

**Parks and Open Space  
Final Performance Plan  
FY 2008-09**

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**I. MISSION STATEMENT**

We are 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 for the enjoyment of all generations.

**II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

The Department of Parks and Open Space consists of two divisions: the Parks and Landscape Division and the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD).

The department is responsible for planning, acquiring, and managing the County's approximately 15,000 acres of open space and 160 miles of public trails, as well as the County's park system that includes five regional parks, eight neighborhood parks, six bike paths, and 16 landscaping areas.

**Parks and Landscape Division**

The Parks and Landscape Division operates and maintains over 50 separate facilities for an estimated two 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 providing educational and interpretive programming for participants.

The Parks and Landscape Division includes the following programs:

- Park Planning and Administration
- Park Facilities
- Landscape Services

**Marin County Open Space District Division (MCOSD)**

MCOSD manages over 15,000 acres of land contained within 33 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. The District's primary land stewardship activities include trail, fire road, and drain maintenance; vegetation management to reduce fire hazard; enforcement of the Open Space District Code; and reclamation and enhancement of native habitat. Visitors to District lands enjoy activities such as hiking, horseback riding, mountain bicycling, and nature study. The Open Space District is a special district separate from the County of Marin and does not receive operating revenues from the County's General Fund.

The Marin County Open Space District Division includes the following programs:

- Planning and Acquisitions
- Maintenance and Operations
- Environmental Education
- Resource Management
- Volunteer

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**III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2007-08**

- Completed Parks and Open Space Comprehensive Strategic Plan
- Completed assessment and reorganization of department planning team
- Established a department capital division to handle FEMA and ongoing POS projects
  
- Completed renovations at Miller Boat Launch, Black Point Boat Launch, Forest Knolls Park, Stinson Beach Village Green and Point Reyes Playground
  
- Completed the one-mile Bahia Trail reroute project
- Completed Phase 2 of the Cascade Canyon Vegetation Management Project
- Completed FEMA storm repairs
  
- Nearly doubled number of hours contributed by volunteers on land stewardship projects compared to FY 2006-07
- Initiated Naturalist Programs for Families
  
- Acquired 92-acre conservation easement, 45-acre floating trail easement, and public trail easement encumbering Gonzales property
- Acquired 108 acres in San Geronimo Valley (Ferrari)
- Acquired 50 acre parcel at Blackpoint from American Land Conservancy
  
- Completed system-wide vegetation inventory and digital vegetation map layer for department's Geographic Information System

**IV. GOALS AND INITIATIVES FY 2008-09**

**GOAL 1: Protect and restore our lands**

**FY 2008-09 Initiatives**

1. Complete a system-wide vegetation management plan
2. Begin development of a Resource Management Plan

**GOAL 2: Grow and link the County's system of parks, trails and protected lands**

**FY 2008-09 Initiatives**

1. Initiate and complete at least four existing conservation easement or land acquisition projects

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**FY 2008-09 Initiatives**

2. Complete at least two existing trail easement or land acquisition projects
3. Secure new funding for land acquisition projects
4. Partner with Marin Open Space Trust to acquire land and easements

**GOAL 3: Foster discovery, learning and stewardship**

**FY 2008-09 Initiatives**

1. Begin a naturalist docent program
2. Expand the Park Watch program
3. Collaborate with Environmental Education Council of Marin to connect children to outdoors and department land

**GOAL 4: Connect communities with the land for recreation and health**

**FY 2008-09 Initiatives**

1. Identify and implement actions to encourage the public to access County Parks by public transit, carpool and bicycle
2. Construct accessibility improvements at McInnis, McNear's and Upton Beach Parks, and Santa Venetia neighborhood parks
3. Collaborate with Healthy Marin to promote outdoor recreational activity

**V. KEY CHALLENGES AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

- Need for an ongoing source of funding to support increased land management and resource protection
- Implementation of Strategic Plan actions will be constrained without additional funding
- Achieving balance between maintaining habitat values and reducing fire fuel loads in vegetation management planning and implementation
- Construction of new fuelbreaks will exacerbate the spread of exotic plants and reduce habitat value without adequate funding for long term maintenance.
- Addressing increased trails use, maintenance and safety issues with existing resources

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**VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Park and Open Space Volunteer Program is responsible for recruiting, training and retaining volunteers, including individuals and organizations, to perform stewardship activities on park and open space lands. Most volunteer activities are related to habitat reclamation and trail maintenance.

**OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of volunteer hours and work performed in parks and open space**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>FY 06-07 Actual</b>	<b>FY 07-08 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Estimate</b>
<b>Workload Measures</b>			
Number of volunteer hours worked in parks and open space	15,455	22,000	23,000
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>			
Value of work performed by volunteers	\$314,460	\$447,920	\$468,280
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>			
Percent change in number of volunteer hours worked per year	n/a	42.4%	4.5%

**Department Comments:**

These indicators gage the success of our efforts to recruit and retain volunteers, and are aligned with the department's Strategic Plan goal to "Foster Discovery, Learning and Stewardship." They show that the department's modest investment in the Volunteer Program pays big dividends in terms of the value of work that volunteers perform.

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Resource Management Program is responsible for overall resource management planning and implementation on department lands including preparing inventories of non-native plants, special status species, and other resources; developing, assembling funding for, and implementing erosion control, non-native plant control, habitat reclamation, habitat enhancement, and other resource management projects.

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**OBJECTIVE: Reduce total acreage of target exotic and invasive species**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>			
Acres treated to control targeted non-native species (all treatment methods)	75	85	85
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>			
Cost per acre to control targeted non-native species	\$975	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>			
Acres treated where targeted species were effectively controlled	4%	5%	5%

**Department Comments:**

“Protect and Restore Our Lands” is one of the department’s Strategic Plan goals. The expansion of non-native plant population is a substantial land management problem, resulting in loss of native habitat and increased fire hazard. Treated acreage is small because not only is controlling non-native plant populations an expensive and long term process, it is an evolving science as well. These measures gauge our success in controlling non-native populations and reclaiming native habitat. The department needs to know if it is making progress toward reducing non-native plant populations.

**MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Parks and Open Space Maintenance and Operations Programs are responsible for maintaining park and open space facilities, managing public use of Department lands by educating visitors and enforcing the Parks and Open Space District Codes, and monitoring land conditions and natural resources,

**OBJECTIVE: Ensure resident satisfaction with parks and open space**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>			
Number of Open Space acres maintained	15,513	15,513	15,563
Number of Parks acres maintained	852	916	916
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>			
Open Space cost per resident served	n/a	\$17.19	\$17.97
Parks cost per resident served	\$16.55	\$17.51	\$17.42
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>			
Percentage of community survey respondents indicating they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with acquiring, restoring, and maintaining additional open space	n/a	78%	78%

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Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
Percentage of community survey respondents indicating they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with maintaining facilities at County park	n/a	86%	86%

**Department Comments:**

Customer satisfaction is an indicator of how well the department is maintaining its lands and serving parks and open space visitors. The biennial County community survey provides a general indication of resident satisfaction with parks and open space services.

**OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND ACQUISITION**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Open Space Planning and Acquisition Program is responsible for planning and acquiring new land, conservation easement and trail acquisitions, assembling funding packages for land and easement purchases, reviewing development proposals affecting Open Space District land and trail interests, planning trails and other improvements, fulfilling environmental review requirements for park and open space improvement projects, and protecting real property interests.

**OBJECTIVE: Complete 20 land and conservation easement acquisition projects by 2013**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Estimate	FY 08-09 Estimate
<b>Workload Measures</b>			
Number and acreage of acquisition projects completed (all methods, including fee and easement)	4/6.19	9/175	6/50
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>			
Average cost per acre acquired	\$0	\$800	\$400
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>			
Percent of total acreage targeted for preservation that has been preserved	51.71%	52.29%	52.46%

**Department Comments:**

This set of measures is aligned with the department's Strategic Plan goal to "Grow and Link the County's Systems of Parks, Trails and Protected Lands." This system amounts to over 15,000 acres, but it is not complete. Thus it is necessary to gauge the department's progress toward protecting an additional 15,000 acres.

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**PARK PLANNING**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Park Planning Program is responsible for the master planning and design of park renovations and new park facilities.

**OBJECTIVE: Complete 20 Parks capital projects by 2013**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>FY 06-07 Actual</b>	<b>FY 07-08 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Estimate</b>
<b>Workload Measures</b>			
Number of parks capital project designs completed	7	3	5
Number of parks capital projects completed	3	8	2
<b>Efficiency Measures</b>			
Number of parks capital projects completed per full time staff member	1.5	4	1
<b>Effectiveness Measures</b>			
Percent of parks capital projects goal completed	15%	55%	65%

**Department Comments:**

County Parks require substantial capital improvements to replace aging facilities, and to provide new facilities that meet community recreation needs. The department's Strategic Plan calls for \$41.4 million in parks capital improvement to be implemented over the next ten years.