

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Parks Department



**DATE:** March 25, 2016

**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** April 7, 2016

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Ramona Arechiga, Natural Resource Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Natural Resource Manager Report

**RECOMMENDATION**

Read report.

**BACKGROUND**

This report covers research and activities since the Commission's February 4, 2016 meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Countywide Initiatives**

**Staffing**

The Natural Resource Management program grew in March! On March 14<sup>th</sup> we welcomed the first Ranger III- Natural Resource Specialist, Michele Laskowski, to the department. Michele has held a variety of positions which have prepared her for this role. Most recently she was the horticulturist charged with the care of plants native to California and Australasian collections at the UC Botanical Garden in Berkeley. Prior to that position she was the seed ecologist and interim nursery manager for the Presidio Trust Native Plant Nursery. In this role she planned, tracked, and collected over 300 native species for propagation to support the restoration programs undertaken by the Natural Resources program. Michele implemented this program with the help of volunteers within Golden Gate National Recreation Area system. She has over eight years of experience working with volunteers to successfully implement projects related to natural resource stewardship.

Prior work that has prepared her for this position include her work as a Sudden Oak Death outreach assistant for the UC Cooperative Extension and her work as a consulting arborist. She is fluent in Spanish and worked overseas as a US Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador. We are thrilled to welcome Michele into the natural resource management program within County Parks and put her diverse skillset to work!

**GIS**

The County of San Mateo is planning on relaunching its GIS program with the recent completion of a GIS Strategic Plan and Governance Model. The natural resource management program has been providing input on behalf of the Parks Department throughout the process. The Parks

Department will continue to contribute by having at least one staff, Arechiga, participate in the Solutions Committee to support continued growth and transition into a more robust County-wide Enterprise GIS solution.

#### Collaboration

The Natural Resource Manager organized six nesting bird trainings for Parks Department and Department of Public Works staff in March. Training included a field portion and classroom session to familiarize staff how to avoid impacts to nesting birds while carrying out a variety of maintenance projects during the spring and summer seasons. A total of 79 County staff went through the training and 39 Parks Department staff.

#### **Park District Activities**

##### Park District I – North County

NRM program recently met with researchers implementing the Living Shorelines research to improve native habitat in the San Francisco bay. They have been working throughout the bay area with regional agencies to pilot habitat enhancement projects and opportunities to improve native oyster populations. They are piloting a restoration project at Coyote Point Recreation Area. We are working with the researchers and staff at Coyote Point to reduce potential disruption to the research plots and provide information about the project.

##### Park District II – South County

The NRM program recently met with staff from Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and the San Mateo Resource Conservation District about slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) an invasive grass species. This species has been documented at Wunderlich County Park and the NRM program collaborated with the RCD to submit a grant to initiate a pilot project to control this invasive species which poses risks to biodiversity and increasing fuel loads in fire prone areas.

##### Park District III – South Coast

The NRM program completed the 2015 annual monitoring report for marbled murrelet (MAMU) in Pescadero Creek County Park. In anticipation for the upcoming MAMU breeding season, beginning later this month, the natural resource manager has worked with District III's supervising rangers to initiate additional avoidance and protective measures for maintenance activities within Memorial County Park.

##### Park District IV - Midcoast

Phase two of the San Vicente Creek restoration project will begin this month with the help of Shelterbelt Builders, Inc.

##### Park District V – Maintenance *all areas*

Hannah Ormshaw, Senior GIS/ NRM Intern, worked with rangers to develop a baseline map identifying mowing priorities for all park operation districts. We will be working to develop a mowing schedule that minimizes potential impacts to sensitive resources and provides additional weed control whenever possible.

##### Park District VII – North County

The NRM program hosted the annual San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan field day on March 18<sup>th</sup>. This was a very well attended event with a total of 18 attendees! The NRM program has also been actively collaborating with the City of Brisbane to clarify processes related to SBMHCP in-house and to the residents who live within the SBMHCP boundary.