



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS

AMERICORPS 2023

RED 4 TEAM

QUAIL HOLLOW RANCH COUNTY PARK



ARRIVAL

The AmeriCorps Red 4 team arrived in Santa Cruz County on January 10th, having been delayed by a day due to disastrous weather. While here, the team continued to experience stormy weather; rain, sleet, and snow!



DEPARTURE

After originally being extended through April, Red 4 got pulled early for a new assignment. They left on February 28th following seven weeks of partnership with Santa Cruz County Parks.



Quail Hollow Ranch



TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Partnering with the Quail Hollow Volunteer Trail Crew, the team learned how to properly maintain and repair trails! We worked to create and restore waterbars and service existing pathways.



FLOOD MITIGATION

Under the instruction of maintenance staff, we worked to reduce water damage by digging trenches, enhancing existing culverts, and creating new water channels.



STORM DAMAGE REPAIR

Due to disastrous storms in the area, the team spent a large amount of time clearing brush and debris from trails and public park areas.

Scott Creek Beach



SAND DUNE RESTORATION

At Scott Creek Beach, the team received an informative presentation on native habitat restoration by Bill Henry and Michael Hann with Groundswell Coastal Ecology. With their expertise, we planted over 400 native plants and buried rice straw in order to stabilize the dunes and restore native habitats. We also pulled out over six large, isolated patches of invasive ice plant and added to the existing rope barrier that surrounds vulnerable sand dunes.

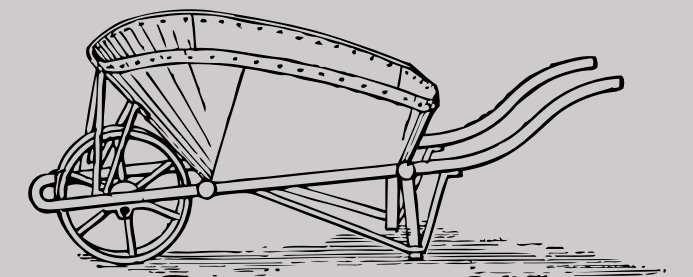
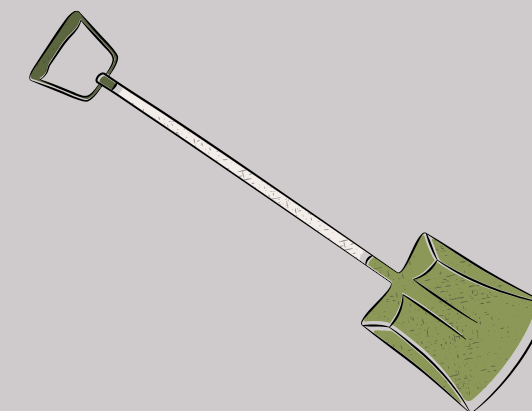
Following our work at Scott Creek Beach, Michael Hann led the team on an informative walkthrough of the burn scar at Big Basin and educated us on the principles of fire reduction and its affects on the local flora and fauna.



Ben Lomond Park

At Ben Lomond Park, the team worked on disaster recovery and flood clean up. Our goal was to help prepare the area to be reopened to the public.

Under the instruction of maintenance staff, we emptied two playgrounds full of silt and contaminated wood chips. We also scraped mud, sand, and debris from community picnic areas, walkways, and the basketball court. Along with trash removal, the team worked to clear the park and surrounding fencing of flood debris.



Felton Covered Bridge Park



PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

At Felton Covered Bridge Park, the team worked to help prepare the playground for reopening. We shoveled and removed all of the silt from the flooding, as well as the contaminated wood chips. This would then get repurposed as mulch and invasive plant containment on a nearby hillside; we shoveled and raked the displaced chips to create a purposeful and improved boundary within the park.



Heart of Soquel Community Collaboration

Partnering with the local company *Merge 4* and other individual community members, the Red 4 Team assisted in the flood recovery at Heart of Soquel Park. We shoveled mud from trafficked pathways, unclogged drains in preparation for further inclement weather, cleared obstructed parking areas, removed trash, and cleaned picnic areas.

Highlands Park



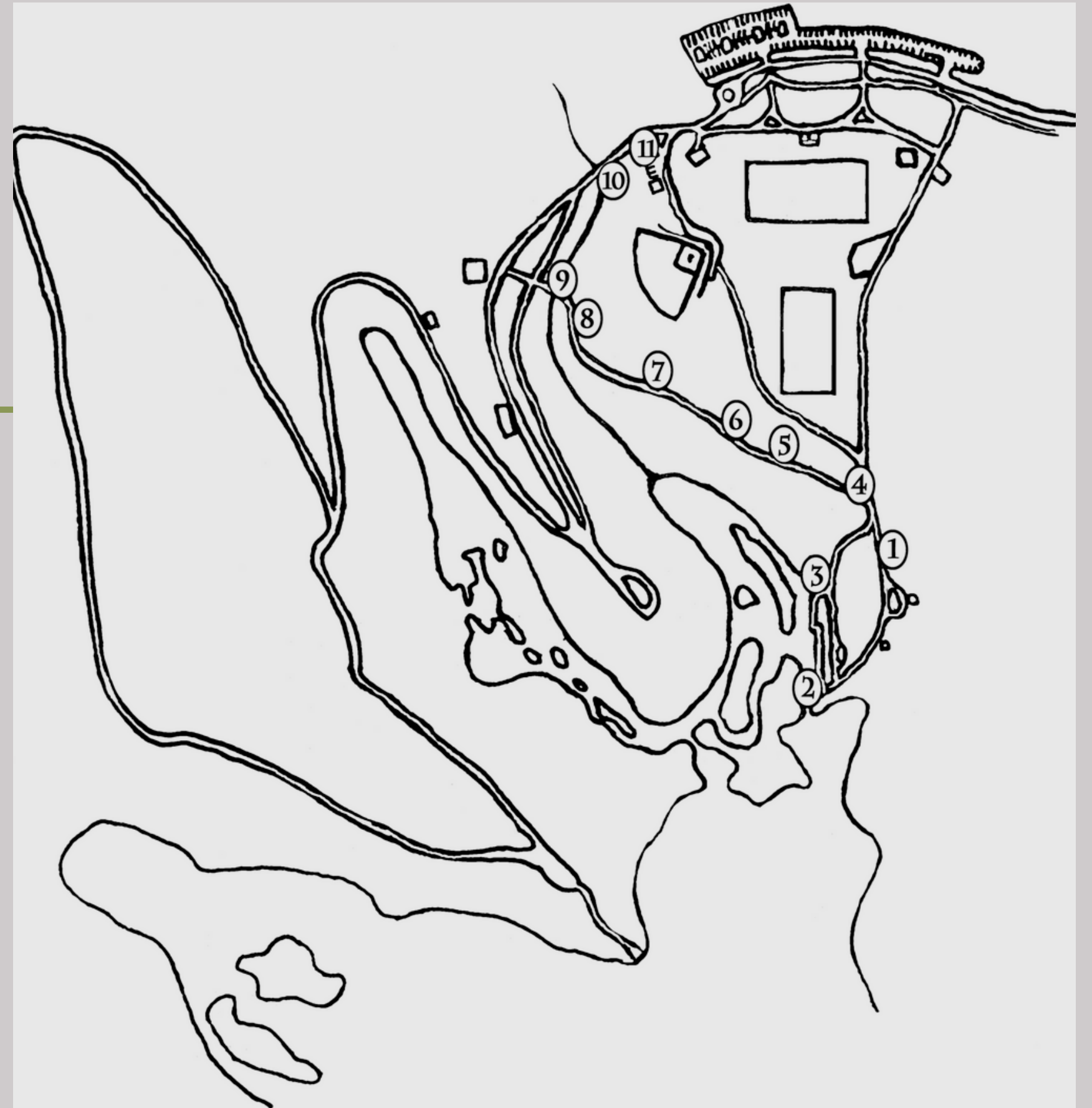
At Highlands Park, the team received an educational walkthrough and lecture concerning invasive plants, proper ivy removal, and pruning techniques by Linda Skeff. Following this, we worked to remove invasives, such as vinca and ivy, along the nature trail in hopes of restoring the health and natural growth of California natives.

Self-Guided Nature Path at Pinto Lake



Before leaving, the Red 4 team worked on reestablishing the self-guided nature walk at Pinto Lake County Park.

The team located remaining markers, established a trail, placed temporary stakes to mark the route, and cleared around remaining viewpoints. The work that the team did has created the groundwork for the creation of a new, engaging path that visitors can enjoy.



Environmental Conservation

TRAILS

Red 4 helped to restore six miles of hiking trails within the Santa Cruz County Park System and logged 147 hours of trail maintenance.

NATIVE HABITATS

The team assisted in preserving half an acre of sand dunes and removed 2030 pounds (two acres) of invasive vegetation. A total of 1350 native plants were then planted!

WATERWAYS

Red 4 restored 0.32 acres of stream beds, river beds, riverbanks, and stream banks. A total of 246.5 hours were logged while working on flood mitigation.

PARKS

The team helped to restore a total of eight acres of park land. This was throughout seven Santa Cruz County Parks and a total of 957 hours spent.

Over seven weeks, Red 4 worked to help recover our parks from unexpected storm damage, prepare for future disaster, repair our trails, restore community spaces, and rehabilitate native habitats.