

Marin County Parks FY 2013 - 14 Performance Plan

I. Mission Statement

Marin County Parks is dedicated to educating, inspiring and engaging the people of Marin in the shared commitment of preserving, protecting and enriching the natural beauty of Marin's parks and open spaces, and providing recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all generations.

II. Department Overview

Marin County Parks includes county parks, planning and administration, landscape services, the open space district (MCOSD), and the countywide integrated pest management program.

The department is responsible for planning, acquiring, and managing the county's approximately 16,000 acres of public open space and 230 miles of public trails, as well as the County's park system that includes five regional parks, eight neighborhood parks, six bike paths, two boat ramps, 16 landscaping areas, and eight County Service Areas. Marin County Parks' lands and facilities received over 6 million visits last year. The department also conducts and manages the countywide Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM). The department currently has 10 citizen advisory boards, and will soon have a citizen oversight committee to review Measure A expenditures annually.

Parks and Landscape Services Division

The Parks and Landscape Divisions operate and maintain over 50 separate facilities for an estimated three million visitors per year. These areas include regional and local parks, bike paths, County Service Areas (CSAs), landscape medians, playgrounds, boat ramps, beaches, sport fields, and the Civic Center campus. Staff, volunteers, and seasonal staff manage these areas while providing public education and other services. County parks also host numerous public and private groups, including family celebrations, corporate parties, and community gatherings and fundraisers. They also serve the Marin community by providing educational and interpretive programming. The Marin County Integrated Pest Management Program is also administered from this division.

The Parks and Landscape Divisions include the following programs:

- Park Planning and Administration
- Park Facilities
- Landscape Services
- Integrated Pest Management

Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD)

MCOSD is a separate governmental entity responsible for over 16,000 acres of land contained within 34 Open Space preserves. Open Space preserves differ from County parks in that they are managed primarily for resource protection. District lands represent outstanding examples of Northern California environments including oak-bay woodland, oak savannah, fresh water wetlands, salt marsh, and grasslands. MCOSD's primary land stewardship activities include trail, fire road, and drain maintenance; vegetation management to protect natural resources and reduce fire hazard; visitor services and enforcement of the Open Space District Code; and protection and restoration of native habitat. Visitors to district lands enjoy activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, mountain bicycling, and nature study. MCOSD is a

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special district separate from the County of Marin and does not receive operating revenues from the County General Fund.

The Marin County Open Space District includes the following programs:

- Planning and Acquisition
- Visitor Services (including Enforcement and Environmental Education)
- Resources Management
- Capital Improvements
- Maintenance and Operations
- Administration
- Volunteer Program

IV. Accomplishments for FY 2012-13

- Successfully passed Measure A by 74% of Marin's voters on November 26, 2012, increasing funding for parks, open space and agricultural land preservation by \$10 million per year for nine years. All of the major Marin County Parks and Open Space constituent groups participated in the formulation of the Measure A Expenditure Plan and worked diligently to promote passage.
- Eight public workshops were held for the Road and Trail Management Plan with attendance between 70 and 80 participants. The draft Environmental Impact Report and plan will be available for review in June.
- The draft Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan was completed, the Environmental Impact Report is underway and will be available for review in June
- Construction was initiated on the Stafford Lake Bike Park after the completion of drawings, and permits were obtained
- Marin County Parks received a partnership grant from Kaiser that funded free entry into the McNears Beach Pool. A total of 848 free admissions and 208 free swim lessons were given to visitors from June 21- August 23, 2012.
- Worked with the Department of Public Works to open the 0.62 mile Tennessee Valley Pathway, allowing the public safe access from the Mill Valley-Sausalito Multi Use Path to Marin Avenue in Tam Valley
- Hosted over a 1,000 reservations at the four main park facilities, as well as 16 special events, issued over 50 short term use permits, and 9 filming permits. Special events such as the Sunset Seekers Dance at Stafford Lake drew as many as 5,000 people per event. Athletic events such as the Marin Triathlon, Battle of the Bay, and the Stafford Cyclo Cross bike races were popular public events that drew up to 1,000 participants. The California Beer Festival was held on September 22 and the "Middle School Run" on October 23, for what are hoped to be annual events. The Persian Festival at McNears Beach Park drew over 3,000 participants.
- Park ranger staff filed over 100 incidents and/or accident reports including domestic violence, skate board injuries, a light plane crash into the McInnis levee, drunk in public, vandalized vehicles, and property theft
- Began implementation of the Marin County Parks sign plan with the installation of new directional signs that have been placed on the Mill Valley Bike Path, Bayside Park, Mission Pass Trail, Pacheco Bike Path, and Lagoon Park; the new logo is now displayed on banners at our four major facilities, event flyers, and special event advertising boards

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- Ranger staff presented 70 public programs this year, including first time events such as “Learn to Ride a Skateboard” at McInnis, “A Grilling Experience” and “Chili Cook-off” at McNears, and the “McInnis Mini Mudder” which drew nearly 300 kids
- Initiated the Paradise Beach Park and McNears Beach Park waterline replacement projects to replace aging domestic and irrigation pipes
- Completed Homestead Valley Community Center renovation construction drawings and began construction
- Completed Agate Beach storm water management construction drawings and initiated construction
- Completed Candy’s Park playground construction drawings with public input and began construction
- Completed Castro Park playground construction drawings
- Completed CSA 16 Via la Cumbre construction drawings
- Completed Miller Boat Launch Phase II construction including construction of a restroom building, fish cleaning station and utilities
- Celebrated the 40th anniversary of Marin County Open Space District through a series of public events, programs, partnerships, and engagement tools; including a series of historical walks with community leaders, neighborhood and community block parties, a partnership with the Anne T. Kent California Room at the Marin County Free Library called “Our Parks, Our History”; a free map of Marin’s public lands highlighting Marin’s public land managers, and a video providing highlights and interviews about the creation of the Marin County Open Space District in 1972 and it’s 40 years of history
- Open Space road and trail staff, using best management practices, re-graded 24 miles of fire roads which included decommissioning 1 mile of road, and more than 2 miles of trails
- Over 15 Trail Maintenance Team volunteers (TMT) worked on 12 trail maintenance projects
- Maintenance staff repaired 16 entry gates and pruned fire roads for emergency access
- Seasonal staff and Conservation Corps North Bay employees performed annual fire fuel reduction mowing and drain clearing over 300 locations
- 27 Patrol Volunteers submitted over 400 reports
- Rangers and our contract deputy contacted 1,012 people regarding violations
- Staff worked with Mill Valley Fire Department to burn several hundred piles of invasive broom within the Camino Alto and Alto Bowl preserves
- Created an Ambassador Program for volunteers to assist Marin County Parks with outreach at festivals, fairs, before civic and community organizations, and at other events
- Developed new and unified Marin County Parks brochure to expand new graphic identity and provide comprehensive information and latest mapping to the public about all Marin County programs, parks, preserves, and pathways
- Developed a new community services brochure for distribution at Marin County high schools to recruit new volunteers
- Hosted 59 community volunteer days, 11 volunteer training/meetings, 2 volunteer recognition events and represented the Parks at 16 fairs and festivals
- Completed the Bothin Marsh Hands-on Habitat collaborative partnership with Save The Bay; the tidal wetland restoration site has been restored to approximately 70% native habitat
- Developed the “Students in Parks” program and received approval from high school principals to promote in the Novato Unified School District

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- Increased Trail Maintenance Team membership by 90% and hosted 12 Trail Maintenance Team days
- Resolved two encroachments and investigated three new encroachments on Open Space land
- Completed design, environmental review, and permitting for the Kent Island Restoration Project in Bolinas Lagoon Preserve
- Completed bathymetry study of Bolinas Lagoon Preserve
- Developed a communication plan and initiated a priority plan for the Bolinas Lagoon Ecosystem Restoration Project
- Reorganized the County advisory committee for Bolinas Lagoon Preserve
- Initiated a feasibility study for the McInnis marsh restoration project

V. Key Challenges and Outstanding Issues

With the passage of Measure A came many responsibilities in carrying out its mandates and implementing the requirements of the new tax. This includes designing meaningful programs, establishing a more complex budget, establishing an independent citizens oversight committee, and creating a reporting and accounting system while reflecting the wishes of the public. Even with this important new funding source, needs exceed available funds and hard choices will be necessary.

The department has 11 citizen advisory committees and boards to support, including the independent citizens oversight committee for Measure A. Each of these boards and committees is subject to the Brown Act, which entails a significant administrative workload to create agendas, publically notice the meetings, take and post minutes, and staff the meetings. Additional workload implications include participation by senior management and providing support to the 80 citizens who serve on these bodies.

Our open space preserve system is, by design, distributed throughout the County and among residential areas where fire hazard exists and from which most fire ignition originates. We work with 14 separate fire agencies to manage fire fuels in the various communities and neighborhoods. There are disparate views on the management of those fuels and on optimum fire prevention and protection methods, which requires this department to weigh the benefits of these measures, collaborate with our colleagues in the fire agencies, and sometimes mediate disputes, especially in light of our important mission to protect and responsibly steward the natural resources within the preserves while doing our part to promote the safety of the communities.

The inexorable spread of non-native invasive weeds imperils our native vegetation, threatens the integrity of wildlife habitat, and exacerbates fire fuel loads.

Park and preserve visitation is up, which requires more staff time to keep visitors safe, monitor conditions, and manage lands and facilities.

Unlawful, damaging, and/or unsafe use of the preserves continues and constitutes a serious dilemma and burden to the rangers, especially in the evening and nighttime hours when rangers are not present.

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VI. Performance Plan

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal I: Protect and restore our lands	IV. Environmental Preservation

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Complete environmental review for the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan	MCOSD - Resource Management
Finalize the Road and Trail Management Plan and certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	MCOSD - Resource Management
Implement two high-value trail projects emerging from the Road and Trail Management Plan	MCOSD - Resource Management
Implement the next phase of road improvement, erosion control, and sediment reduction projects in the Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve	MCOSD - Resource Management
Initiate development of a master plan for Stafford Lake Park, emphasizing opportunities for health, wellness and fitness	Park Planning & Administration
Initiate development of a comprehensive Marin County Parks sign plan system to expand our new graphic identity and create a new signage identity for visitors. (a)Begin installation of new signage at high volume park, preserve, pathways, and recreational. (b)Begin development of a sign standards manual.	Park Planning & Administration
Initiate development of a master plan for McNear's Beach Park, emphasizing opportunities for health, wellness and fitness	Park Planning & Administration
Initiate development of a mini-master plan for Paradise Beach Park, including development of a plan for accessibility to the fishing pier and beach	Park Planning & Administration

Program: Resource Management

Objective: Provide information on the acres of non-native, invasive weeds removed and controlled in fuel management zones as well the number of new populations identified, mapped, and included in the department's Geographic Information System (GIS)

Workload Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Acres treated to control targeted non-native species (all treatment methods)	164	163	124	190	165
Efficiency Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target

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Efficiency Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Cost per acre to control targeted non-native species	\$950	\$618	\$998	\$1,200	\$1,000
Effectiveness Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Percentage of acres treated where targeted species were effectively controlled	6%	5%	13%	10%	10%

Story Behind Performance:

The department continues to treat and control a large number of non-native, invasive weed infestations. Projects range from treating small, outlier populations that are just taking hold, to treating large, dense infestations that stretch for several acres. Over the past three years, the department has focused on a number of wide area fuel breaks that aim to eliminate invasive weeds (namely broom) and reduce fire danger. These multi-year projects have reduced invasive weeds by almost 90%.

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal II: Grow and link the County's system of parks, trails, and protected lands FY 2011-12	IV. Environmental Preservation

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Complete construction of Stafford Lake Bike Park	Park Planning & Administration
Collaborate with partner agencies in the planning of two multi-use path projects: (a) extension of the Cal Park Tunnel pathway and (b) the path from Novato to the Marin-Sonoma border associated with the Novato Narrows Project	Park Planning & Administration, Park Facilities, and Landscape Services

Program: Park Planning

Objective: Complete 20 capital projects between 2008 to 2013

Workload Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Number of parks capital project designs completed	5	3	2	8	4
 Number of parks capital projects completed	3	4	1	4	3
Efficiency Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target

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Efficiency Measures		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
	Number of parks capital projects completed per full time staff member	1	2	0.5	2.0	1.5
Effectiveness Measures		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
	Percent of parks capital projects goal completed	75%	105%	115%	135%	150%

Story Behind Performance:

Park planning continues its success in completing projects using funding sources outside the general fund. In FY 2013-14, park planning will complete construction of the Homestead Valley Community Center renovation funded by County Service Area (CSA) 14 and Phase I of the Stafford Lake Bike Park, funded by sponsors and donations. Construction of improvements in CSA 18 at Castro Park will also be completed, as well as landscape treatments at the Eliseo Driver and La Cuesta Drive entries in CSA 16. Planning for the future, park planning will initiate development of master plans for Stafford Lake Park in Novato, and McNear's Beach Park in San Rafael.

Program: Open Space Planning and Acquisition

Objective: Complete two fee acquisition and/or conservation and/or trail easement projects between 2008 and 2013

Workload Measures		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
	Number of acquisition projects completed (all methods, including fee and easement)	2	3	6	5	3
	Acreage of acquisition or easement projects completed	330	37.43	0.16	91.3	10

Efficiency Measures		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
	Average cost per acre acquired	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,115	\$2,000
Effectiveness Measures		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
	Percent of total acreage targeted for preservation that has been preserved	59%	56%	55%	56%	56%

Story Behind Performance:

The department successfully completed five acquisition projects increasing the amount of

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protected lands by over 90 acres and added over 2,000 feet of new trail easements. Among these acquisitions, the department added 20 acres to its Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve, protecting sensitive plant habitat and northern spotted owl nesting areas. The department also successfully acquired 20 acres of sensitive marsh habitat near the Deer Island Open Space Preserve. Finally, the department renegotiated its easements with Spirit Rock Meditation Center adding 50 acres of protected land to the conservation easement and 2,000 new public trail easements.

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal III: Foster discovery, learning and stewardship	IV. Environmental Preservation

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Recruit volunteers to help construct and maintain the Stafford Lake Bike Park	MCOSD - Volunteer
Recruit a team of committed volunteers to provide long-term, ongoing maintenance for Stafford Lake Bike Park	MCOSD - Volunteer
Recruit a small team of volunteers to assist Parks staff in maintaining Coastal Parks facilities: Bolinas Lagoon, Agate Beach, Upton Beach, White House Pool, Chicken Ranch Beach, the Fault Line Trail, Bolinas Park, and the Miller Park Boat Launch	MCOSD - Volunteer
Expand community outreach and volunteer recruitment to address invasive species control and habitat restoration at the Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve	MCOSD - Resource Management
Expand website to offer more online services to the public including: e-commerce functions, donations, park passes, short term use permits and fees, merchandise, public incident reporting; and redesign Integrated Pest Management Program information and reporting	Park Planning & Administration
Recruit Novato Unified School District High School volunteers in Service in Parks program through targeted outreach in San Marin and Novato High Schools	MCOSD - Volunteer
Recruit volunteers for Kent Island Restoration project	MCOSD - Volunteer

Program: Volunteer

Objective: Maintain a high quality volunteer program that benefits the volunteer and Parks and Open Space facilities

Workload Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Number of volunteer hours worked in Parks and Open Space	19,923	26,384	23,649	28,000	30,000

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Efficiency Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Value of work performed by volunteers	\$464,007	\$617,913	\$571,832	\$655,760	\$725,400

Effectiveness Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
 Percent change in number of volunteer hours worked per year	-32%	25.6%	-11.6%	6.1%	7.1%

Story Behind Performance:

The increase in volunteer hours is dependent on adequate volunteer leadership staffing. With the loss of the AmeriCorps support also came a decline in the number of volunteers the department was able to support. The Parks Division is currently considering increasing its Volunteer Program Coordinator from half to full time. Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB) applied for AmeriCorps but has not received final approval for the program. If CCNB receives approval for AmeriCorps and the Department hires two AmeriCorps members, the Department's capability to recruit and manage more volunteers will increase. If both of these occur then volunteer hours will increase beyond the target number above. Based upon the current level of staffing, the department expects a slight rise in hours due to the increased outreach in the volunteer program at Ring Mountain Preserve, Stafford Lake Bike Park, Students in Parks and Kent Island restoration programs.

Program: Park Planning and Administration

Objective: Increase educational outreach

Workload Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Number of programs provided annually	100	135	166	180	200

Efficiency Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Number of participants	1,500	2,025	2,490	3,600	4,000

Effectiveness Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Increase in participant numbers	N/A	225	65	1,575	500

Story Behind Performance:

The department intends to increase participation in the Environmental Education program through partnerships with schools and community organizations. See initiatives under Goal IV.

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Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal IV: Connect communities with the land for recreation and health	II. Safe Communities

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Develop a grant program in partnership with community organizations to increase visitation to department lands and participation in volunteer and environmental education programming by underserved communities	Park Planning & Administration – External Affairs, Volunteer, Environmental Education
Develop and offer introductory nature events for individuals with high health needs consistent with regional Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative	Park Planning & Administration – External Affairs, Environmental Education
Complete and implement farmland preservation and cities, towns, and special districts programs	Park Planning & Administration – External Affairs, Volunteer, Environmental Education

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal V: Achieve sustainable long-term financial viability to satisfy operational needs, capital requirements, and desired programs and services	X. Financial Responsibility

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Begin creating a “Friends” organization for Marin County Parks	Park Planning & Administration – External Affairs
Develop a plan to decentralize open space field operations and create satellite field offices combining parks, open space and landscape services staffs to increase community familiarity with local parks staff and vice versa, reduce travel time to work sites, and improve project outcomes through sharing of material resources and staff talents	Park Planning & Administration, Park Facilities, Landscape Services, and MCOSD - Operations
Develop, design, and complete a Marin County Parks annual report pursuant to Measure A, providing a transparent overview of expenditures and accomplishments for the public	Park Planning & Administration, External Affairs, Communications