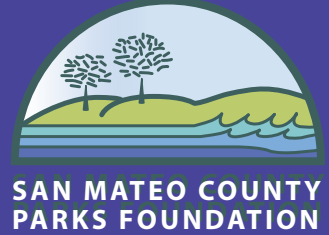


The Year in Review 2023-2024



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

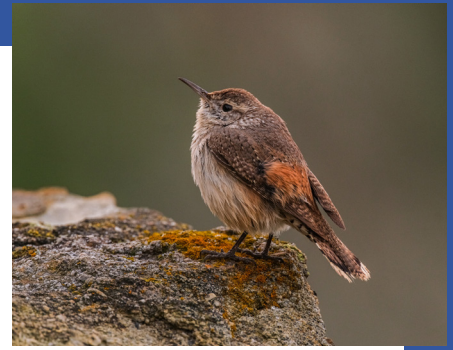


“ As the Bilingual Community Engagement Intern this year, I have gained invaluable insights into our community, parks, and myself, witnessing firsthand how nature can unite us in meaningful ways. By focusing on strengthening the connection between the North Fair Oaks community and Friendship Park, I had the privilege of collaborating with incredible partners, like The Riekes Center, to host events that celebrate culture and creativity, making the park a welcoming space for everyone. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and how it has enriched my personal growth.”

- Raquel Henriquez

To Our Extended Parks Family,

As the sun sets on 2024, we are celebrating a milestone year that perfectly captures the spirit of San Mateo County Parks – honoring our cherished past while building an exciting future. This year marked your park system's centennial, a journey that began with Memorial Park, where countless families have created memories under towering redwoods for the past 100 years.



Robert Ho

And as we prepare to welcome 2025, it is exciting to think about the upcoming opening of our newest treasure: Don Horsley Park at Tunitas Creek Beach. This breathtaking stretch of coastline represents more than just a new park – it is a promise to future generations that our natural heritage will be preserved and shared. Its new name honors former Supervisor and County Sheriff Don Horsley who died last year after a lifetime of public service that included spearheading the effort to protect this land.

Let's take a moment to pause and reflect on how lucky we are to live so close to an incredible tapestry of landscapes – in the form of old-growth redwoods, shimmering tide pools, oak-studded hillsides and bay shoreline beach access. All preserved and accessible for your enjoyment. Lots of people over many years worked hard to make this happen, from county supervisors to people like you, who visit and support the parks.

At the Parks Foundation, we are creating vital connections between people and nature by:

- Making parks accessible with park passes in all county libraries
- Promoting cycling through weekly Bicycle Sunday events
- Growing fresh local food at Friendship Park's community gardens
- Ensuring children can experience the wonders of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

When you make a gift, you plant a seed. In an era dominated by screens, our parks offer something irreplaceable: real connections with nature that nurture mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Every child who discovers the magic of a tide pool, every family who gathers for a picnic, every volunteer who digs in the dirt – these moments plant seeds that grow into a lifelong appreciation for our natural world.

I am asking for your support to plant even more seeds. Maintaining parks in perpetuity is no small task. Restrooms and trails always need attention. Aging playgrounds and outdated facilities must be upgraded. Highly flammable plants ought to be managed while native species protected. Your year-end gift will help us maintain and improve essential facilities – like the Flood Park playground and Memorial Park nature center. Will you help us continue this vital work with a year-end gift? Your support ensures that these precious spaces will continue to thrive for the next 100 years!

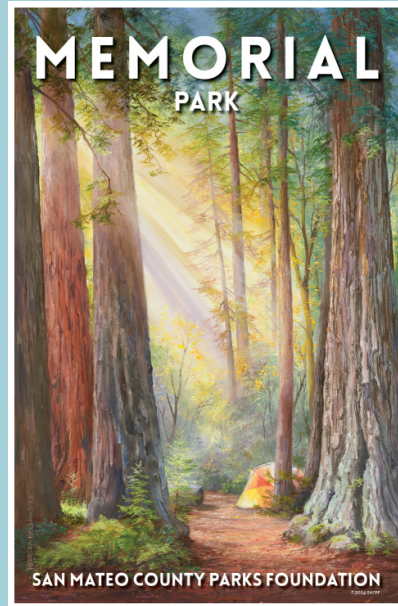
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Beasley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

Your gifts support projects throughout the County

Our Fiscal Year 2023-2024 project highlights:



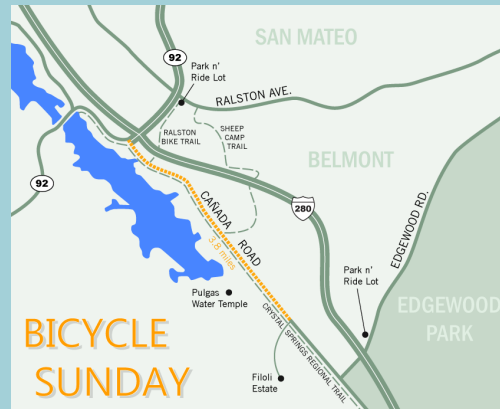
The Parks Foundation unveiled a first round of **San Mateo County Park** posters earlier this year to much acclaim. Right now, our second round of artists is busily working on designs for our next three parks, San Pedro Valley, Sawyer Camp Trail and Wunderlich Park. Stay tuned!



Seven large canvas photos of San Mateo County Parks were hung on walls throughout the Coastside Health Clinic in Half Moon Bay. As part of the **Parks Rx program**, the canvases inspire people to explore nearby open spaces as their awareness of park offerings grow.

Rob Cala

The **South San Francisco Education Foundation** was thrilled to receive one of our Enhancing Equitable Access grants which allowed them to bring high school students to San Bruno Mountain for team-building activities that had the kids engaged, excited, and empowered. As one student shared, *"We need more of this, more getting outside in nature."*



"A perfect ride for all ages and skills along the beautiful Crystal Springs watershed." – Yelp review for **Bicycle Sunday**. From 9am-3pm on most Sundays, a 3.8 mile stretch of Cañada Road is closed to traffic, making it a beautiful setting for a bike ride. Destinations along this route include the Pulgas Water Temple and Filoli Estate.

Improving access into and within parks is extremely important so that all, regardless of ability, may enjoy our incredible nature. Recently, this included making accessibility improvements to the gathering area adjacent to the **Memorial Park Nature Center**.



We love supporting culturally relevant events and entertainment, such as Taiko drumming and Folklorico at **Coyote Point Summerfest** and the popular salsa recipe contest at Friendship Park.



This year's Bilingual Community Engagement Intern, Raquel, has picked up where Cristina left off, deepening relationships with community gardeners and partners to ensure **Friendship Park** is a welcoming place with culturally relevant events, like *Día de los Muertos*, and workshops that engage youth in gardening.



Northern California Public Media

For this year's segment on **OpenRoad with Doug McConnell and Friends**, we focused on the youth advocacy that led to the inclusion of a pump track in the new Flood Park landscape plan. Now a young adult, Juventino shared this inspiring statement, *"If my friends and I were able to put our hearts and souls into something so important to us and it happened, I can only imagine what else we can do."*



Bringing Grassroots Ecology into **Huddart Park** to address French broom is our newest partnership. French broom can grow into dense stands that are highly flammable and increase the risk of wildfire. Grassroots Ecology brings out young volunteers to remove this invasive plant and learn about climate-resilient forests.

The Parks Foundation supported over **30 park field trips** for Title 1 schools and community-based organizations. These field trips range from night hikes and overnight camping trips to tide-pool visits and wildflower walks.





SAN MATEO COUNTY
PARKS FOUNDATION

1701 Coyote Point Drive
San Mateo, CA 94401

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

www.SupportParks.org | Office 650-321-5812

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“ This is an opportunity that we couldn’t have provided if we hadn’t received the (Parks Foundation’s) grant. It’s great to see students participating, learning something new, and having fun while learning in an outdoor environment.”

– Seemaa Prasad,
Baden High School Principal



There are several creative ways you can support the Parks Foundation!

You can:

- Recommend a grant through your donor-advised fund (DAF)
- Make a gift of stock
- See if your employer will match your gift
- Sign up to be a monthly donor for the price of a cup of coffee

We can use your support to fund youth field trips, resilient forests, the Memorial Park Nature Center, Flood Park playground elements, habitat restoration, Bicycle Sunday and more. Unrestricted gifts are the best, but you can see options for restricting gifts on our online donation page. Thank you!

“ I’m grateful to the Parks Foundation for including me in this project and for designing the project as they have. Seeing the unique perspectives of the participating artists will be a wonderful way to celebrate the county parks.”

Bruce Washburn,
Edgewood poster artist