Annex and the back patio area of the swim center.

New engineered Fibar was installed at Hestwood County Park in the playground.

Jose Avenue Park has received turf restoration work, and Gopher abatement.

Jose Avenue, Brommer Street, Felt Street and Hestwood restrooms have received a fresh coat of paint, fixture and lighting upgrades have also been installed as needed.

The team also worked on Ivy and Poison Oak removal at Twin Lakes County Park.

Maintenance has just completed a large clearing project at Brommer Park to clean up the areas around the picnic pavilion and the playground.

South County, Pinto Lake and Aptos Polo Grounds Maintenance Shops

The South County Maintenance team removed a hazardous Eucalyptus tree and Oak tree at Pinto Lake County Park.

The Disc Golf course at Pinto Lake is busy at this time of year! The maintenance team is staying busy keeping the areas cleared back from the walking paths, and keeping the open fields mowed.

We had a successful grand opening for our new south county park, Valle Del Pajaro! There was an excellent turnout of friends, neighbors, county staff, and elected officials. Come on out and see the new park!

There has been a lot of activity around the front of Pinto Lake County Park and Mesa Village County Park with the construction of the Green Valley Road Pedestrian Walkway. We have planted trees at Mesa Village with the help of Watsonville wetlands watch and plan to install new fencing soon.

The maintenance team has been working on the athletic fields at Pinto Lake County Park and Polo Grounds County Park. The work includes filling holes and grading the decomposed granite pathways around the fields.

The Bollard Lighting at Willowbrook County Park is being replaced with new fixtures and more efficient LED lighting.

Polo Grounds, Seascape, Pinto Lake, and Valle Del Pajaro have all received seasonal mowing of the open spaces for fire prevention.

A new public restroom was installed at Hidden Beach and our crews have been working on maintaining and cleaning the new restroom and maintaining the new landscaping around it.

Seasonal Maintenance County Wide

Every year Parks Maintenance maintains our sports fields for safety and playability at Pinto Lake, Polo Grounds, Anna Jean Cummings, Brommer, Michael Grey and Highlands Park. This work consists of irrigation maintenance, rodent control, fertilizing and spot seeding/top dressing, and consistent summer mowing schedules. These efforts set us up for success when it comes to off-season renovations and restoration projects for our athletic fields.

Maintenance Staffing Changes

County Parks is preparing to fill upcoming vacancies within the Parks Maintenance team. We have two team members who are retiring, so the department will be looking to fill these positions in the next few months.

Congratulations to Bernardo Chow and Blanca Rocha! While the department is sad to see them go, we are happy to see them enter the next phase of their lives. These will be big shoes to fill, as both Bernardo and Blanca are talented, hard-working individuals with vast institutional knowledge of the Parks Department.

Vehicle/Equipment Update

Parks Maintenance will be getting a new fleet vehicle this week for the Maintenance team that oversees the swim center and surrounding parks.

We have also placed orders with our local John Deere vendor for a couple new lawn mowers, currently we have 2 lawn mowers that are being repaired, and we are trailering the remaining mowers all over the county to get the weekly mowing completed for our athletic fields, playground areas, picnic areas, and wedding lawns.



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Date: August 4, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Park Planners - Rob Tidmore, Mariana Colibri-Urgo, and Mike Pruitt
Subject: Planning Section Report

Coastal Rail Trail

Segments 10 and 11: Final design for the project began in early May and the team is working to incorporate suggestions from the RTC-led value engineering study conducted in 2024. Updated designs and cost estimates for the project are expected in late Summer.

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. Additional pedestrian and bicycle classes at area schools are scheduled for Fall 2025.

North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5): The RTC expects to open the Panther/Yellowbank parking lot to the public this fall prior to the rest of the project opening in Summer 2026. The purpose of the early opening of the parking lot is to minimize impacts to public coastal access. The trail itself will not be open. As part of the Maintenance Agreement for the project, County Park and Public Works will be maintaining the trail on behalf of the RTC. An addendum to the Maintenance Agreement went to the Board of Supervisors on August 5th for approval for Parks staff to begin early maintenance of the parking lot.

Freedom Lake Restoration Plan

Freedom Lake, a cherished natural resource for both wildlife and the local community, has faced ongoing challenges from invasive species that disrupt native habitats and degrade water quality. Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW) is actively maintaining the area where Acacia was previously removed and native vegetation was installed. The native plantings are establishing well, and efforts to control Acacia resprouts are ongoing.



Maintenance activities will soon expand to include the area cleared by the County along Freedom Boulevard. Remaining cut material will be processed, and the site will be covered with weed matting. This area will also be added to WWW's regular maintenance schedule.

sandhill habitat area is closed during Mount Hermon June Beetle flight season (May 15 – Aug 15). Parks staff have assisted with volunteer coordination and intermittent saw work to remove downed trees. A larger volunteer-supported trail building effort is planned for the fall after the Mount Hermon June Beetle flight season. Parks' Volunteer Coordinator will work with Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship (SCMTS) to recruit volunteers for this work. The project biologist has submitted the permitting requirements for the project with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Trail construction will be a coordinated effort between Parks staff, the trail design crew from SCMTS, and local volunteers, with an estimated volunteer percentage of 35%-45% for the trail construction.



Santa Cruz Coastal Lagoons & East Cliff Drive Resiliency Study

County Parks was awarded a \$650,000 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to develop an initial planning-level feasibility study of nature-based adaptation strategies to sea level rise for East Cliff Drive at the three coastal lagoons (Schwan Lagoon, Corcoran Lagoon, and Moran Lagoon) in mid-Santa Cruz County. The goal of the project is to identify a preferred adaptation strategy for each location that prioritizes nature-based solutions, protection of coastal resources and ecosystems, maintenance of coastal access, and protection of infrastructure and property.

A contract with Environmental Science Associates (ESA) to conduct the study was awarded by the Board of Supervisors on June 24th. A project kickoff meeting was held in July, and monitoring work at the three lagoons has begun in partnership with California State Parks and Santa Cruz County Environmental Health. The project team is developing a Technical Advisory Committee and Interested Party List for communication and distribution of project materials. A public-facing project website is expected to be ready this fall with background information.

South County Parkland Acquisition – Valle del Pájaro



In 2024, County Parks, in collaboration with its nonprofit partner County Park Friends, hosted and participated in a series of community events to gather feedback on potential temporary uses for the site, which is currently zoned for Commercial Agriculture. Through these outreach efforts, over 1,000 community members shared their input by ranking their top three preferred temporary park features. The highest-ranked priorities included a natural play area, picnic areas, and natural trails.



In response to this community input, and with the goal of beginning to provide public access to the future park—County Parks implemented a small parking lot, an access pathway, and a

half-mile loop trail with benches and picnic tables. These amenities were officially opened to the public on July 11.

As for long-term planning, the County has selected a consultant (Mithun) to lead the development of a Master Plan, with a strong emphasis on community engagement throughout the process. The Master Plan work is expected to begin this fall.





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Date: August 4, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments

- The Recreation team supported transportation and positive recreational experiences through its partnership with County Park Friends, offering collaborative programs as part of the ParkRx and Outdoor Equity initiatives across the county. A field trip to Big Sur was held on July 8th, and two Sports Fusion programs were conducted at Mesa Village in Watsonville.
- The Recreation team secured a contract with Pajaro Valley Unified School District to provide free camps at Mar Vista Elementary School during summer break. Camp Taking on Summer (TOS) ran from June 9th to August 6th.
- The Recreation team continues its partnership with the Capitola Branch Library to host Bridge Club sessions, which take place every Monday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- The Mall Walkers program, hosted at the Capitola Mall, continues through a standing agreement. The program meets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Family Fun Day 2025 was hosted by the Scotts Valley Recreation team at Skypark on Saturday, July 19th. This collaborative event brought together Parks teams from the City of Santa Cruz, City of Watsonville, and Santa Cruz County Parks. This free, family friendly event was celebrated as part of July is Recreation Month and was a successful countywide effort!
- The Recreation team joined the San Andreas Regional Center's Superhero Festival at Chanticleer Park on Saturday, July 19th. There were games, activities, free backpacks, face painting, and, of course, Superheroes. This event was an inclusive family friendly event for all to enjoy.
- The County Parks Aquatics Team hosted two basic CPR Certification courses for Recreation staff on June 22nd and July 20th.
- County Parks teamed up with the South County Task Force to host the annual National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 5th at Pinto Lake County Park.

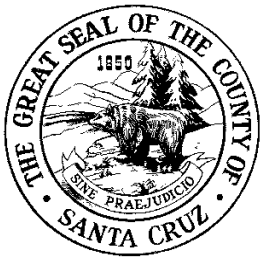
Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements

- Summer camps were offered at four parks throughout the county – Highlands County Park, Quail Hollow Ranch County Park, Mesa Village County Park, and Aptos Village County Park. From June 9th to August 6th, participants enjoyed a wide range of enrichment activities including games, arts and crafts, sports, cooking classes, and local field trips.

- The County Parks team plans to extend its contract with El Palomar Ballroom to continue offering Big East Swing classes and introduce an additional Salsa Dance class for active adult participants this fall.

Marketing Efforts

- The Department is currently developing the Winter and Spring Activity Guide, which will promote seasonal programs scheduled between December 2025 and May 2026.
- Marketing efforts continue to include the creation of bilingual flyers (Spanish/English) as well as regular social media updates to promote events and programs.



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: August 4, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Garrett Smart, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Reservations Section Report

Food Truck Fridays

We have held three Food Truck Fridays serving over 120 community members. Each event has had its own unique vibe, and the vendors have varied from month to month. Cre's Soul Food, Taquizas Gabriel, Skills of Life Café, Rollin' Snack Shack, The Boys and Girls Club, the Santa Cruz Public Libraries as well as local musicians, Dos Bros and Clay Moon, have all come together to create a fun community forward event we hope to see continue to expand in the future.

Facility Reservations

There are still 74 combined private and special events booked already in 2025, and the community is still calling, emailing and booking online to secure their event dates. July was a slower month for reservations, but August through the end of October looks very busy and will be filled with happiness and a variety of events for the community. We already have 30 reservations for events in 2026, and the number continues to grow.

Recreation Program Specialist Recruitment

With Emma Lee becoming the new Parks Volunteer Coordinator, the Reservations Team is in the process of recruiting a new Recreation Program Specialist. We are hoping to bring in a positive team member as soon as possible to continue planning and booking events and supporting all the services and programs that our team offers.

Parks and Rex

Over the last few months we have been coordinating and finalizing plans for Parks and Rex. As you may know, Santa Cruz County Parks, in partnership with Santa Cruz County Animal Services, is hosting the 10th annual Parks and Rex Doggie Pool Party on August 16th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 160 people have already signed up with just under two weeks to go.

Dog Swim Session tickets are available online this year. Each ticket includes access to the full event. Food will be available for purchase from Areperia 831, Chubby Tacos, and Skills of Life Café. Beer will be available for purchase from Sante Adarius. All proceeds benefit Santa Cruz County Animal Services and local youth programs.

Skydio Event

Last year marked the first of its kind, large scale, special event at Seascapes Park hosted by Skydio Inc. This year Skydio is back, and in the final planning stages of their annual user summit, which is a private event for their user groups taking place on September 17th and 18th. This year they are hosting a free, interactive, youth STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) event on September 16th to educate local youth about the careers and opportunities related to drones.



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Date: July 29, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Emma Lee, Volunteer Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Section Report

701 Ocean St. County Building

The beautification project continues at the County building! We will be hosting community volunteer days on July 30th and August 20th from 3:00pm – 5:00pm to continue mulching the front of the building as well as the front building sign. Additional succulents will be planted, and weeds will be pulled as the project progresses.

Ben Lomond County Park

Volunteers Kym and Phil Morello have continued their outstanding work at Ben Lomond County Park. With the help of community volunteers, they've weeded and added new drip line, as well as donated and planted 22 replacement plants. They also prepared and power washed the restroom building in anticipation of the new mural being painted in partnership with the Ben Lomond Village Alliance. The mural was completed in June.



East Cliff Drive County Parkway

The newly planted areas along East Cliff have begun to flourish! We have another community volunteer day scheduled for August 16th from 9:00am – 12:00pm. We will be watering, weeding, and reinforcing the perimeters within the boxes.



Felton Discovery County Park

We have two more volunteer days scheduled at the Felton Discovery County Park on September 6th and November 1st from 9:00am – 12:00pm to continue the park beautification! We will be weeding, pruning, and planting during these garden work parties.

Floral County Park

Following three more community volunteer days in May and June, the native pollinator garden was successfully completed! We will be continuing our volunteer efforts there to weed the area while the native plants continue to grow and establish.

Pinto Lake County Park

We have some upcoming volunteer days at Pinto Lake County Park. We will be focused on general park clean-up efforts:

- August 23rd from 9:00am – 12:00pm
- September 2nd from 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- November 2nd from 9:00am – 12:00pm

Polo Grounds County Park

We have two more volunteer dates at Polo Grounds County Park. We'll be mulching and weeding the dog park, and cleaning up the picnic areas:

- August 9th from 9:00am – 1:00pm
- August 23rd from 9:00am – 1:00pm

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

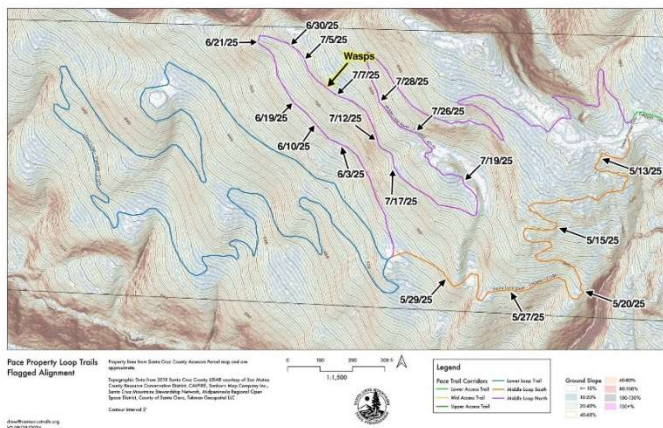
We hosted our annual Quail Hollow Ranch volunteer recognition awards in May. We had a great turnout to celebrate our volunteers. A total of 3,087.25 hours were recorded in 2024 at Quail, which included all the groups and individuals, plus the community volunteer days held at the park.



The Friends of Quail Hollow non-profit purchased and donated two high quality resin-constructed replicas of a Gopher Snake and Rattlesnake, which are now displayed in the visitor center. Volunteers Richard and Kathy James arranged the updated educational display.



Our Nest Box Project volunteers are already wrapping up their season of monitoring the birds at Quail Hollow Ranch! It was a great season with many fledglings and full nests. Their 2025 season summary should be released soon.



Pace Property

We've continued our habitat restoration work and our trail building efforts at the Pace Property. Throughout May, June, and July we hosted a total of 24 volunteer days. Our volunteer leads, Jeff Ustick and Zach Steinkamp, along with our community volunteers, continue to make amazing progress on the trail. These volunteer days will extend into August on Monday and Saturday mornings from 9:00am – 1:00pm. Our estimated progress map is on the left.

Valle del Pajaro

Park Hosts Kris and Alex helped to weed whip the property in anticipation of the ribbon cutting on July 11th. They, in addition to Park Host Elizabeth, will be working the new park into their weekly routines to greet community members, pick up litter, and continue general beautification efforts.

AmeriCorps

We have been invited to apply for another AmeriCorps team! We will be submitting an application in early November and hoping to host a team next March – May 2026.

Park Hosts

Bert Scott Estate: Kris has continued to weed whip and clean up around the property! He also regularly greets visitors at Pinto Lake County Park, Polo Grounds County Park, Scott County Park, and Valle del Pajaro.

Kris has planned and led two volunteer events at Polo Grounds County Park, which has resulted in great progress in mulching and weeding the dog park. Two more dates are planned for August.

He will also help to lead volunteer days at 701 Ocean and Pinto Lake County Park.

Pinto Lake County Park: Alex continues to landscape around the historic Pinto Lake home, greet park users, and close the park at night. Alex also helped with volunteer events at Floral County Park and the Pace Property. Alex will also be visiting Valle del Pajaro on a consistent basis to greet park users.

Elizabeth continues to landscape around the front house and close the park at night. She also has been helping to maintain the Park Host trailers, greet community members, and visit Valle del Pajaro.

Elizabeth will be leading the November 2nd volunteer event at Pinto Lake County Park.

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park: Beth and Steve continue their projects around Quail, including painting, watering, and maintaining the volunteer tool shed. They open and close the park gates and greet visitors daily.

Beth has helped with the Pace Project volunteer days, as well as volunteer days at Floral County Park and 701 Ocean Street. Beth will be supervising the Felton Discovery Park volunteer days and the East Cliff Drive parkway date. She'll also continue to help with the 701 Ocean Street beautification.