The Year in Review
2021-2022

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

When I was going to ride the horse at first I was excited and at the same time nervous because I thought I was going to fall from the horse, but when I started to get a little confident, I wasn’t so scared anymore, I was actually feeling calm. The ride was a very exciting experience for me. If there is another field trip riding horses, I would like to have Lucie again.”

– Odalys, 5th grade
To Our Extended Parks Family,

In 2022, things continued to open up in your San Mateo County Parks, like the Coyote Point Eastern Promenade, which affords year-round, beach access and a front row seat to San Francisco Bay. The first-ever pump track in San Mateo County opened with much fanfare at Quarry Park this past July, and youth environmental field trips returned, introducing more children to parks.

This image of opening up fills me with warmth. People have been isolated and uncertain for too long. Opening up and reconnecting with one another and nature is healing on so many levels. Children from North Fair Oaks got to visit Wunderlich Park for the first time this fall. They learned how to take care of and ride horses. A whole new world opened up for them in just one afternoon.

Reopening the garden beds at Friendship Park meant this special place was soon overflowing with tomatoes, zucchini and goodwill. In the coming year, we look forward to co-hosting bilingual gardening workshops with Collective Roots to share knowledge and build community.

Our continued support of OpenRoad with Doug McConnell means sharing the gift of parks with new audiences and informing people of the inner workings of park management. This year, the focus was on the forests of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks and the collaborative efforts underway to ensure they are resilient in the face of wildfire.

Opening up allows us to relax into the present moment with more heart, and parks are the perfect setting to encourage this. You can see it on the beaming faces of children when they are up close with a horse, or the friends walking and talking along Sawyer Camp Trail. It happens when you find that perfect park bench to bask in the afternoon sun and watch the planes land, or when you take your next meeting outside and get to know a colleague on the trail.

The San Mateo County Parks Foundation loves building new connections to the parks for people. This is a positive ripple effect that creates new park champions, environmental stewards and healthy, confident youth. If that first visit to a park is healing, joyful and welcoming, a seed has been planted.

Thank you so much for your support of San Mateo County’s parks! You are instrumental in making good things happen. Together we are nurturing a world class park system that is resilient, accessible and scenic. Together we are opening up minds and hearts by connecting people to these backyard wonders.

With gratitude,

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

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San Mateo County Parks at a Glance
- 24 parks
- 16,000 acres
- 190 miles of trails
- 2.5 million visitors
- 54 park rangers

Photo by Rob Cala
Your gifts support projects throughout the County

This year’s project highlights:

The return of youth environmental field trips makes us VERY happy and Fitzgerald Marine Reserve was a popular destination last spring. Third grade teacher Matt Sullivan of Lead Elementary said, “Our students LOVED it and many mentioned it as their favorite part of our year!”

For a sneak peak into the inner workings of forest health management, OpenRoad with Doug McConnell took people to Huddart and Wunderlich Parks to learn more about how San Mateo County Parks and its partners are making our forests more resilient to wildland fire.

Ensuring a healthy tree canopy means sometimes removing hazardous trees that have been weakened by drought and pests. At Coyote Point, that is mostly eucalyptus trees near trails and picnic areas. Unsafe trees have been removed, shade shelters have been added, and views are opening up.

The Foundation provided a new shed, a little attention and support for community events, all of which livened up Friendship Park, as evidenced by the overflowing garden beds.

It has been wonderful to see children and teens of all ages ditch their screen time to hop on their bikes and enjoy San Mateo County’s first pump track at Quarry Park in El Granada.

The Foundation supported the Friends of Edgewood’s Green Grass Initiative by funding cutting-edge restoration techniques to grow more native plants, grasses and wildflowers. It involved removing the top layer of mostly non-native grasses through a method called Hydro-Mechanical Pulverization (think power-washing) in combination with hand-weeding and re-seeding with native seeds.

Our inaugural Enhancing Equitable Access grant program supported three organizations that help people, specifically communities of color, access and feel welcome in parks. One such group is Brown Girl Surf, which connects women to nature through surfing. They launch at Mirada Surf.

We love supporting park rangers’ special projects. This year it included Edgewood Farms, a collaboration between the Friends of Edgewood and San Mateo County Parks, created to cultivate more native plant seeds.

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The Pacific Beach Coalition is forever grateful for the support provided by the San Mateo County Parks Foundation. It has helped us inspire and engage volunteers throughout the Bay Area to care for our parks, beaches and neighborhoods by picking up trash or restoring habitat. Ultimately, we hope these efforts make an even bigger impact by inspiring volunteers to END LITTER!

–Lynn Adams, President, Pacific Beach Coalition

Now that the Parks Foundation is a team of three, we are hosting more events and collaborating with new organizations. This includes planning a range of park outings with San Mateo Pride Center and Peninsula Family Service; making it easier for groups, like Voices of Recovery, to host their annual picnics in the parks; and covering the bus fees for families from Casa Circulo Cultural and The 49ers Academy to visit the parks.

The truth is we cannot do this work without your wonderful support and the partnership of many organizations. We have endless gratitude for the volunteer docents, weed warriors and trail ambassadors, park rangers, Friends groups, and all of you who show up with love for your San Mateo County Parks all year long.

Next year, the San Mateo County Parks Foundation turns 25 and we want to celebrate with you! Stay tuned for more good news coming out of your San Mateo County Parks. May we meet in a park soon.

– Adriana Fernandez Arriaga,
SMCPF Program Coordinator