



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, April 13th, 2026
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. [Draft County FY 2026-27 Budget Presentation](#) – Ryan Friedrich, Senior Admin Analyst, CEO

8. **ACTION ITEMS**

- a. [Review and approve names for the trails at the Pace Family Wilderness Park](#) – Mike Pruitt, Park Planner II..... page 4.
- b. **Elect Chair and Vice-Chair for Calendar Year 2026**

Scheduled Item – 06:00 P.M.

Scheduled Departmental item – 6:00 PM or thereafter

- c. [Discuss and approve amendment to the Floral County Park Master 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 February 9th, 2026**..... page 7.
- 10. **Consider Reports:**
 - a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 10.
 - b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... page 11.
 - c. Maintenance Section Report..... page 13.
 - d. Planning Section Report..... page 15.
 - e. Recreation Section Report..... page 20.
 - f. Reservations Section Report..... page 23.
 - g. Volunteer Section Report..... page 24.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. [Email from Anne Johannes – Floral Park](#)
- II. [Email from Dan Haifley – Item 8 \(c\) on 4/13/26 Parks Commission Agenda: Floral Park](#)
- III. [Email from David Schwartz – Floral Park](#)
- IV. [Emails and Letter from Greg Fontana – Mountain Lion](#)
- V. [Email from Kathy Welch - 1/2 Basketball Court at Floral Park/ 18 ft. statue at Dirt Farm](#)
- VI. [Email from L Solomon – Floral Park 1/2 basketball court](#)
- VII. [Email from Matthew Balkman – Support of the Basketball Court and Other Needed Projects](#)
- VIII. [Email from Nina Donna – Simpkins Family Swim Center](#)
- IX. [Email from Save Pleasure Point – April 13 Discussion](#)
- X. [Email from Steve Miller – Low Stem Time](#)
- XI. [Email from Surely Iam Love – Half Basketball Court at Floral Street Park](#)

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, June 8th, 2026

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.

LATE ADDITIONS – MON. APRIL 13

Written Correspondence Listing

- XII. [Email from Amber Jones – Support half basketball court at Floral Park](#)
- XIII. [Email from Ashley Muller – Yes for half basketball court at Floral Park!](#)
- XIV. [Email from Celine Ruff-Silberberg – Basketball court floral park](#)
- XV. [Email from Derek Draper – Enhancing Pleasure Point Park: A Proposal for Our Local Youth](#)
- XVI. [Email from Jeff McGee – Floral basketball park](#)
- XVII. [Email from Julie Howard – Concern Regarding Process and Proposed Amendment to Floral Park Master Plan](#)
- XVIII. [Email from Kevin Keet – Basketball court at floral](#)
- XIX. [Email from Phoenix O’Neill – Floral park](#)
- XX. [Email from Terry Corwin – Floral Park Half Court Improvement](#)
- XXI. [Email from Yolanda Garcia – Concerns Regarding Proposed Half Basketball Hoop at Flora Park](#)



JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

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 TTY: 711

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Mike Pruitt, Park Planner II
DATE: April 9th, 2026
SUBJECT: Pace Trails – Trail Naming

Project Background

In 1997, the County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services was gifted a 79.5-acre parcel, known as the Pace property. The deed requires that the land “be held as natural parkland to be used by the public for their enjoyment. The Pace property encompasses rare ecological features including a nearly 32-acre area of sandhills, a sensitive habitat found only in Santa Cruz County and protected by the County’s Sensitive Habitat Ordinance. There are certain special status species which are endemic to the sandhills and occur only in this area. They include the Ben Lomond Spineflower, Ben Lomond Wallflower, Mount Hermon June Beetle, and Zayante Band-Winged Grasshopper.

Project Elements

The Pace Trail System consists of an access trail and a two-mile loop trail that introduces hikers to sandhills habitat as well as a variety of other habitat types, and the unique species throughout the currently inaccessible Pace property.

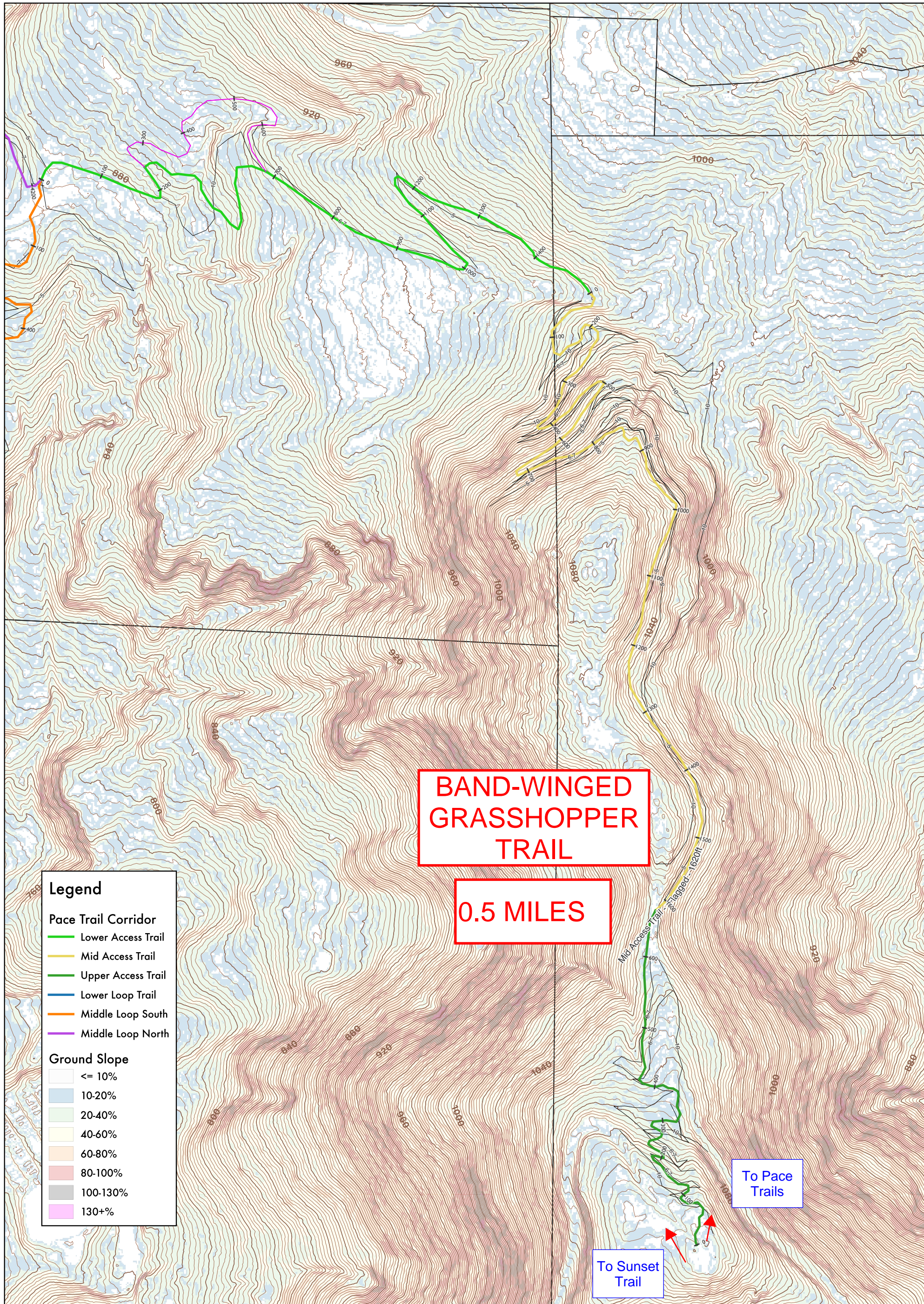
In a separate project element, a local artist will be creating public art for the project. This art will incorporate sculptures of the Ben Lomond Spineflower, Ben Lomond Wallflower, Mount Hermon June Beetle, and Zayante Band-Winged Grasshopper.

The new trail system is composed of four different segments based on direction and geography. The Access Trail, Middle Loop North, Middle Loop South, and the Lower Loop.

The Parks Department is proposing naming the four trail segments after the endemic species present on the site and aligning the trail names with the future public artworks. This would create unified trail names that are consistent with the existing trail names which are named after park features, site history, and local species.

The proposed trail names would be:

- Band-Winged Grasshopper Trail
- June Beetle Trail
- Wallflower Trail
- Spineflower Trail



**Pace Property Access Trail
Flagged Alignment**

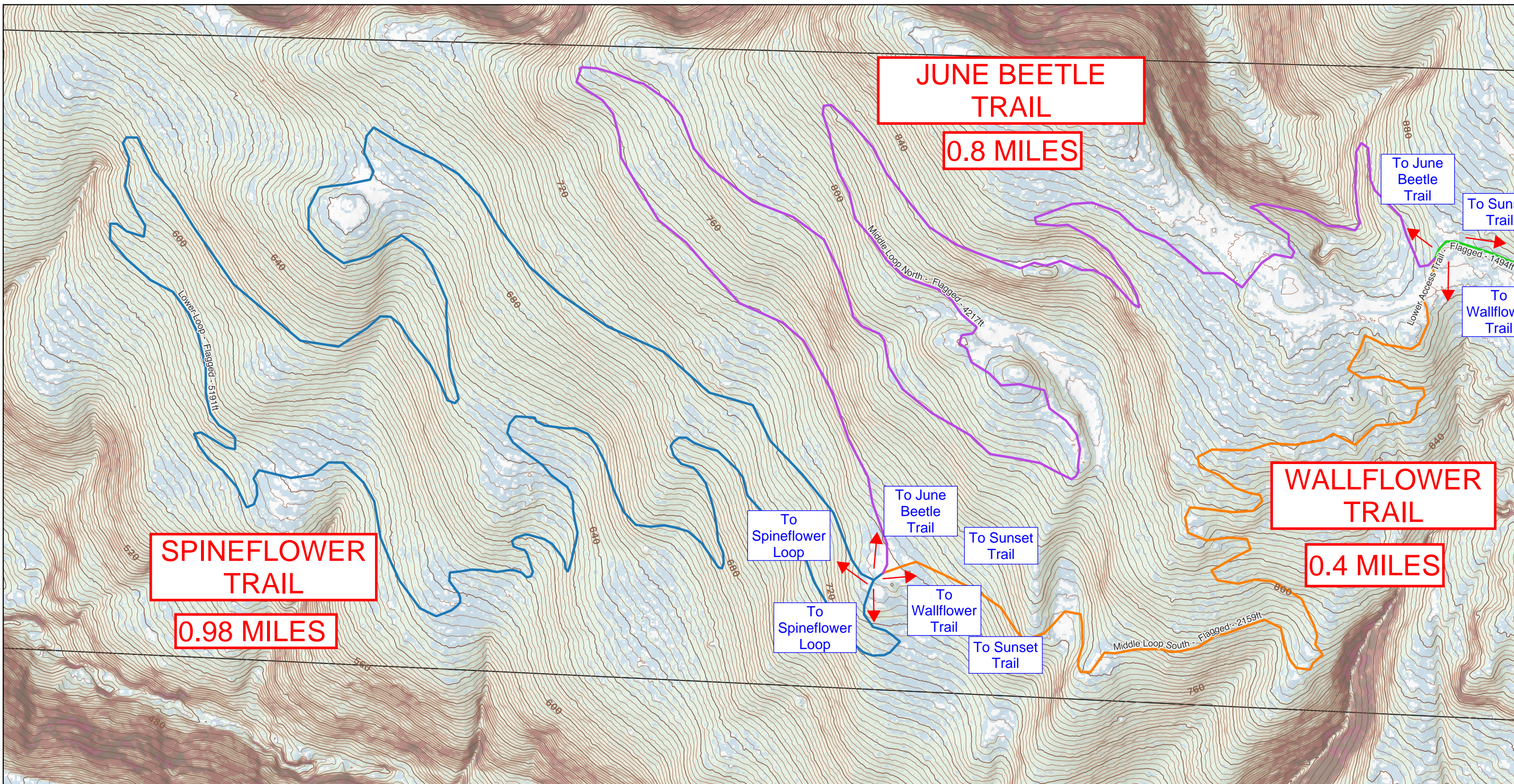
Property lines from Santa Cruz County Assesors Parcel map and are approximate.
 Topographic Data from 2018 Santa Cruz County LiDAR courtesy of San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, CALFIRE, Sanborn Map Company Inc., Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, County of Santa Clara, Tukman Geospatial LLC

1:1,500



Contour Interval 2'



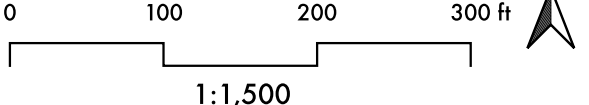


**Pace Property Loop Trails
Flagged Alignment**

Property lines from Santa Cruz County Assesors Parcel map and are approximate.

Topographic Data from 2018 Santa Cruz County LiDAR courtesy of San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, CALFIRE, Sanborn Map Company Inc., Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, County of Santa Clara, Tukman Geospatial LLC

Contour Interval 2'

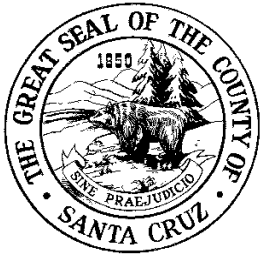


Legend

Pace Trail Corridors	Lower Loop Trail
Lower Access Trail	Middle Loop South
Mid Access Trail	Middle Loop North
Upper Access Trail	

Ground Slope

<= 10%	60-80%
10-20%	80-100%
20-40%	100-130%
40-60%	130+%



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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Anissa Childers, Aquatic Supervisor
Subject: Aquatic Section Report

Programming

Swim lessons continued strong – group swim lessons had 212 enrolled participants, while private lessons served 89 participants through our contracted instructors. Additionally, one of our private contractors took on the Learn-to-Swim scholarship group lessons this season, serving 20 participants for a total of 321 swimmers receiving instruction this season.

We offered other programs such as **Junior Guard Clinic**, with 113 participants enrolled, and **Spring Water Warriors Camp**, with 30 enrolled participants, providing families with continuous Winter programs for youth.

Interest in the non-competitive **Simpkins Sharks Swim Club** remained strong, with 37 participants now enrolled.

Hiring and Training

We had 27 new lifeguards certified through American Red Cross Lifeguard courses, which were offered by our staff. Five newly certified lifeguards have officially started working since February 1st.

Facility Usage and Adult Programming

Adult Fitness programming maintained a steady level of participation, with 2,579 participants from February to the present. Water Aerobics classes also continued to perform well, serving 1,442 participants during the same period.

General facility usage remained high throughout the winter season. Warm Water usage recorded 1,958 check-ins, and Lap Swim recorded a total of 10,908 check-ins from February to the present. This does not include drop ins.

Upcoming Programming and Events

We had our annual **Light Up the Night Pool Party**. This event was a great success and continues to be a popular community favorite. This year we invited “El Pato Frutas Y Antojitos” a food/snacks truck to be vendor for this event, highlighting local small business. For this year’s event we had 173 pre-registered participants.

Looking ahead to spring and Summer, we will offer a variety of programs, including Junior Guard and Little Guard summer camps, Swim lessons, Private Swim Lessons, and Simpkins Sharks.

County Park Friends – We are offering upcoming Spring and Summer lessons learn to swim lessons taught by our private contractor Sunshine.



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: April 5th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Kathy DeWild, Arts Program Coordinator
Subject: Arts & Cultural and Quail Hollow Ranch Interpretive Programs - Section Report

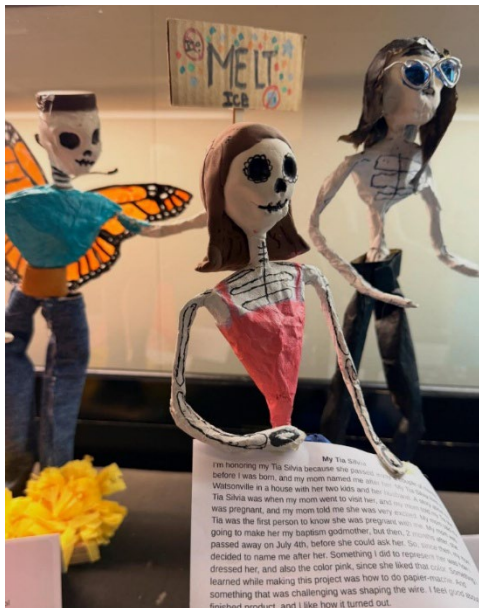


Artist-led Public Art Activity at Floral Park

On Saturday, April 18th from 10:00 – 11:00 AM all ages are invited to dive into art and ocean life with artist Justin Francavilla! We'll explore Monterey Bay's tide pool creatures through a new public art installation at Floral Park.

The first part is a bronze plaque featuring their names in both English and Spanish. Kids and adults will get to make rubbing prints of the plaque, learning how to say each animal's name in two languages. The second part is new bronze tide pool sculptures where you can see and touch, turning the park into our own outdoor classroom and art studio.

This hands-on activity is a fun way to discover sea life, practice new words, and see how art and nature come together!

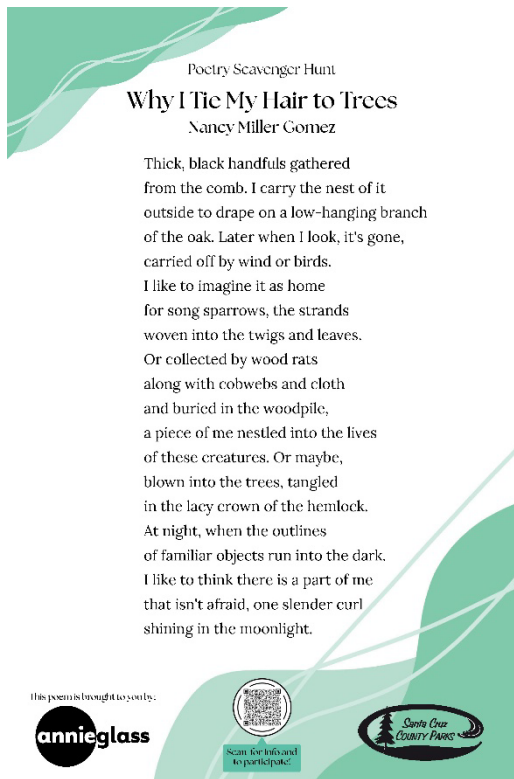


Art Exhibitions

Youth Art Exhibit at 701 Ocean St. (1st & 5th floors):

More than 400 works of art created by Santa Cruz County students in grades K-12 are on display at through May 1! The works are part of the 2026 Youth Art Exhibit, facilitated by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education and Arts Council Santa Cruz County. We invite you to swing by and check out some amazing artwork by the next generation of artists, led by some dedicated teachers!

Winging It: Birds of Live Oak at the Simpkins Family Swim Center/Live Oak Library Annex through May 22nd. Soar through this exhibition of local art and history! Winging It shares artwork inspired by birdwatching in this area, as well as Live Oak history that makes it inviting for our feathered friends.



Poetry Scavenger Hunt

This spring, there are more than just flowers blooming in Santa Cruz County. In celebration of National Poetry Month, poetry has left the page and is popping up in County Parks! In a project sponsored by Santa Cruz County Parks, Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate Nancy Miller Gomez, and amazing local businesses sponsors, poems by local and national poets have been installed in 16 County Parks. Everyone is invited to join us in this county-wide Poetry Scavenger Hunt! In this self-guided experience, we want you to enjoy the parks through your own poetic lens.

With the poem as your guide, explore each participating park to find elements that connect to the poem. The hunt is open-ended, so be creative and let your imagination run wild. Use your cell phone (or a sketch pad) to document your interpretive discoveries. Your scavenged responses can be literal, metaphorical, abstract, artistic, zany, beautiful or weird. Upload your photos (or your sketches) as a post to your Instagram account and add [@poetryintheparks](#) as a collaborator. A review panel will choose a winner for each location. The winners receive a

prize from a sponsoring business!

Are you up for the challenge? Invite your friends, bring a picnic, find a poem, snap some pics, win a prize! Details on how to participate, more information about the poets, and sponsor info. can be found here: [Poetry Scavenger Hunt](#)

Quail Hollow Ranch Interpretive Activities

Sandhills Hikes - Sundays in April, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM & 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Join a guided hike with a Park Docent to see and learn about the many rare species that make this special place their home: this is the only time to visit the flower-covered hills of the sandhills habitat. This is a slow hike open to ages 8 and up; *ages 15 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Participants must be able to hike up to two hours. [Register for a Sandhills hike.](#)

For Goodness Snakes! - May 3rd, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

In this exciting and interactive presentation, you'll get a chance to see and hold (only if you want to!) a blue-tongued skink, black and white Tegu, four different kinds of ball pythons, and a 9-ft. albino Burmese python! Brian will discuss snake senses and how these animals live and interact with the wild. **For ages 7 & up; an adult must accompany ages 12 and under. [Register now!](#)

Easy Gardens for Busy People – From Seed! - May 17th, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

No matter where you live in Santa Cruz County, there's still plenty of time to plant and enjoy a big and bountiful garden! Learn which easy-care and versatile vegetables, culinary herbs and colorful flowers can be planted from seed now that will both feed the pollinators and sustain your family throughout summer and fall. Instructor Renee Shepherd is the founder of local seed company Renee's Garden. For ages 12 & up. [Register now!](#)



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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jesse Williams, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Maintenance Section Report

North County, Highlands and Emeline Maintenance Shops

The North County Maintenance is working on a new trail construction project in the **Pace Family Wilderness** connecting to Quail Hollow Ranch County Park. The work on this project is in partnership with the Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship, the California Conservation Corps, and an AmeriCorps Team. We are working on installing benches, tables, and signage and hope to open this trail this summer.

In the outdoor education center at **Quail Hollow Ranch** maintenance installed an outdoor sink/wash station for the summer kids camps.

Shaded fuel break work at the **Miller Property** in Boulder Creek continues with the help of CalFire and the California Conservation Corps.

At **Greyhound Rock** staff are developing a campground area and reestablishing a trail and coastal access to the beach.

Park Maintenance is now maintaining and monitoring all the Eucalyptus Trees in the Grove around the **Sanitation District on Lode Street**. This Grove is the roosting habitat for the Monarch Butterflies from October to March.

Irrigation repairs were made around the new batting cages recently installed at **Anna Jean Cummings Park**.

Staff have begun the early high weed mowing and springtime irrigation maintenance in North County.

Mid County, Simpkins and Felt Street Maintenance Shop

Mid County Maintenance recently had an "all crew day" at **Simpkins Swim Center** where our maintenance team completed a list of deferred maintenance as well as poured a new concrete slab for future lockers on the pool deck. A very large sump pump was replaced at the swim center. The pump allows us to backwash the pool and is a vital part of the circulation, cleaning, and maintenance of the pools. Our swim center 50-meter lap pool is out of service temporarily while we replace the motor and recirculation pump. If everything goes smoothly, we hope to be open on Friday 4/10 or Saturday 4/11.

Staff are repainting and rehabbing the play structures at **Twin Lakes Park** (7th Ave). These play structures are showing their age, so staff are trying to give them a little more life before we will need to replace them.

South County, Pinto Lake and Aptos Polo Grounds Maintenance Shops

In South County, Maintenance staff have been busy with seasonal mowing high weeds at Seascapes, Aptos Polo Grounds, Tee Street at the Farm park, the Freedom Annex, Pinto Lake disc golf course, and the Round Tree facility.

A fence was replaced due to tree damage at **Aldridge Lane County Park**.

Maintenance repaired a 4" water main break at **Pinto Lake County Park**. As well as repaired a water heater at the Pinto Lake back house where we are currently housing an AmeriCorps team.

Continued maintenance at **Mesa Village County Park** consists of more tree planting with Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the replacement of fascia boards on the restroom, this park is finally getting the attention it deserves.

Poor drainage that was causing flooding and over saturation in the dog park at **Aptos Polo Grounds** was rerouted to help dry out the area.

Repairs were made to the entrance ramp at the portable classrooms at **Mar Vista**.

South County area training staff to manage new native plantings at **Heart of Soquel** and **Heart of Soquel Parkway**.

Seasonal Maintenance or Upcoming Maintenance County Wide

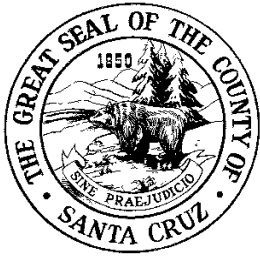
Upcoming seasonal maintenance will consist of fuel reduction, seasonal high weed mowing, and converting areas into more sustainable drought tolerant areas for water conservation.

Maintenance Staffing Changes

The Santa Cruz County Parks Department has recently onboarded a new entry level Park Maintenance Worker. The Parks Department also had a long-time maintenance worker leave us to pursue other ventures, staffing levels have not changed.

Vehicle/Equipment Update

Santa Cruz County Parks is in the process of obtaining a new truck to be used along the North Coast 7.5-mile segment of the Rail Trail.



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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Park Planners - Rob Tidmore, Mariana Colibri-Urgo, Mike Pruitt, Zane Mortensen
Subject: Planning Section Report

Coastal Rail Trail

Segments 8-11: The Board of Supervisors approved a contract amendment with RRM Design Group on February 24th to begin work on the Interim Trail. An analysis of Interim Trail designs is expected to go before the RTC for a decision in June.

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

North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5): The Panther/Yellowbank parking lot is now officially open to the public. The permanent bathrooms are still being fixed, so the contractor has installed portable restrooms until the permanent restrooms open.

Freedom Lake Restoration Plan

Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW), in partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks, is advancing restoration planning and implementation at Freedom Lake with a focus on improving habitat, water quality, and overall ecological function of the system.

Recent work has focused on upstream areas, where invasive vegetation removal has been completed. Upcoming restoration efforts include installation of erosion control blankets and a community volunteer planting event to stabilize disturbed areas and support establishment of native vegetation.

In parallel, the project team is advancing a hydrologic review of the lake to better understand system dynamics and inform restoration planning. Recent technical work includes installation of a stream monitoring gage and completion of surveys of both the inlet and outlet channels. A bathymetric analysis has also been completed to evaluate overall lake geometry and storage capacity.

Together, this work is providing the technical foundation needed to develop a preferred restoration strategy that protects the ecological importance of the site while expanding opportunities for recreation and public access.



Greyhound Rock

An RFP for the site planning and design work for this project was released in March, and consultant proposals are due on April 10th. Staff will review and rank proposals this month. Contract negotiations will occur in early May, and a tentative contract will be brought to the Board of Supervisors for approval in June.

Moran Lake County Park

Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan (HMP): Staff are working on completing CEQA review of the HMP. The HMP clarifies that habitat management will prioritize public safety, protection of monarch habitat, and restoration of native species and habitat for biodiversity, in that order. The HMP will also outline regularly recurring, proactive arborist inspections to assess grove risk, hazard abatements as identified, regular maintenance of trimmed trees, continued drainage improvements to reduce ponding at the base of trees, and ongoing native tree and shrub planting. County Parks’ consulting arborist completed a risk assessment of all the trees in the park, and no immediate hazards were identified that required immediate action.

Tree Work: Additional tree work is planned for Summer 2026, pending funding availability. Parks staff are working with our arborist and tree contractors to scope and receive quotes for the work.

40 Moran Way: Maintenance staff have finished adjustments to the fence layout, and the first phase of work is complete. Planting the site with native trees and shrubs is expected to occur next rainy season.

Pace Property Connection Trails

Trail construction is nearly complete. Volunteers have been instrumental on the trail work. Park staff are awaiting schedule coordination with the California Conservation Corps to perform finishing work on the project as a part of the grant requirement. Work coordination with AmeriCorps is underway for installation of trail benches, picnic tables, and trail directional signs. The interpretive signs design process is underway. The artist has been chosen for the project and is awaiting approval from the Board of Supervisors. The project team is striving for a productive Spring/Summer construction season. The excellent volunteer effort has provided solid trail construction progress and Parks is capitalizing on the momentum for the project moving forward. A soft opening for the trail is anticipated for late spring with final completion end of summer to early fall 2026.



Pinto Lake

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

The County is currently awaiting the results of an NPS 319(h) grant application submitted to the State Water Board in December 2025. If awarded, the funding would support planning and implementation of key restoration measures such as in-lake phosphorus sequestration, aeration, and invasive species removal, along with upstream improvements like sediment basin and drainage retrofits and partnerships with farmers and adjacent landowners to reduce nutrient loading.

The County is continuing to refine its in-lake management approach and maintain ongoing monitoring to better understand source contributions and support adaptive management. These efforts are intended to better align in-lake treatment with upstream BMP implementation and support progress toward TMDL compliance.



Santa Cruz Coastal Lagoons & East Cliff Drive Resiliency Study

County Parks was awarded a \$650,000 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to prepare a planning-level feasibility study of nature-based adaptation strategies to address sea-level rise along East Cliff Drive at three coastal lagoons—Schwan Lagoon, Corcoran Lagoon, and Moran Lagoon—in mid-Santa Cruz County. The project seeks to identify preferred adaptation strategies for each location that prioritize nature-based solutions, protection of coastal resources and ecosystems, maintenance of coastal access, and resilience of critical infrastructure.

Monitoring at the three lagoons is ongoing in partnership with California State Parks and Santa Cruz County Environmental Health. ESA has completed multiple field efforts, including RTK-GPS topographic surveys, bathymetric mapping, sediment and water quality sampling, and planning for long-term monitoring installations. The County has also completed the Existing Conditions Report, which compiles historical data, prior studies, and recent field findings to establish a comprehensive project baseline.

The project has transitioned into Phase 1 community engagement, focused on sharing existing conditions and gathering input on key issues, constraints, and opportunities. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) engagement is underway, with the first TAC meeting completed. Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) materials have been developed for targeted audiences (Ecology, Recreation, and Neighbors/Businesses), and meetings are currently being scheduled.

In parallel, the project website and StoryMap/Experience Builder are in development and will serve as key tools for sharing project information, visualizing existing conditions and coastal hazards, and supporting ongoing public engagement. The Community Engagement Plan has been finalized, and outreach efforts will continue to expand as the project moves into the next phase of evaluating and refining adaptation strategies.



Valle del Pájaro

Long-term planning is underway. The County has selected Mithun to lead development of a Master Plan, with a strong emphasis on community engagement throughout the process. The effort kicked off in Fall 2025 with an initial meeting between the planning team, the consultant, and County Park Friends. Since then, Mithun has completed a draft site analysis and is advancing the community engagement framework.

Community engagement began with an initial workshop in March and will continue through a series of events, including Workshop 2 on May 2, Workshop 3 in the first weeks of June, and Workshop 4 in mid- to late August, when school is back in session. In addition to these workshops, Parks will take a “meet people where they are” approach. Between Workshop 2 and Workshop 4, the County anticipates conducting up to five targeted outreach meetings with previously identified key community groups. This effort is intentionally aligned with well-attended community events occurring between May and July, building on lessons learned from the Strategic Plan update process.

In parallel with engagement efforts, Parks is working with the consultant team to complete a site assessment focused on identifying key issues and evaluating potential strategies for sediment management and the

broader hydrologic approach at Paulsen Road and within the larger watershed. This work will establish a strong technical foundation to inform subsequent planning and design.



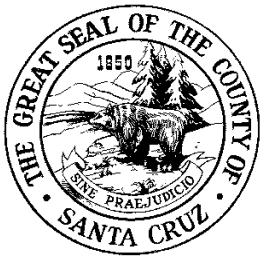
Miller Property County Park

The Miller Property County Park Shaded Fuelbreak Project is a collaborative wildfire prevention effort between Santa Cruz County Parks and CAL FIRE (San Mateo–Santa Cruz Unit). The project focuses on establishing a shaded fuelbreak along Kings Creek Road to reduce wildfire risk, strengthen community resilience, and improve forest health by lowering the potential for catastrophic wildfire.

The project is located along Kings Creek Road within Miller Property County Park, near the communities of Boulder Creek and Riverside Grove in Santa Cruz County. Vegetation management activities extend up to 300 feet on both sides of the roadway, encompassing approximately 52 acres in total—39 acres west of the road and 13 acres east. A 50-foot bankfull elevation buffer is maintained from Kings Creek and its associated riparian corridor to ensure all work remains outside sensitive riparian areas. CAL FIRE began on-the-ground fuel reduction work in December 2025, and approximately 8–10 acres of fuel reduction were completed during the initial phase of the project along the roadway corridor.

Fuel reduction work is being carried out by CAL FIRE engine crews during non-fire assignments, with oversight and coordination provided by Santa Cruz County Parks. Work is anticipated to resume in late April 2026 and will continue throughout the year, depending on weather conditions and CAL FIRE crew availability.





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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jaime Jimenez, Recreation Supervisor
Subject: Recreation Section Report

Partnerships with Local Recreation Departments



The Recreation Division collaborated with the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to support the “Kick-Off Santa Cruz 2026” initiative in anticipation of major regional sporting events hosted in neighboring Santa Clara County, including the Super Bowl and the FIFA World Cup. As part of this effort, a series of family-friendly events were successfully held across South County, Mid County, and North County from February 3rd – 5th. These events celebrated the Big Game while promoting community engagement and access to recreation programming. The Department extends its appreciation to the Board of Supervisors, Kick-Off Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz County Park Friends for their continued support of youth recreation and community-based programming. Additional thanks are extended to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office for their professional management of event operations, contributing to a safe and positive experience for all participants. The

Department also acknowledges Joe Nedney for his participation and hands-on coaching at the kicking and punting stations, which enhanced the overall experience for attendees. Appreciation is further extended to the San Francisco 49ers Flag Football program and Chase for their leadership and support in delivering engaging activity stations. Finally, the Department recognizes the contributions of the San Francisco 49ers, Gooder Foods, Pacific Cookie Company, and Highway 17 Studios, whose support helped enhance the quality and success of the events for participants and families.

Staff also participated in the Santa Cruz Children's Museum of Discovery community event on March 21st at the Capitola Mall, where summer program offerings were promoted to families.

The team is also supporting community partnerships through participation in the upcoming “Jack Rabbit 5K” fundraiser in collaboration with the Live Oak School District, benefiting Shoreline Middle School, scheduled for April 19th.

To support seasonal staffing efforts, the Recreation Team attended multiple job fairs these past few months in partnership with “Your Future Is Our Business” at local Santa Cruz County high schools, promoting employment opportunities in recreation and aquatics.



Looking ahead, the Recreation Team is gearing up for a series of high-energy, world first class soccer inspired community events designed to bring the excitement of the global game to Santa Cruz County. The fun will kick off on June 13th from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Anna Jean Cummings Park in partnership with Central Coast FC, offering interactive drills, skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth and families to engage in the spirit of the sport. The momentum continues June 14th from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM at Sky Park, where the City of Scotts Valley will host a vibrant community celebration with a Wacky Soccer Tournament. These events aim to foster community pride, encourage active lifestyles, and create memorable, World Cup-themed experiences that unite residents of all ages through play and shared enthusiasm for soccer.

Recreation Programs & Contractual Agreements

During the February school break, the Recreation Team facilitated Ski Week Camps at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park for 26 youth ranging between the ages of 6-12 by providing safe and engaging environments for youth while supporting human development through structured recreational opportunities. Camps were held February 16th – 20th from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The Recreation Team hosted a Parks and Recreation Cultural Worker (PRCW) hiring event on Saturday, March 28th from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM at Simpkins Family Swim Center. A total of 27 Extra Help PRCW's were offered conditional job offers.



Our Active Adult Programs continue to provide both fee-based and free recreational opportunities for community members. Programs include Mall Walking and Bridge Club. The Mall Walking group gathers at the Capitola Mall - Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:45 – 10:00 AM to walk indoors and for a stretch class. Bridge Club meets on Mondays at the Aptos Branch at 10:30 AM. Participants continued their walking and stretching routines, engaged in cognitive and analytical fun, and enjoy being part of fostering human development and creating positive recreational experiences within our community.

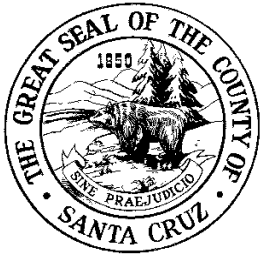
The Mobile Rec and Free Family Workshops program concluded operations at the end of February, marking another successful season of community-centered service delivery. Throughout its duration, the program provided equitable access to recreation opportunities by bringing activities directly into neighborhoods, reducing barriers related to transportation and cost. The Recreation team demonstrated exceptional commitment and adaptability, creating safe, welcoming environments where youth and families could connect, play, and build community. Through consistent outreach, creative programming, and strong on-site engagement, staff fostered meaningful relationships and increased participation across diverse communities. The program's success reflects the team's dedication to meeting residents where they are, enhancing quality of life, and advancing the Department's mission of accessible and inclusive recreation for all.



Marketing Efforts

The County Parks Summer/Fall Activity Guide is here! The material is published in both English and Spanish. The activity guide can be found online at scparks.com or pick up a hard copy at Simpkins Family Swim Center - 979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 or one of your favorite local shops.

The Parks Department continues to create marketing flyers in both Spanish/English. As well as social media posts and updates.



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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent
Subject: Reservations Section Report

Over the past three months, staff have been actively managing the annual athletic field renewal and allocation process. This effort is focused on ensuring equitable and well-organized access to athletic facilities for all user groups, while maintaining clear communication and scheduling efficiency.

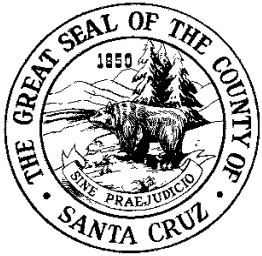
In March, annual garden plot permits were successfully renewed across the four community gardens located within our county parks. Staff supported returning participants and facilitated onboarding for new community members, continuing to promote community engagement and stewardship within these shared spaces.

With the arrival of spring, preparations are underway for the upcoming peak wedding and event season. Facilities staff and Park Service Officers are coordinating logistics and readiness efforts in anticipation of increased park usage. We look forward to supporting a high volume of successful and well-managed events in the months ahead!

Staff have also continued to provide ongoing support for marketing efforts, website management, and digital signage across park facilities. These efforts help ensure timely and accurate communication with the public, promote programs and events, and enhance overall visitor awareness and engagement.



Special congratulations to our Santa Cruz County Parks employees on their California Parks & Recreation Society District 6 Rise & Shine Awards! County Parks employees Garrett Smart and Kaylo Zubey, Supervisor and Recreation Specialist for Facilities/Reservation were awarded the Terry Seigrist's Award of Excellence for their contributions to our department's marketing and communications. The Terry Seigrist's Award of Excellence is the highest honor in our local awards. This dynamic duo was recognized for identifying the need to strengthen the Parks Department's visibility and, despite the absence of dedicated communications staff, collaboratively building a social media presence, activating the digital sign at the swim center, and supporting newsletters and marketing efforts to better inform and engage the community. Through their initiative, teamwork, and creative use of limited resources, they significantly elevated public awareness and enhanced the department's overall image.



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: April 13th, 2026
To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Emma Lee, Volunteer Program Coordinator
Subject: Volunteer Section Report

701 Ocean St. County Building

The succulent planting and beautification project is still ongoing at the County building! We've continued to eradicate weeds and plant succulents around the entrance of the facility. We completed the most recent volunteer day there on February 27th. We are looking forward to scheduling more 2026 dates to complete the project by weeding, planting succulents and spreading mulch!



Anna Jean Cummings County Park

We kicked off the first event in our four-part volunteer series at Anna Jean Cummings Park, where participants removed invasive plants along the established hiking trails. Five enthusiastic volunteers joined us and made a strong impact, clearing impressive piles of invasive broom.

This volunteer series is part of an ongoing effort to improve trail access and restore native habitats throughout the park. Join us on the last Saturday of each month through June, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

At Anna Jean Cummings Park, we also continue to have workability groups join us weekly to pick up litter, rake, blow leaves, and pick up extra tasks as needed.



Ben Lomond County Park

Volunteers Kym and Phil Morello have continued to donate their time and expertise to beautify the park. In March, they planted 26 native plants and pulled two bins of weeds.



Felton Discovery County Park

Our 2026 volunteer dates have been scheduled at the Felton Discovery Park! Join us from 9:00 – 11:00 AM on April 25th, May 30th, June 27th, September 26th, and October 24th to help tend to the native plants in the park. We're looking forward to the Garden Work Parties!

Floral County Park

Volunteers are continuing to care for the newly planted Native Pollinator Garden at Floral County Park. We're there weeding the space on the first Saturday of every month from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, currently extending through June.

Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

It's time for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park! This year, we'll celebrate our incredible volunteers on May 8th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM. We're looking forward to a fun day where volunteers can connect with one another while learning about recent accomplishments across the ranch and what's ahead.

The nest box season has officially started! Volunteers are active and have begun the season of monitoring nesting bird activity at Quail Hollow Ranch County Park. It's a beautiful and busy Spring at the park!

A student group from Highlands High School has continued to visit and volunteer at Quail Hollow Ranch, most recently on April 2nd! Under the direction and supervision of Park Host Beth, students help to maintain the garden areas at the park and beautify the space.

Pace Property

We've continued the volunteer efforts for the Pace Trails Project! Thanks to our amazing volunteers and volunteer leads, we held five volunteer days in March, completing the initial trail construction. In addition to the great volunteers we are working with, the California Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps are going to help us complete and refine the trails.

Pinto Lake County Park

We're participating in the Pitch In All County Cleanup Day on May 9th at Pinto Lake County Park! Join us on May 9th from 9:00 – 11:00 AM to pick up litter and beautify the park.





AmeriCorps

We've partnered with AmeriCorps March 20th – April 21st! This group of 9 young adults will be helping us complete the Pace Trail Project.

Over the last two weeks, the team has:

- Hauled materials to locations for five benches and two picnic tables
- Built and set two benches
- Cleared duff (organic matter) and poison oak from one mile of trail
- Leveled and re-naturalized a half mile of trail



While in the county, they'll be staying with us at Pinto Lake County Park, and exploring all our beautiful area has to offer.

Park Hosts

Park Hosts have continued to help host volunteer events, greet park visitors, and enhance our parks.

South County

South County Park Hosts at Bert Scott, Kris, and at Pinto Lake, Alex and Elizabeth, continue to focus on park stewardship and assist volunteer efforts across the county. Kris continues to lead the volunteer days at Floral Park, with assistance from Alex. Elizabeth will continue to spearhead the planting project at Pinto Lake County Park and assist Park Host Beth with the Felton Discovery Park volunteer days.

North County

North County Park Hosts at Quail Hollow, Beth and Steve, continue their projects around the ranch and assist visitors in the park. In addition to their regular projects, Steve opens the visitors center when docents are unavailable, and Beth continues to help maintain the front garden area. Beth has also continued to be at every Pace Project volunteer day to check in volunteers and hand out snacks. Beth will also assist with the upcoming events at Felton Discovery Park and future volunteer days at 701 Ocean Street.

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