



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, 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

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. Discussion on Water Quality Issues at Pinto Lake County Park – Mariana Colibri-Urgo, Park Planner III.
- b. Oral Presentation on the ongoing projects at Moran Lake County Park.
- c. Informational Overview of the Santa Cruz County Parks Proposed FY2025-26 Budget.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Select the name of the new South County Park for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.
- b. Review and accept the amended Parks Commission Work Plan 2024-25..... page 3.

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.

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, August 11th, 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.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN 2024/25					
#	Stated Goal	Members Involved	Timeline	Fiscal Impact*	Projected Outcomes
COMMUNITY OUTREACH					
1	Attend County sponsored events, serving as County ambassadors by welcoming, meeting and greeting the public, and serving in a volunteer capacity conducting various event duties as needed.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	<p>Commissioners engage and interact with citizens while remaining aware of current trends in the public use of parks, beaches, trails, recreation programming, and special events.</p> <p>Create outreach to the public, educating them on what the Parks & Recreation Commission does, how to engage with the Commission and local government, programs the County offers, and spaces & places to recreate.</p> <p>Each Commissioner participates in a minimum 2 events.</p>
2	Connect with local City and County Commissions to better understand collaboration opportunities.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	<p>Attend meetings of area commissions, create connection with members.</p> <p>Better understand efforts of area commissions generating ideas for future Santa Cruz County Parks & Recreation goals and determining opportunities for collaboration where synergy exists.</p>
3	Identify and schedule guest speakers for Parks & Recreation Commission meetings, as appropriate.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Commissioners gain awareness and understanding of topics relevant to goals outlined in this Commission Work Plan and other topics of interest.
GREAT FACILITIES					
4	Research community needs related to facility use, development, and programming.	de Sieyes, Sanford	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	<p>Generate a better understanding of community interests and needs related to facilities and programming. Identify related core and stretch objectives.</p> <p>Provide findings to Parks & Recreation department for consideration and planning.</p>
EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP					
5	Examine climate resiliency efforts and advise Park & Recreation department of best practices.	Hernandez	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	<p>Gain awareness and understanding of topics relevant to climate resiliency through research and connection with local organizations.</p> <p>Identify gaps in climate resiliency efforts/education and advise Parks & Recreation department of best practices.</p>
6	Identify best practices for sustainability and advise Park & Recreation department of findings.	Konevich, de Sieyes	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	<p>Commissioners examine current sustainability efforts within the County and explore additional best practices in all areas of sustainability.</p> <p>Areas of exploration could include, but are not limited to those outlined in the Strategic Plan 5-year Update such as balancing recreation and conservation, restoration or enhancement, water conservation, nature programming, interpretive signage, community partnerships, etc.</p> <p>Provide recommendations on best practices, potential partnerships, and community outreach opportunities to Parks & Recreation department.</p>
SPECIAL PROJECT(S)					
7	Explore Best Practices for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) related to Parks & Recreation	Konevich, Hernandez	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Explore DEI best practices and make recommendations for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of parks & recreation including, but not limited to, those outlined in the Strategic Plan 5-year Update such as signage, health and well-being, park accessibility, recreation programming, and collaboration with non-profit groups.
ADVISE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS -- NOTE:					
	2024/25 Parks and Recreation Commission Work Plan Outcomes to be submitted in the Biennial Report	Chair	On or before January 31, 2025		Board of Supervisors is advised of past year work plan outcomes in Biennial Report.
	2025/26 Parks and Recreation Commission Proposed Work Plan/Goals to be submitted in the Biennial Report	Chair	On or before January 31, 2025		Board of Supervisors reviews proposed work plan goals and intended outcomes in Biennial Report.



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 14th, 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 5:06 PM.

Present: Alexis Konevich (District 1), Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4)

Vacant: District 5

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

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS No modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS 3 members of the public.

Mariah Roberts: Executive Director of County Park Friends (CPF). Voiced concerns about the rezoning of County parcels that are being proposed to the Board of Supervisors and importance of the Commission being involved in conversations.

Lynn Dunn: Spoke to concerns about ADA compliance in the Live Oak Library Annex.

Cynthia Denny: Chair of the Sierra Club. Introduced herself to the commission and spoke briefly about the committee's hopes of being more active in the community and involved with the Commission.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (items 9-10) Motion to approve: Sanford/2nd: de Sieyes/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

District 1: Lots of communication happening in District 1. The issue of rezoning at Winkle Farm Park has come up. Lots of improvements in the local park and maintenance (bathroom painting, etc.).

District 2: Brand new to commission. Proud of progress made at the fields at Polo Grounds County Park.

District 3: Quiet, nothing to report.

District 4: Attended the Mesa Village beautification with Watsonville Wetlands Watch Participants got a fruit tree for participating, so there were around 60 people that attended. This volunteer event made the park more inviting.

District 5: Vacant

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) will be meeting for the first time on Wednesday, April 16th at 5:30p. We had over 500 kids participate in Spring Break programs. Getting ready to do fuel reduction work at the Miller Property. We are recruiting for the Park Planner position, hoping to have that filled within the next 4-6 weeks. Working on adding new pollinator gardens at Felton Discovery Park and considering other parks to do the same. This would help reduce water usage and create pollinator habitats. Starting outdoor recreation program at Quail Hollow. The Parks team remodeled the cottage to be used as an outdoor education center. In April there will be a ribbon cutting for the Polo Grounds Score board. The Hidden Beach restrooms are expected to be completed/open in May. Parks Staff received recognition by CPRS. We have started developing the Pace Wilderness Property. Jody McGraw is assisting training staff/volunteers on trail developments. The artwork at Ben Lomond Transfer Station was approved by the Board of Supervisors. The artists is making a humongous fungus made of "reclaimed materials."

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Presentation on Updated Parks Department Communications Plan – Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent

Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent, presented on the newly developed County Parks Communications Plan. The plan is still a work in progress, but it streamlines how and when information is shared with the public.

- **Commissioner Sanford:** *What do you need from the Commission? Advocacy to Supervisors or support, etc?* Getting the word out so the public knows where to find us and find information. Look at the Activity Guide and share the various programs with others.
- **Chair Konevich:** *Does the department ever need help sourcing content?* If you have an idea or story to share/highlight, please let staff know, so they can work to promote/share it and have feedback regarding what type of content others want to see.
- **Commissioner de Sieyes:** *Suggested encouraging tagging County Parks on social media.*

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Discussion on the upcoming Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors hearings to remove Park Designations for parcels in Santa Cruz County.

Director Gaffney discussed the proposed rezoning for 47 parcels of land, 5 of which are currently designated as Parks/Open Space. This is a Public Hearing item being presented to the Board of Supervisors on April 29th, 2025. The Parks Department and Commission were not consulted regarding the proposed parcels.

- **Commissioner Sanford:** *Is Brommer Street County Park becoming housing?* No, it's a parcel at 7th and Brommer St.
- **Commissioner de Sieyes:** *Can you expand on the few acres at Par Three that will continue to remain open space/park land?* There was a stipulation during the housing element that a previous district 2 Supervisor made sure that 2-4 acres of that parcel would stay public land (although it did not have to remain public land).
- **Commissioner Hernandez:** *What can the Commission do moving forward?* As a Commission, you could write a letter to the Board of Supervisors. Individually, you could talk to your District Supervisor.
- **Chair Konevich:** *Asked for clarification between County Parks owning land and/or a Parks designation on a parcel near Winkle Park.* County Parks owns the land adjacent to Winkle Park. The Par Three land is not County owned, but has a Parks designation, meaning it was intended to be developed into a park. *If land is owned by Parks, how can it be taken away/changed?* The land is owned by the County of Santa Cruz through the Parks Department. So the County can ultimately decide its use/designation. *As the Planning team of the Parks Department is built up, should the Master Plan be revisited and what advice/direction do you have for the Commission to help move that forward?* Becoming more engaged, meeting regularly with the Supervisor that appointed you, future meetings with Deputy Director Hurley. This would be a long-term project, so continuing to be engaged with the department and community.

Public comment: 4 members of the public.

- **Chair Konevich:** *Do impact fees from development go to certain parks?* Impact fees were updated in 2021-22 but were not able to be collected until recently so a backlog exists. The fees collected go all together in one “bucket” and are used throughout the County. The Board of Supervisors decides the spending of this money.
- **Commissioner de Sieyes:** *Is the County’s plan to rezone the parcel near Winkle Park and sell it to a developer for the Housing Element?* There are many scenarios that could play out, but selling is a harder process.

Motion to have Chair Konevich and Commissioner de Sieyes write a letter, in collaboration with Parks staff, that conveys the Commission’s concerns regarding rezoning parcels from Parks land: Sanford/**2nd**: Hernandez/All In favor

- b. Review, discuss, and assign Commissioners to 2024-25 Commission Work Plan goals... pages 19-20.

Commissioners reviewed the existing work plan, made changes to the wording on some goals, and reassigned members to each goal. The commission liaison was designated to make the changes and return the amended Work Plan to the Commission during the May meeting.

Motion to amend the existing work plan: de Sieyes/**2nd**: Sanford/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 February 10th, 2025..... pages 3-4

10. Consider Reports:

- a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 5
- b. Maintenance Section Report..... pages 6-7
- c. Planning Section Report..... pages 8-12
- d. Recreation Section Report..... pages 13-14
- e. Reservations Section Report..... page 15
- f. Volunteer Section Report..... pages 16-18

Adjournment Motion to adjourn at 7:03 PM: Sanford/**2nd**: de Sieyes/All in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, May 12th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

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

Date: May 2, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Anissa Childers, Aquatics Supervisor
Subject: Aquatics Section Report

From March to the present, the Aquatics Section has had strong participation across various programs. We have had 254 individuals enrolled in swim lessons, 83 participants in private lessons with our contractors, and 58 individuals in the ParkRx Free Swim Lesson Spring Program.

Since March, we have taught 4 lifeguarding classes. To end the spring season, we have certified 27 new lifeguards and recertified many of our current lifeguards. More than half of the participants have applied to work with us for the summer season.

As we finish up our spring hiring and gear towards summer, we have had 24 new lifeguard applicants and 2 new head guard applicants.

Throughout Spring we have maintained a 7-day-a-week schedule, providing consistent lap swim to the community. Lap swim is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 7:30 PM, and on weekends from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. In addition to lap swimming, we offer a variety of programs throughout the week, including Adult Fitness classes, Water Aerobics, and lane rentals for three local swim teams.

This summer, we are proud to offer a record number of spots in our pool guard programs. The Junior Guards program now has a total of 480 spots available, with increased availability in each session —100 open spots in each morning session and 60 in each afternoon session. Additionally, our Little Guard program has expanded to offer 192 total spots, marking the highest capacity ever for our summer camp programs.

We recently hosted our first-ever Family Glow Night Pool Party, which was a major success with over 200 attendees enjoying an evening of swimming, music, glowing accessories, and community fun. Additionally, we are excited to offer our next event: a Family Movie Night at the Pool, featuring the film *Luca*. There are 200 spots open for registration, and the evening will include popcorn, snacks, and a food truck on-site. These family-friendly events have been very well received, and we are committed to continuing to create fun, engaging, and creative experiences for families at the pool throughout the summer.

We are offering three Free Family Swim Days this summer on Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day, providing more opportunities for the community to enjoy a fun day at the pool at no cost.



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Date: May 2nd, 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 will review the selection panel's recommendation of public artist for the Juvenile Hall Facility on May 5. If approved by the Commission, the artist's proposal and agreement will go to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.



Shaun Logan was selected as the public artist for the new restroom building at **Hidden Beach** Park. The artist's proposal includes two components. 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. The mural will be completed by May 7.

Justin Francavilla is busy creating public artwork for **Floral Park**, to be installed this spring near the new playground. The "Life of the Tide Pool Party" will feature tide-pool dwelling creatures on two bronze sculptures, one a plaque, the other a 3-dimensional piece. Infused with whimsy, the design will include elements such as sea stars embracing each other alongside some underappreciated sea neighbors like nudibranchs, snails, and barnacles -- all of which can be found just one block away in the world-renowned Pleasure Point tide pools. The plaque will offer park visitors the opportunity to make a rubbing of the artwork with crayons and paper, taking their own copy of the art home.

Mary Tataro was recently approved as the public artist for the **Ben Lomond Transfer Station**. "Humungus Fungus" will feature nine mushroom-shaped sculptures of welded metal covered with steel mesh, fiberglass cloth, and resin, then overlaid with weather-resistant reclaimed materials. The sculptures will be painted and finish-coated to protect against the elements. Placed in groups of three, the mushrooms – nature's recyclers - will range in height with the small ones 4-5 feet, the medium 5-7 feet, and the large 9-12 feet.





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Public Art Walk & Talk – Heart of Soquel Park

Saturday, May 3rd, 10-11AM – All ages -- Free! Join Artist Justin Francavilla for a fun art adventure in the park! We'll turn our walk into a treasure hunt, discovering cool animal art hidden on bronze plaques along the Heart of Soquel Parkway. As we explore, we'll make rubbing prints of these special plaques and learn about some of the neighborhood's lesser-known animals. This event is a hands-on way to see how art and nature come together, showing us amazing things right around us!

Santa Cruz County 2025 Artist of the Year

Janet Rachel Johns, dancer and choreographer, has been named 2025 Santa Cruz County Artist of the Year by the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission. Please join us at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 9 at the Crocker Theater, Cabrillo College for a *Profile Performance* featuring Janet and Esperanza del Valle. Admission is FREE to the public; seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis the night of the event.



As an Assyrian woman, mother, educator, dance instructor, choreographer and a performing artist in Santa Cruz County for over 45 years, Johns has experienced firsthand the power of the arts for healing a community and bringing people together. Since she started learning folklorico dance at age 18 as a university student at San Jose State University, she learned from her mentor, Ramon Morones Ortiz, of Guadalajara, Mexico, the importance of learning authentic steps, style and choreography from master instructors and keepers of the

traditions of Mexico. When she moved to Watsonville to begin her career as a bilingual educator in 1978, she co-founded Esperanza del Valle and wrote her first Arts Council grant, establishing her folklorico dance class as a performing company in 1980. Esperanza del Valle was the only adult folklorico dance company in the Watsonville community in those early days. Hundreds of dancers have trained, learned, and performed with her company over 44-plus years.



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Date: May 2, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jesse Williams, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Maintenance Section Report

North County

- **Pace Trail Project – Quail Hollow Ranch:** Ongoing maintenance and volunteer coordination efforts are actively supporting the continued development of the Pace Trail at Quail Hollow Ranch. Volunteers and staff are working collaboratively to improve trail conditions and enhance user experience.
- **Miller Property – Boulder Creek:** Construction of a new parking area has commenced at the Miller Property in Boulder Creek. This project aims to improve public access and accommodate increased visitation while preserving natural surroundings.
- **Equipment Acquisition:** The maintenance division has acquired a new excavator, along with a forestry mulching head attachment designed for our tracked skid steer tractor. This new equipment will significantly increase our capacity for vegetation management, land restoration, and trail maintenance activities.
- **Seasonal Grounds Maintenance:** Routine springtime operations are underway, including mowing, invasive weed control, and general landscape upkeep across all managed properties to ensure safety, accessibility, and environmental stewardship.

Mid County

- **Relocation of Mid-County Operations:** The mid-county maintenance team is in the process of relocating its operations from the Simpkins Family Swim Center to the garage and office facilities located on Felt Street. This move is intended to consolidate operations, improve logistical efficiency, and better support ongoing fieldwork in the region.
- **Turf and Field Maintenance – Jose Avenue and Brommer Park:** Maintenance crews continue to perform essential turf management and field upkeep at Jose Avenue Park and Brommer Park. These efforts include irrigation checks, turf rehabilitation, aeration, and general grounds maintenance to ensure high-quality, safe recreational spaces for public use.
- **Swim Center Facility Repairs:** The showers in the locker rooms at the Simpkins Family Swim Center are currently undergoing repairs to address plumbing issues and improve user comfort. Work is being conducted with minimal disruption to facility operations and is expected to be completed promptly.

South County

- **Seasonal Grounds Maintenance:** Spring maintenance activities are underway at all South County Park locations, including mowing, weed abatement, and landscape management. These efforts are essential for maintaining the safety, appearance, and ecological health of our public spaces during the growing season.
- **Sports Field Maintenance – Aptos Polo Grounds and Pinto Lake:** Routine sports field maintenance continues at both Aptos Polo Grounds and Pinto Lake County Park. Crews are focused on turf care, surface leveling, and irrigation system checks to ensure fields remain in optimal condition for community use and scheduled athletic programs.
- **Restroom Installation – Hidden Beach:** Maintenance teams are supporting the recent installation of a new public restroom facility at Hidden Beach. Associated site work includes utility connections, pathway adjustments, and landscaping to integrate the structure with the surrounding environment.
- **Facility Upkeep – Aptos Village Park Clubhouse:** Ongoing facility maintenance and repairs are being carried out at the Aptos Village Park Clubhouse. Tasks include structural assessments, minor repairs, and general upkeep to ensure the building remains functional, clean, and welcoming for community events and rentals.



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Date: May 2, 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: The Capitola City Council voted not to approve the Park Ave alignment at a special City Council meeting on April 17 and requested that the trail remain in the rail corridor, which is consistent with the alignment of the Ultimate Trail Configuration previously approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 30, 2024.

An amendment to the existing consultant contract to add final design was recently approved by the Board on April 29, 2025. Final design for the project will kick-off in early May, and will start by modifying the design 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 2025.

North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5): The RTC expects to open the Panther/Yellowbank parking lot to the public this summer 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 will need to be approved by the Board of Supervisors and RTC to have Parks staff begin early maintenance of the parking lot.

Floral County Park Playground Renovation

Site work, drainage modifications and landscape modifications have been completed; play structure and PIP have been installed. The project was completed in Winter 2024. The Public Art piece will be finished in Spring 2025.



Freedom Lake Restoration Plan

Freedom Lake, a cherished natural resource for both wildlife and the community, has faced challenges from invasive species that disrupt native habitats and diminish water quality. In a series of workday events, dedicated teams from Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the California Conservation Corps worked side by side to remove invasive trees and plants that are impairing native habitat and obstructing the open viewing and access routes of park users. Consistent with best practices for riparian habitat and vegetation management, willow trees were pruned and limbed up to reduce hazards for park users and enhance lines of site and the feeling of openness to enhance park user safety. During the winter rains approximately 100 native understory plants and shrubs are being planted within the Acacia removal areas to increase diversity of native plants growing on site and improve the park user experience. Phase 2 for this project, including a series of planning studies and analysis will be performed in coordination with staff from Santa Cruz County Parks and other resource professionals in the region, is expected to commence in late Spring 2025.



Greyhound Rock

Parks staff are finalizing consultant contracts to conduct an initial feasibility study that will analyze the potential for biological, geological, and cultural constraints for the cabin project. This feasibility study will identify suitable development locations for the environmental education center and cabins. Results of the initial feasibility study are expected in Late Summer 2025.

Hidden Beach County Park

Site Prep Work for construction of the project started in January. The permanent, prefabricated, ADA-compliant double-unit restroom was delivered on-site on February 26th. Site Work including final utility connections, parking lot modifications, ADA path of travel and landscape modifications is scheduled to be completed by April 30th. The mural in the building part of the public art is currently in progress. The project is expected to be completed in Spring 2025.



Moran Lake County Park

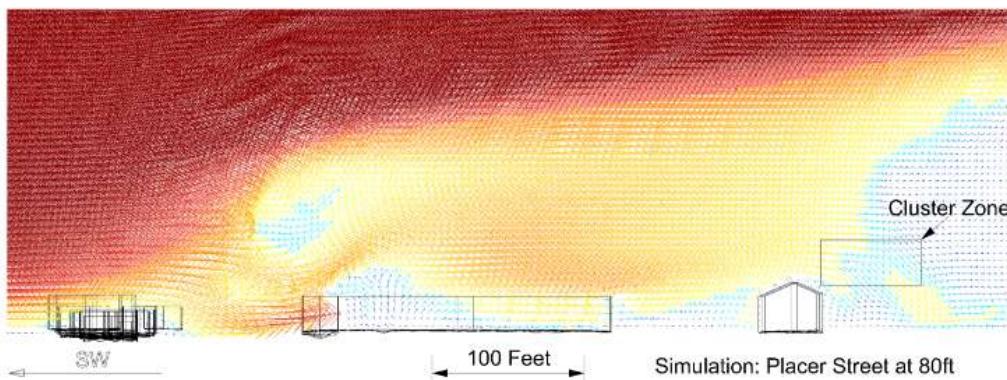
Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan: County Parks, in collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District and the First District Supervisor, recently completed a wind study for the Moran Lake monarch habitat in response to community feedback. The wind study analyzed the effects of the tree canopy on wind protection for monarch overwintering sites and identified tree management actions that could be taken to reduce the risk of tree failure while protecting monarch habitat. The draft wind study is available on the County Parks website for public review, and viewable at the link below:

[Wind Study - Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat and Tree Assessment April Draft 20250401.pdf](#)

Based on the data from the wind study, County Parks will be starting tree trimming and tree removal work around Moran Lake County Park in mid-May to improve public safety and ensure the long-term viability of monarch overwintering habitat. The upcoming tree work is science-based and is part of Parks' ongoing efforts to manage monarch habitat at Moran Lake and increase climate resilience. Any trees removed will be replaced with native tree species that support local biodiversity and monarch habitat, similar to the 64 native trees that were planted in December 2024.

A community meeting to discuss the results of the wind study and how that relates to the monarch habitat management plan will be held in June, date and time TBD.

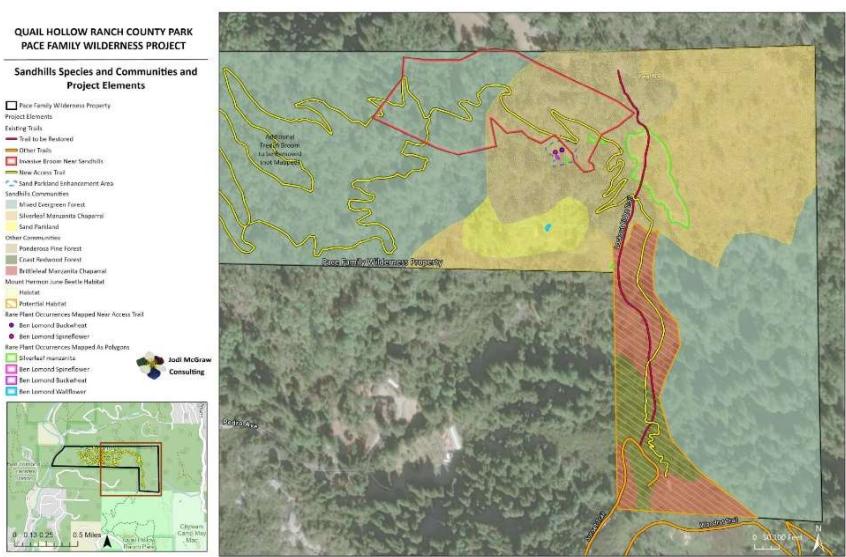
Figure 5C. Vertical Slice for 80 ft Placer Height



Example figure from Draft Wind Study showing minimal impacts to cluster zone from reducing the height of the critical windbreak on Placer Street.

Pace Property Connection Trails

Pace Property Trails will bring residents through the sandhill habitat, one of the rarest ecosystems in the United States and found only in Santa Cruz County. Project trail layout and flagging have been completed with great interest from the community. Park staff have coordinated directly with the biologist and trail design consultant in refining the trail layout. Park staff and the project biologist have collaborated in creating the worker environmental awareness training program. The training is required for all workers and volunteers associated with



construction on the trail and was held in February. The topics covered were construction best management practices and biological resource protection measures, including the special status species that reside in the sandhill habitat. 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, and local volunteers. With an estimated volunteer percentage of 35%-45% for the trail construction. Trail construction in the sandhill habitat area will have to occur outside of the Mount Hermon June beetle flight season from May 15 to August 15, and bird nesting survey will be performed prior to the spring construction. Park staff will be working with volunteers late spring to clear invasive broom and begin construction on the loop trail outside of the sandhill habitat.



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.

An RFP for consultant support for the project was released on January 6. The County received three proposals from highly qualified consultant teams. A selection committee comprised of staff from the Coastal Conservancy, California State Parks, County Public Works, and County Parks evaluated the proposals, conducted reference checks, and interviewed the consultant teams and selected Environmental Science Associates (ESA) as the top-ranked consultant team. Staff has begun negotiations on scope and fee with the top-ranked consultant team, and if those negotiations are successful, staff expects to bring a contract to the Board for approval in May/June.

South County Parkland Acquisition – Whiting Road

A preliminary park diagram for phase 1 was developed by County Parks while a permanent plan is developed. The diagram was shared previously with the Commission. Funds have been allocated for phase 1 implementation and staff are coordinating the required access improvements to scope out the Phase 1 work. Partial funding for Master Plan development has been allocated from the District 4 Supervisor's office, more funds are required to develop the Master Plan.





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: May 2, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments

- County Parks collaborated with the Live Oak School District and the Live Oak Education Foundation by participating in their Live Oak Jack Rabbit 1K FUNdraiser held on Saturday, April 26th at the Shoreline Middle School athletic field. Approximately 250 people were in attendance. The opening ceremonies started at 8:45am followed by track races & relays. Those not participating in the races were able to access free family activities, view student art and watch live performances while enjoying delicious treats from a local food truck. All the proceeds support TK-8th grade arts.
- County Parks & the Personnel team connected on Saturday, April 26th from 9am-1pm at the Simpkins Family Swim Center to offer a Pop-Up Hiring Event for Parks, Recreation, Cultural Workers (PRCW's). A total of 38 Extra Help employees will assist the recreation team this summer.
- County Parks is planning its next Family Fun Day event. The event is going to be held on July 19th in Scotts Valley. Meetings continue taking place with other local recreation agencies (Watsonville, Capitola, Santa Cruz, and Scotts Valley) for the planning and implementation of the upcoming event.

Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements

- Recreation staff provided four (4) Recreation Spring Camps the week of April 7-11. The programs combined served 174 youth between the ages of 6-12.
- Recreation staff hosted a Glow Night on Friday, April 25th. The program took place at Aptos Village Park from 7-10pm and served 39 youth between the ages of 6-12.

Marketing Efforts

- The [Summer/Fall 2025 Activity Guide](#) is here! It can be found online at our website and copies have been distributed County wide. The guide is available in both English and Spanish.
- The Department continues to create marketing flyers in both Spanish/English. As well as social media posts and updates.



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Date: May 2, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Garrett Smart, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Reservations Section Report

FOOD TRUCK FRIDAYS

Staff are ramping up efforts to develop and promote a great community event at Simpkins Family Swim Center, in the new Live Oak Community Center Plaza in the form of a Food Truck Friday's event. The First Event coincides with the Simpkins Family Swim Center Movie Night May 23rd. Subsequent Events will feature live music and various food vendors, to make it a fun, family friendly, food focused festivity. Join us for the first Event on May 23rd!

Skills of Life Relocation

Also in the Live Oak Community Center Plaza, we have relocated the Skills of Life Café Trailer from near the far-left corner of the building to much closer to the road. Everyone involved is hoping this will increase visibility for this wonderful community partner and program.

Concessionaire at The Hook County Park

Taquizas Gabriel has signed up to do a pilot program for concessions at The Hook County Park. Our Maintenance Staff removed the former dumpster enclosure that was not in use. The dumpster enclosure is gone and Taquizas Gabriel will be vending there beginning May 14th and if everything goes well, they will become an awesome addition to East Cliff, the Hook and the Pleasure Point area.

Mariannes Ice Cream

Mariannes Ice Cream is now available for sale in the lobby at Simpkins Family Swim Center. We have novelties, ice cream sandwiches, bars, frozen bananas. This summer will be a "treat" for all Simpkins Swimmers, and Live Oak Library Annex Patrons.

2025 Private Event Reservations

As of May 1st, we have already had 42 private events across all the County Park Venues. As of May 2nd, there are 92 more private events already booked in 2025. Our Team of Park Services Officers, and the main Office Reservations team, are looking forward to seeing all the positive community impacts and happy family gatherings and celebrations throughout this year.



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Date: May 1, 2025
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Margaret Ingraham, Volunteer Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Section Report

701 Ocean St. County Building

Volunteers and County staff made some good progress at the volunteer day at the County building beautification project. During the last two volunteer days weeds were pulled, additional succulents were planted, and mulch was applied.



Anna Jean Cummings County Park

The workability group continues to show up weekly to volunteer at AJC by picking up litter, raking, blowing and are always willing to do extra tasks, as needed.

The Great Scout Trash Out on Sunday, April 27th was a success!

Ben Lomond County Park

Volunteers Kym and Phil Morello were recognized at the Outstanding Volunteer Awards at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 29th. They were recognized for their efforts and continued support at Ben Lomond County Park.

East Cliff Drive County Parkway

Another community volunteer day on East Cliff resulted in another vacant planter area being planted. We have 2 more dates scheduled this year to continue this beautification along East Cliff:

- Sunday, May 18th 9 AM – 12 PM
- Saturday, August 16th 9 AM – 12 PM

Felton Discovery County Park

Our April 5th volunteer day at the park had a good turnout and volunteers weeded, pruned, and spread playground fill. The regular volunteer days will now be quarterly, and the dates are listed below.

- Saturday, May 31st 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Saturday, September 6th 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Saturday, November 1st 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Floral County Park

Come join us for the next volunteer days at Floral park to continue to plant the native pollinator garden!

- Saturday, May 17th 9 AM – 12 PM
- Saturday, May 31st 9 AM – 12 PM

Pinto Lake County Park

We will participate in the Pitch In Litter Pick Up event this year on Saturday, May 10th from 9 AM - 12 PM. This event will be led by two Park Hosts.

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

Our next free composted manure giveaway day is scheduled for Sunday, May 18th. The composted manure is free, and donations to the Friends of Quail non-profit are appreciated.

The Friends of Quail non-profit was recognized at the Outstanding Volunteer Awards at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 29th. They were recognized for all the support they have given to the park over the years.

Volunteers James Maughn, Jenille Graham, Cathy Hoeft, Suzanna Rather, and Cara Wilcox, plus Park Hosts Alex B., and Beth E. lead the Forbidden Sandhills Hikes this year.



The Nest Box Project volunteers have started their season of monitoring the birds at Quail.

Richard and Kathy James spend every Sunday hosting the house open to the public and they are also leading hikes for seniors in the park.

Pace Property

We hosted our first Habitat Restoration volunteer day on the Pace property, and it was very successful. Volunteers, Trail Crew, Park Hosts and Parks staff hiked and pulled French Broom for a couple hours. We will have many more of these in the future.



AmeriCorps

We were notified that we will not be hosting an AmeriCorps Team this year. All the teams were disbanded.

Park Hosts

Bert Scott Estate: Kris is very busy with weed whipping around the Bert Scott property and general clean up.

Kris, is training to help lead the Pace Project Habitat Restoration Volunteer Days. Additionally, Kris continues to help with volunteer days at Floral County Park, East Cliff Drive County Parkway, and Felton Discovery Park.



Kris also spends time at Pinto Lake County Park, Polo Grounds County Park, and Scott County Park, greeting community members and picking up litter. Kris has planned and will supervise a volunteer day at Polo Grounds Park on Sunday, June 8th. He and the Park Hosts from Pinto Lake will supervise the Pitch In event at Pinto Lake County Park on Saturday, May 10th.

Pinto Lake County Park: Alex continues to work on the landscaping around the historic home at the park and greet park users. Alex helps to close the park up at night and report issues he sees. Alex has also helped with volunteer events at Floral County Park and East Cliff Parkway and is training to help lead the Pace project habitat restoration volunteer days. In addition, Alex was trained to lead our Forbidden Sandhills hikes this year.

Elizabeth continues to work on the landscaping around the front house, helps to close the park up at night and reports issues she sees. Elizabeth is familiar with many of the regulars at Pinto Lake and has good relationships with them. Elizabeth will help with a volunteer event at Chanticleer in May and is training to help lead the Pace project habitat restoration volunteer days.

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park: Beth and Steve Egelhofer have done some beautification projects around the park such as: planting lavender, fixing the pathway around the front garden, fixing boards and lots of painting. They were instrumental in the success of the free composted manure giveaways, greeting people and directing traffic.

Beth supervises the Highlands Highschool students in volunteer days at the park. She also helped with volunteer events at Floral County Park, 701 Ocean St., Felton Discovery Park and is training to help lead the Pace Project habitat restoration volunteer days. In addition, Beth was trained to lead our Forbidden Sandhills hikes this year.