

Building Bridges between People and Parks

by Michele Beasley

Thanks to all who joined us on September 10 at Huddart Park to celebrate 25 years of inspiring people to care for, learn about and enjoy parks. It felt right to celebrate our 25th anniversary by turning the spotlight on our wonderful partners. We chose a volunteer group, a San Mateo County Parks Division and a community leader who embody our mission.

Our volunteer group, the Friends of Edgewood care for Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve. Thirty years ago, Edgewood was designated a Natural Preserve precisely because this group of individuals recognized the importance of Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity and fought to see that it be protected and appreciated forever. Their care for Edgewood shows up in the grasslands where the Weed Warriors pull out invasive species every week, or at Edgewood Farms, where native wildflowers are grown to create more seeds for habitat restoration, or in the lovingly tended Native Garden.

San Mateo County Parks' Interpretive Division works to ensure our parks are welcoming to all and invites people to learn about the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the parks. This is done by a dedicated park ranger team led by Katherine Wright and includes Lauren Ford-Peterson and Tracy Nappi. Whether organizing hikes and events in the parks or bringing the parks to the people by showing up in classrooms and libraries, San Mateo County Parks' Interpretive Team is doing amazing work.



From left to right: Interpretive Specialist Tracy Nappi, Park Ranger Lauren Ford-Peterson, SMC Parks Director Nicholas Calderon, honoree Rafael Avendaño with his daughter Alana, SMC Parks Foundation Executive Director Michele Beasley, Kathy Korbholz, Peter Ingram and Bill Korbholz, of the Friends of Edgewood. Photo by Rob Cala.

Community leader Rafael Avendaño is planting seeds of enjoyment in the next generation and he is a big believer in the power of parks. As the Executive Director of Redwood City Together, Rafael is leading a common community agenda to best support schools and the overall Redwood City and North Fair Oaks communities. One way he does this is by connecting kids to parks. From organizing bike rodeos at Flood Park to camping at

Memorial Park, Rafael is actively nurturing the next generation of conservation-minded park champions.

Each of our honorees is building bridges between people and parks. This is what you are supporting when you donate to the San Mateo County Parks Foundation — habitat restoration, volunteerism, interpretive programs, equitable access to the parks and so much more.

(Continued on next page)

San Mateo County Parks

Cowell – Purisima Trail
 Coyote Point Recreation Area
 Crystal Springs Regional Trail
 San Andreas Segment
 Sawyer Camp Segment
 Edgewood Park & Preserve
 Devil's Slide Trail
 Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
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Memorial Park Nature Center

One very concrete, upcoming project involves our first county park. Next year, Memorial Park, and as a result San Mateo County Parks, turns 100. Memorial Park is dedicated to the San Mateo County servicemen who died in World War 1. This local treasure has been on the receiving end of many long overdue and well-deserved improvements.

Just recently, a Memorial Park-specific interpretive plan was completed. This will guide renovations to the Nature Center, which the Foundation has been eager to support for several years. Things are now moving forward! This is a wonderful opportunity to freshen up displays, tell more of the park's history, and better connect people to the creeks, redwoods and wild-life of Memorial Park.

If you are inspired to support this project, you can make a donation and restrict it to the Memorial Park Nature Center. Thank you for your support!



Top: The windows in the Nature Center bring the redwoods inside. Above: Memorial Park's Nature Center is ready for its makeover! You can help make that happen. Photos by Katherine Wright

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Casa Circulo Cultural Enjoys Their Memorial Park Camping Adventure

By Adriana Fernandez Arriaga,
Program Coordinator

Our first camping trip to Memorial County Park for Casa Circulo Cultural was a success!

Casa Circulo Cultural (CCC), based in North Fair Oaks, is a grassroots, community-based multidisciplinary art organization dedicated to creating cultural programming reflective of the experiences of the Latino communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. Thanks to a grant from Save the Redwoods League, and in partnership with the San Mateo County Parks Department, we organized a camping trip for this group in August.

It started with a Camping 101 Workshop at Sports Basement a week before the camping trip. The kids and CCC staff had the opportunity to learn how to set up and break down their tents and try out a few sleeping pads. They learned about the three-bin washing system and how to set up and store a camping stove. They also learned about the principles of Leave No Trace Behind. As a bonus, they got to try dehydrated food. At first, the kids thought it looked yucky, but once they ate the chicken and rice, they wanted more. Overall, it was a fun interactive experience for the group which was about to go camping for the first time.



The group enjoyed splashing around in Pescadero Creek.

On the day of the camping trip, the group arrived at Memorial County Park via a yellow school bus. The fifteen kids ages 7 to 18 were very excited! Park Ranger Katherine Wright welcomed the group and led them in an icebreaker activity: If they could be a cartoon character, who would they be? The kids then got a tour of the campsite and chose where to set up their tents. Quickly, everyone got busy putting their Camping 101 skills to the test. The kids really took to the challenge and worked together to put up their tents, with a little support from park rangers.

Once the campsite was set up, the group walked through the redwood forest to the banks of Pescadero Creek. Despite having no intention of getting wet, the moment the group reached the water, the kids were in

the creek splashing, laughing, and having fun. This was a highlight of the trip.

For dinner, the parents prepared delicious potato tacos while the kids had some downtime to shower and put on warm layers. Then came the eagerly awaited campfire with promised s'mores. The group shared their favorite summer experiences while enjoying the warmth of the fire. The camping trip already rated as a fan favorite! At 8:30 pm, some of the kids went on a night hike led by County Park Naturalist Interns that was open to the entire campground. Sixty people walked without lights to adjust to their nocturnal vision. On the outing, they learned about echolocation, insect-eating bats, and the tallest tree at Memorial Park. Back at the campsite, the group was visited by a fox, which everyone thought was "pretty cool."

On Saturday, the younger kids woke up at 6 am super excited to adventure. They hiked down to the creek where they skipped rocks and wandered around while the rest of the kids woke up. For breakfast, la senora Ana and her husband Gonzalo made pancakes, tacos, and eggs with ham. The rest of the weekend was spent playing volleyball, going on a nature walk, engaging with arts and crafts, soaking in the creek, and watching the movie Frozen at the amphitheater. On Sunday, they broke down their campsite, joined another nature walk, and had a quick lunch before their bus ride home.

The adults expressed their gratitude for this memorable and fun experience. For some of them, it was their first time camping. One youth, Alexander, shared, "the camping trip was fun because it was my first time going and I wasn't using my phone and I liked that we were playing volleyball and I liked the river." Overall, everyone enjoyed spending time together in nature. Experiences like this one can leave a positive imprint that lasts a lifetime.



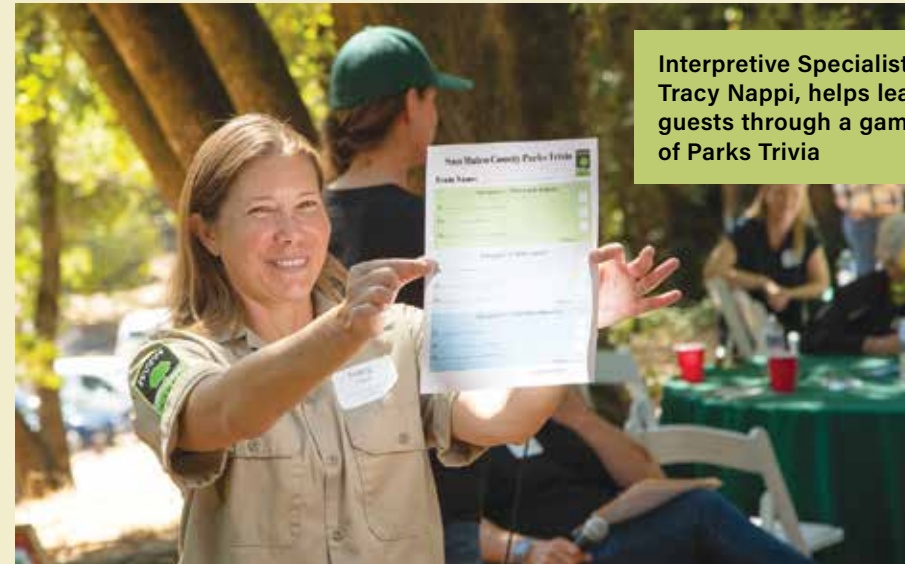
Kids, cartoon characters and superheroes alike were all hungry for s'mores!

Lots of New and Old Friends Gather at Huddart Park for Our 25th Anniversary Picnic

All photos by Rob Cala



Michele Beasley, SMC Parks Foundation Executive Director, and Helen Wolter, District Representative from the Office of State Senator Josh Becker, with a resolution honoring the Parks Foundation's 25th anniversary.



Interpretive Specialist Tracy Nappi, helps lead guests through a game of Parks Trivia



It was a reunion! Retired park staff Ron Weaver, Mike Fritz, Lynne Fritz, Tom Baker, Pamela Noyer, Bob Emert, and Retired Sheriff's Captain, Timothy McHenry



Adrienne Etherton and Kara Cox smiling brightly at our 25th anniversary celebration.



Q&A with Friends of Edgewood Honorees' Peter Ingram, Kathy Korbholz and Bill Korbholz



Thanh and Robert Mougeot



Honoree Rafael Avendaño with his wife, Ana, and their daughter, Alana

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Every effort was made to ensure that this list is complete and accurate. The Foundation regrets any errors or omissions. Please contact us so we may make the proper correction.

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A Beloved Trail is Next in Line for Repair

One of the most popular — if not THE most popular — trails in San Mateo County, Sawyer Camp Trail, has been mostly out of commission since our winter storms. This has been a huge disappointment for the many people who make walking Sawyer Camp a regular and enjoyable part of their lives. However, our relentless winter storms wreaked havoc on our county parks and it stretched park resources to the max.

Sawyer Camp Trail is the middle segment of Crystal Springs Regional Trail, a planned 17.5 mile regional trail of which a little over 15 miles are complete. The San Andreas Segment parallels San Andreas Lake to the north while the southern Crystal Springs segment parallels Cañada Road (Bicycle Sunday's location) and connects one into Huddart Park.

The paved, six-mile Sawyer Camp segment attracts runners, hikers, parents with strollers, cyclists and rollerbladers. It is estimated that 325,000 people enjoy Sawyer Camp and the longer Crystal Springs Regional Trail each year. Now, though, only the southern 1.5 miles of Sawyer Camp Trail is open.

What Is Going On?

Sawyer Camp Trail sustained damage in four locations starting at about 1.6 miles from the southern entrance. Water rushing down the steep slopes to the reservoir took out culverts and created sinkholes beneath the paved trail. The most significant impairment to the trail is at the 1.7-mile mark — a 50-foot landslide that threatens the trail's integrity making it unsafe for emergency or ranger vehicles to pass.

While our storms stopped months ago, the damage was spread throughout the county and kept San Mateo County Parks



Damage at 1.7-mile mark of Sawyer Camp Trail.

and the Department of Public Works busy with emergency repairs. Geotechnical engineers have surveyed the trail and their assessment is that once work begins, it should be an easy fix. The challenge is waiting in line. Major county roadways also experienced failures, slip-outs, and flooding. Public Works identified 15 high priority roadway repair projects that required attention with the top three being Kings Mountain Road in Woodside, Higgins Canyon Road in Half Moon Bay and Cañada Road near Highway 92. Fixes to these routes took precedent over Sawyer Camp Trail and took months as well.

The repair project to stabilize and restore the trail began the first week of October. Work includes removing debris, reestablishing drainage and replacing damaged culverts. The trail is within the Peninsula Watershed, a California designated Fish and Game Refuge and a protected

area within the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve. As a result of this area's significant habitat value, permits are required from various agencies, like the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), to get the project moving.

As best as possible, San Mateo County Parks intends to reopen the trail as sections are fixed and deemed safe. Culverts are to be replaced first and completed by October 15. An overall completion date has not been determined due to the variables at play, including weather.

This project is eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement, which the County is pursuing. In the meantime, the project will move forward using San Mateo County Measure K funds so the trail can safely open to people as soon as possible (hopefully not too long after you read this!). Your patience will soon be rewarded!

More images from our Anniversary Picnic Photos by Rob Cala



Bill Korbholz of the Friends of Edgewood and Julia Bott, founding Executive Director of the SMC Parks Foundation



SMC Parks Director Nicholas Calderon, SMCPF Board Member Mary DeLong, Jamie Riotto and Park Ranger Steve Cross