The Year in Review
2020-2021

A report to our community showcasing our work to support San Mateo County Parks by funding projects, people, and programs

“The San Mateo County Parks Foundation has been an extraordinary partner in our quest to restore Edgewood’s sensitive grassland habitats, and an inspiration as we reimagine how we deliver interpretive programs in a constantly changing world.”

– Peter Ingram, President, Friends of Edgewood
To Our Extended Parks Family,

The board and staff of the Parks Foundation recently got a preview of Tunitas Creek Beach. Tunitas Creek Beach is slated to become the newest San Mateo County Park once all improvements have been made. While there, we saw snowy plovers zipping along the beach and overhead, an osprey flew back and forth showing off half a fish in its talons.

This is when I feel immense gratitude for this place you and I call home. We live in a beautiful area and our parks and coastline play a huge role in that beauty.

More and more people have been coming home to their San Mateo County Parks – the pandemic forced many to discover these rich treasures in our collective backyard and now they’re hooked! The ocean is hypnotic and powerful when standing at Pillar Point Bluff. Both birds and planes draw people to Coyote Point. San Bruno Mountain offers unparalleled views of San Francisco and the Peninsula. I don’t mean to be melodramatic, but I do believe we live in an earthly paradise!

People flock to the parks to hike, trail run, bird watch, volunteer, fill in the blank. Behind the scenes, much is going on to ensure a healthy balance between access, recreation and restoration –

- A new interpretive strategic plan will guide efforts to better connect people to the parks with events and information that is culturally relevant and reduces barriers to understanding the parks.
- The County’s first pump track for bike riders is slated to come to Quarry Park by mid-2022, offering a new amenity that will replace kids’ screen time with time (and movement) in nature.
- Efforts to restore Edgewood’s grasslands could offer important lessons for grasslands throughout California and benefit endangered species like the Bay checkerspot butterfly and San Mateo thornmint.

It is thanks to you, that the San Mateo County Parks Foundation is providing financial support to these projects and more.

We know how healing and magical time in a park is and we want to remove the barriers that prevent people from experiencing that magic too. We know the parks are home to a plethora of plants and animals and we want them to thrive, too. We know that it is our responsibility to make sure we leave these places better than when we found them. Thank you for being a part of this effort.

With gratitude,

Michele Beasley, Executive Director
and the Board of the San Mateo County Parks Foundation

San Mateo County Parks at a Glance

- 24 parks
- 16,000 acres
- 190 miles of trails
- 2.5 million visitors
- 54 park rangers
Your gifts support projects throughout the County

This year’s project highlights:

- The use of Park Prescriptions increased during the pandemic. Doctors at San Mateo County Health prescribe time in nature to patients at risk of obesity and diabetes. This prescription pass covers the $6 parking fee at parks like San Pedro Valley.

- The OuterSpatial app lets you stay connected to your San Mateo County Parks, with downloadable maps, activities, events and suggestions for the best accessible trails (hint: Devil’s Slide Trail from the southern trailhead).

- Funds were provided to craft SMC Parks’ new Interpretive strategic plan which will provide a framework to develop information and activities that are inclusive, welcoming and accessible.

- The Foundation took over management of San Mateo County Park’s commemorative bench and table program. New scenic spots to sit and rest have gone in throughout the parks including this lovely spot at Pillar Point Bluff.

- We secured two-year funding from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) to support Friends of Edgewood’s Green Grass Initiative. This initiative aims to restore San Bruno Mountain’s non-native grasslands to their former functional beauty and species diversity by eliminating weeds and promoting greater cover of native plants.

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Inspiring people to care for, learn about and enjoy our parks

San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation
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The Parks Foundation helps us bridge the gap between department funding and park needs. Last year, the Foundation helped us migrate some of our gas powered equipment to electric models which helps us reduce emissions. They also matched funds for new shade structures in some of our picnic areas. We are so grateful for this partnership and the positive impact it has on the park, park visitors and our environment."

– Laurel Finnegan, Park Ranger IV

Lately, the Parks Foundation has been busy supporting tree health at Coyote Point and is gearing up to make another round of campsite improvements at Memorial Park. Bicycle Sunday returned last spring and is as popular as ever. Youth field trips to the parks returned this fall and a lesson in nature is just what the doctor ordered.

The Foundation funded a parks internship position to reconnect the North Fair Oaks community to the raised garden beds at Friendship Park. We also created a new grant program designed to enhance equitable access to San Mateo County Parks.

Finally, we launched our first ever photo contest this past summer and were inspired by the entries. We look forward to holding more events in the parks and coming together in community to celebrate life, you and this amazing place we call home. Thank you for your support!

Mountains of gratitude to the Parks Foundation for their continued support for equitable and inclusive access to our county parks. This year their funds made it possible to submit an Outdoor Equity Program proposal (to State Parks) to increase the ability of residents in low-income communities to participate in outdoor experiences at parks. ¡Gracias!"

– Gloria Cahuich Gonzalez, San Mateo County Health, Park Rx