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One of the things that makes Marin County such a wonderful place to live and visit is our Parks. [Marin County Parks](#) has released their annual report for fiscal year 2014-15 which provides a broad overview of department goals and achievements. I thought I would share some of the highlights with you here.

Parks estimates that more than 6 million people visited our 34 open space preserves and over 70 parks and other facilities during the 2014-15 fiscal year. We accumulated 17,873 volunteer hours and employed 122 full-time and seasonal workers to deliver services to Marin residents and visitors from around the world. The department's total expenditures were \$21.8 million and it was awarded \$3.4 million in matching funds.

Thanks to Measure A (the county-wide one-quarter cent retail sales tax passed in November 2012), Marin's parks, preserves and family farms are being protected and cared for like never before. In the second year since Measure A's passage, Marin County Parks has increased its capacity to: improve and expand visitor services; collect scientific data and protect rare plants and wildlife; plan and implement widespread improvements to our parks; implement road and trail planning and projects; acquire new open space land; reduce the threat of wildfire through vegetation management, , and take on more volunteers.

Specifically, Measure A funds accomplishments include: a new restroom and added signage at Stafford Lake; acquisition of the Sky Ranch property above San Anselmo and Fairfax, which was added to the Bald Hill Open Space Preserve; 2.3 miles of illegal trails were restored to prevent erosion and other negative impacts; park fees were reduced at our regional parks; and 15 additional dog waste stations were added to serve trail heads with high visitor volume.

Some of the projects underway for fiscal year 2015-16, include: work with the City of Novato to develop a plan for widening and resurfacing the Novato bike path which runs from Dogbone Meadow Park to Stafford Lake; addition of a new parking lot at Stafford Lake; new park furnishings at Santa Venetia, McInnis and Civic Center Lagoon Parks; installation of gates and signs at open space trail heads; and completion of the Inclusive Access Plan and three park master plans – including Stafford Lake.

As you can see, our Parks staff and volunteers have been hard at work! And, as promised, Measure A funds are truly making a valuable impact. To learn more about Marin County Parks and to view the complete annual report, visit: www.marincountyparks.org.

In other news, military veterans in Marin County have a new one-stop shop to help them find information about the myriad services and resources available to them, courtesy of the Marin County Free Library (MCFL) and state funding. The recently renovated South Novato Library,

located in the Hamilton neighborhood at 931 C Street, is now home to a Veterans Resource Center (VRC).

If you are a veteran and need help beginning the process to register yourself at CalVet, requesting your service records, applying for benefits, or just have a question about eligibility, the staff at the VRC can help you begin that process.

Volunteer Benefits Coaches are available during drop in hours at the South Novato Library on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2-5pm. Personal appointments can be made Tuesday-Saturday, from noon-5pm. To schedule an appointment email: LibraryVeterans@marinlibrary.org or call 865-201-4047.

The VRC has a dedicated computer station, printer and phone available for free use by veterans. Veterans benefits reference materials will also be on-hand.

And finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank Kris Cirby for her service on the Marin Women's Commission. Kris has been an active and valuable member of the Commission, serving since 2006, and we will miss her when her term ends later this year. She was instrumental in creating the Teen Girl Conference, an annual event that provides teenage girls the opportunity to explore their place in the world and gain skills and confidence to achieve their goals – thank you Kris! If you are interested in serving on the Marin Women's Commission we are looking for volunteers. The application deadline is April 29. To apply or to get more information, visit www.marincounty.org and go to the "Boards and Commissions" webpage, request an application by email at bos@marincounty.org, or call the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at (415) 473-7331.

As always, my door is open to you and I welcome your suggestions and ideas. You can reach me at: (415) 473-7331 or jarnold@marincounty.org.