

2016/17 parklands report

*parks bring
people together*



SANTA CLARA™
COUNTY PARKS

welcome to your county parks



For over 60 years Santa Clara County Parks has been enhancing the quality of life in Santa Clara County by preserving natural, cultural, and scenic resources. Today we provide 28 parks comprising over 50,000 acres of park lands, which includes 10 lakes, 5 major interpretive facilities, 5 campgrounds, and over 350 miles of trails. Each year we host over 3 million visitors and we play an important role in stewarding water resources, protecting wildlife habitat and supporting healthy lifestyles.

In June of 2016, an overwhelming majority of voters (over 78%) supported Measure A, which renewed the Park Charter Fund, County Parks primary source of funding, for another 15 years. This funding will allow us to continue to provide safe and well maintained parks, open additional parkland to public access, and update the parks to meet the needs of an increasingly urban and diverse community. Other highlights of 2016 included:

- Closing escrow on a 2,700 acre parcel that links Coyote Lake and Anderson Lake to Henry Coe State Park and other protected lands creating a linked system of over 100,000 acres.

- Beginning construction of the Rancho San Vicente Staging area which will provide access to over 900 acres of oak woodland and critical habitat which expands Calero County Park; and opportunities to connect to Santa Teresa and Almaden Quicksilver County Parks and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's Rancho Canada del Oro Preserve.
- Beginning construction of an enhanced playground at Hellyer County Park that is nearly twice the size of the old one and which includes a water play area; this playground will open in the summer of 2017.

We are in the process of updating our Strategic Plan which will set priorities for the coming decade. We hope to complete the plan in early 2018. If you are interested in learning more, please check out our plan website at OurFutureParks.org.

On behalf of our dedicated staff, thank you for your continuing trust and support. We hope to see you in one of your amazing parks soon.

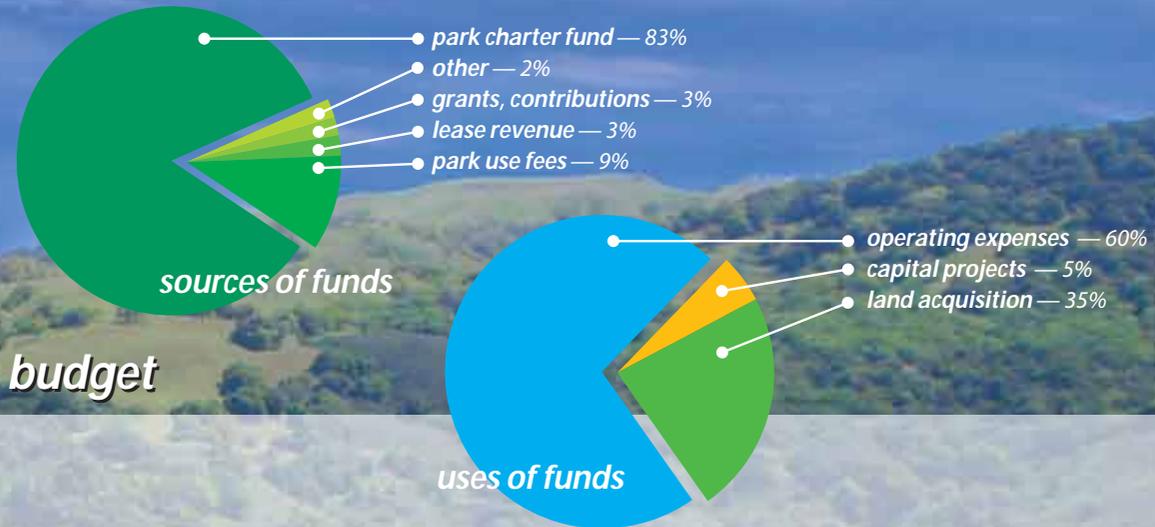
Robb Courtney, Director

the people behind your parks



Lisa Pappanastos was one of two recipients of a special staff award.

As a Park Program Coordinator, Lisa led a large team to develop the first annual Harvest Festival at Martial Cottle Park, attended by 6000+ visitors. Working at Martial Cottle Park every day for more than eight months, she established the volunteer program, opened the park store, on-boarded our community partners and also did some hands-on work-cleaning and organizing historic family items for future use. Lisa's excellent event planning and project management skills were put to the test in this multi-faceted project. Her efforts resulted in a wonderful experience for park visitors who want to learn about the Santa Clara Valley's agricultural history.



Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department is a special revenue department. Its primary funding source is a set-aside of Santa Clara County's property tax revenue known as the Park Charter Fund. Passed in 2016, Measure A, secured this funding for 15 more years to invest in natural resource stewardship and public access.

For Fiscal Year 2015-2016, revenues totaled \$59.3 million and expenditures \$74.8 million. Excluding land purchases, total expenditures were \$49 million. The notable land acquisition in FY 2016 was the purchase of 2,748 acres of land between Anderson Lake and Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear County Parks.

Santa Clara County's strong economic growth in 2016 provided the Department healthy revenue growth. As with every year, in 2016 we worked toward the goal of a fiscally sustainable future by prudently allocating resources and staying within budget.



As the second recipient of a Parks Staff award, Sara Shallenberger demonstrated exemplary public service through her leadership on a County project to implement new software for a volunteer management system. In addition, Sara finalized the Parks Department's new Volunteer Program Guidelines, which empower parks' staff to engage more County residents in meaningful community projects. She ensured that the Volunteer Program implemented all of its projects, including supplying 75 volunteers to support the ever-popular walk-through night at Fantasy of Lights. Her dedication and high-quality work for the Volunteer Program provides a productive and valuable participation for all of our County Parks volunteers.

your growing park system

Coyote Creek Trail Hellyer Park to Anderson Visitor Center

Coyote Creek trail is part of a regional trail system that extends from San Jose to Morgan Hill jointly managed by the City of San Jose, Town of Los Gatos and Santa Clara County. Future plans include connecting Coyote Creek Trail to the Baylands Trail and San Francisco Bay. Seventeen miles of the trail were upgraded in 2016 with new surfaces for bicyclists who use the trail for commuting and walkers who enjoy the path along the creek year-round.



Coyote Canyon/Coyote Highlands

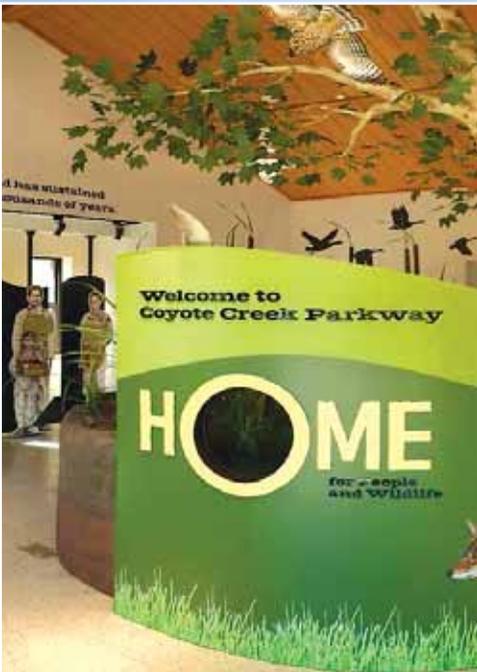
The newly-acquired Coyote Highlands and Coyote Canyon properties offer spectacular views of the Santa Clara Valley, Coyote Creek drainage, and views of Anderson and Coyote Lake reservoirs. The 2700+ acre properties link Henry Coe State Park, Anderson County Park, and Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch County Parks. An interim Master Plan is in the works to connect to the Bay Area Ridge Trail, create a secondary loop trail and redevelop the staging area to prepare these new areas for visitors in 2018.





Hellyer Park Playground

After many years of solid use, it's time to replace the children's playground at Hellyer Park. The department is building a state-of-the-art playground complete with a 30-ft high structure for slides and bridges, and a water play area—a first for Santa Clara County Parks. Using recycled water, there'll be jets and water sprinklers for children to cool off in the summertime. The new playground is nearly twice the size of the original and can entertain 100 in the water play area, 200 children total. The playground is expected to open late summer 2017.



Coyote Creek Parkway Center connects visitors

As part of the master plan for the Coyote Creek Parkway, a new visitor center was built in 2012. Over a three-year period, Park Charter funds were set aside for a new full interpretive exhibit which was completed in February 2017.

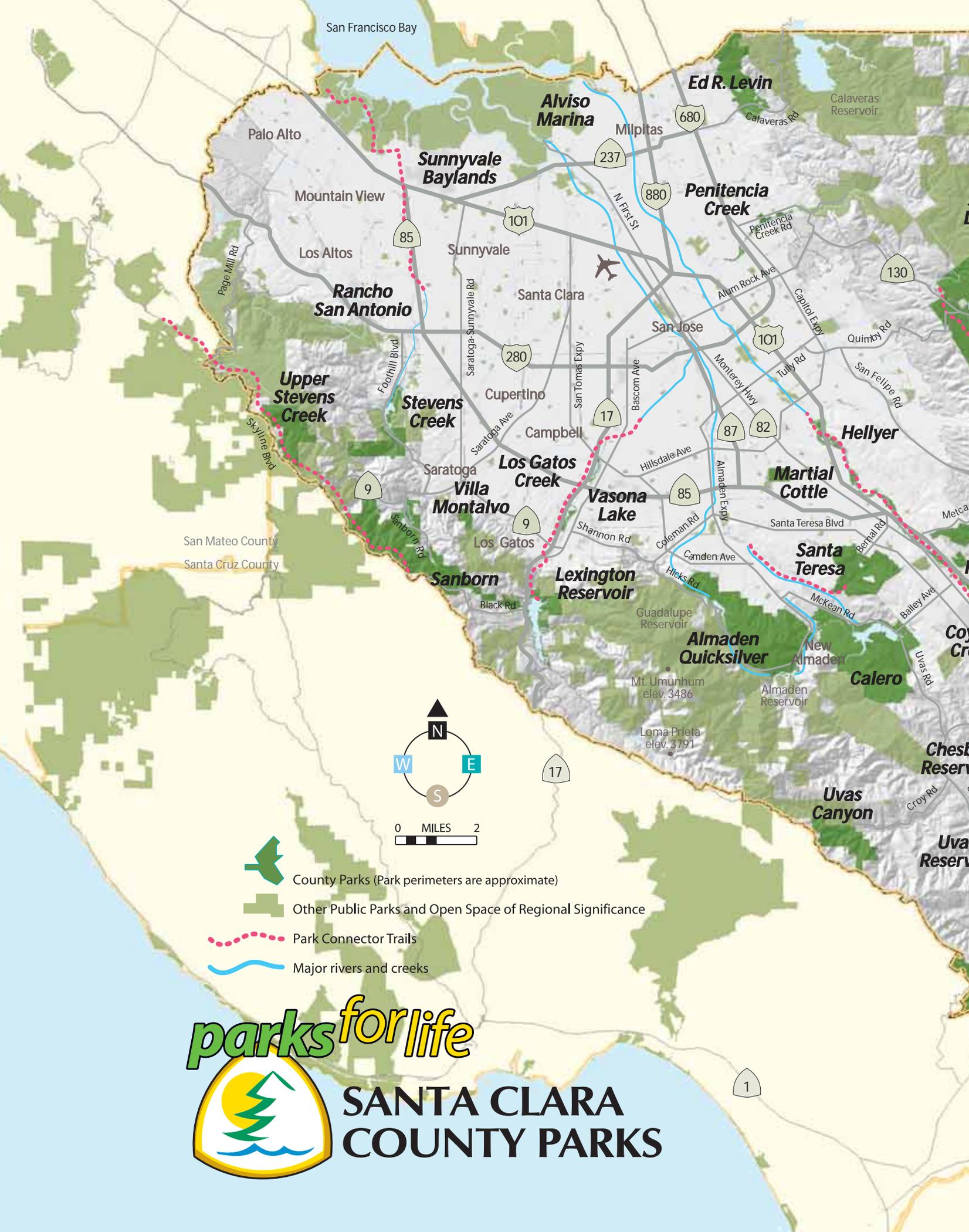
The exhibit focuses primarily on the value of Coyote Creek's riparian habitat and resources for wildlife and people. Visitors learn about local cultural history and the people who settled here and influenced the area. A realistic creekside diorama illustrates the diversity of plants and wildlife living along the creek. Engaging exhibits for all ages and abilities help visitors to think about their own relationships to nature and how they can be stewards of the environment every day.

We staff the Visitor Center with Parks employees and volunteers. We are grateful for our enthusiastic volunteers who daily share their knowledge of the area's history and wildlife.



Rancho San Vicente at Calero County Park

As part of Calero County Park, Rancho San Vicente will be the first Santa Clara County Park to be enrolled in the Habitat Plan, which is overseen by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency. The Habitat Plan provides a long-term, coordinated program for habitat restoration and conservation. Being a part of the plan ensures a comprehensive and effective way to address the impact of the public's access to Rancho San Vicente for endangered and threatened species and their habitats. Species and habitats supported at Calero County Park include (but not limited to) oak woodlands, serpentine grasslands and associated plant species, Mt. Hamilton Thistle, California Tiger Salamander, California Red-legged Frog, Western Pond Turtle, potential Bay Checkerspot Butterfly habitat, and an important wildlife habitat connection between Santa Clara Valley and the Santa Cruz Mountains. The 50-year overall plan ensures protection and preservation of habitats for future generations to enjoy. Access includes a parking lot for cars and horse trailers which will be completed in Summer 2017.



County Parks (Park perimeters are approximate)



Other Public Parks and Open Space of Regional Significance



Park Connector Trails



Major rivers and creeks

parksfor life



**SANTA CLARA
COUNTY PARKS**

*parks bring
people together*

parks mission, vision & values

The mission of the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department is to provide, protect, and preserve regional parklands for the enjoyment, education & inspiration of this and future generations.

Our vision is to provide a sustainable system of diverse regional parks, trails and natural areas that connects people with the natural environment, supports healthy lifestyles, and offers outstanding visitor experiences that renew the human spirit while balancing recreational opportunities with the protection of natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources.

The values that create the foundation upon which the vision and strategies for the County's regional park system are built are characterized in five themes:

- **Quality of Life**
- **Equitable Access**
- **Optimal Park Use**
- **Partnership**
- **Demand for Recreational Opportunities**



county government

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Field Sports

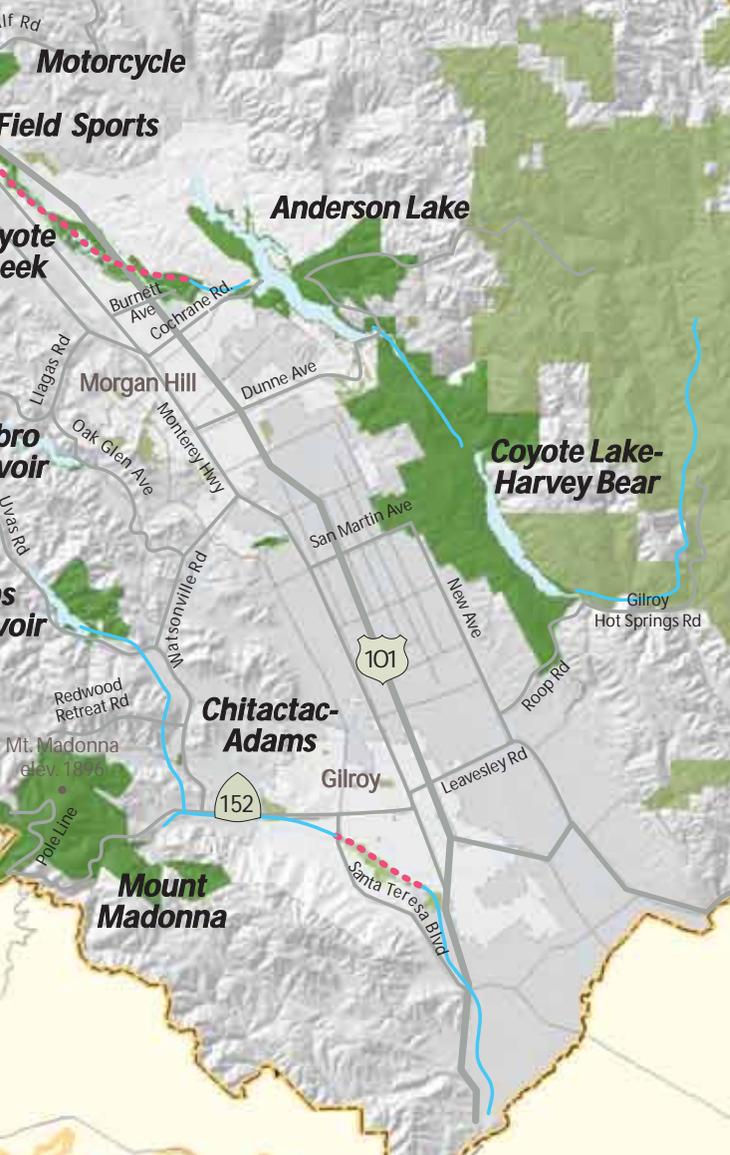
Coyote
Lake

Anderson Lake

Coyote Lake-
Harvey Bear

Chitactac-
Adams

Mount
Madonna



volunteers and partnerships



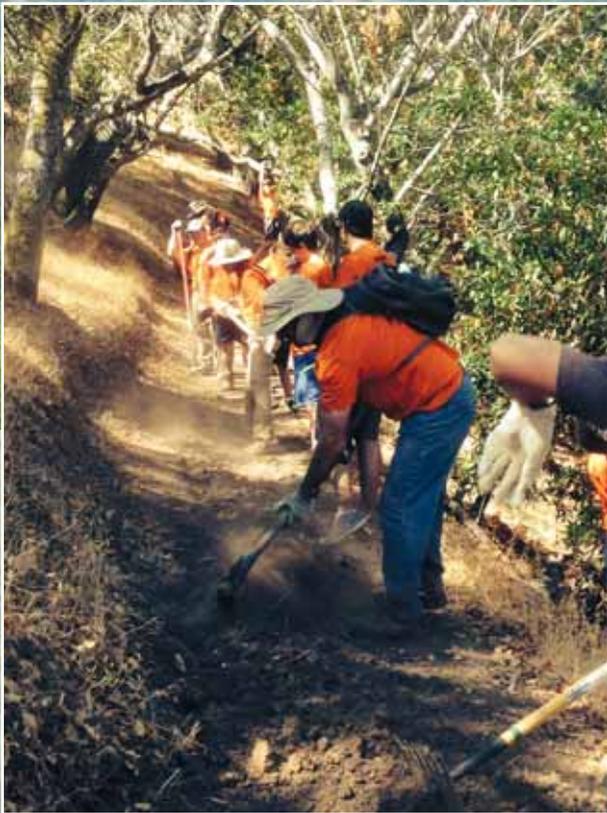
Providing outstanding services and facilities requires a coordinated effort among many people. Each year Santa Clara County Parks is supported by hundreds of talented, motivated, and diverse volunteers who provide a broad range of services to Santa Clara County residents. From keeping our facilities clean, to rehabilitating natural areas, to hosting visitor center inquiries and explorations, to assisting with hosting many of our signature public events, our volunteers rise to the occasion again and again with open hearts and open minds. From our Fishing in the City program, to our Junior Ranger program, to our visitor center and docent programs, volunteers engage in what matters most for many of our park visitors community, culture, and civic engagement.

The opportunities for engaging volunteers are boundless. In 2016 volunteers answered the call for service for a total of 37,427 hours equating into a donation in time of over \$1,030,000 to the Santa Clara County Parks Department.

But it's the relationships we build with those volunteers and volunteer groups that help us to achieve our long-term goals. We are so grateful to those who help make the important things happen day in and day out and give their time and energy to participate in the community spirit. To all of our volunteers—we are humbled by your service!

The Santa Clara County Parks Department is committed to establishing new and strengthening existing partnerships with friends groups, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, governmental entities and volunteers for a wide range of support, from direct monetary contributions and formal concession agreements to operations and programming. Partnerships are essential to delivering our mission and achieving our strategic plan goals. In 2016, the Department partnered with over 100 groups to provide our visitors with a range of experiences and activities that we could not otherwise provide. From active recreation to environmental education to art and culture to healthy lifestyle choices, our partnerships help make a significant impact in the lives of people of all ages.





santa clara county parks manages prescribed fires to maintain healthy ecosystems

Residents put their trust in Santa Clara County Parks to ensure the preservation of natural ecosystems, and restoration of degraded habitats in the over 50,000 acres of land in our regional park system. One of the tenets of the Parks Natural Resource Management Program is vegetation management, which we achieve through cattle and goat grazing, invasive species control and prescribed fires.

Fire is essential for healthy ecosystems, since many plant communities require fire to regenerate when exposed to heat and chemical properties found in smoke and ash. When we implement a prescribed fire (aka controlled burn) in a park, we achieve multiple benefits such as, invasive plant control and improvement of grassland habits. By partnering with CalFire, San Jose Fire and other local fire agencies our prescribed fires provide firefighting training, manage non-native vegetation that overpowers native plant species, reduce fuel loading and promote biodiversity.

We at Santa Clara County Parks are dedicated to being stewards of the land for YOU in preserving, enhancing and restoring the natural resources within our park system.

An exciting addition in 2016 is Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT), which promotes the wise use of parks through professional wilderness leadership training for teachers and youth leaders. We are excited to work with BAWT to connect more young people in Santa Clara County with our regional parks and provide many with their first camping experience. We also value our many ongoing partnerships such as Jacobs Del Cabo, REI, Youth Science Institute, Friends of Santa Teresa County Park, Friends of New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association, Black Mountain Bowman, Los Gatos Rowing Club, Friends of Metcalf, and many more.





connecting people with parks

connecting digitally

The parkhere.org website

The parkhere.org website is the hub for finding out anything and everything going on in your County Parks. With over 65,000 users each month, our staff strives to provide timely information on park activities, wildlife sightings, trail updates, resource management and our progress on future trail openings.

Social Media

Come find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram! You'll see stunning pictures and learn how other people are connecting with parks and nature. Nearly 10,000 users have joined our Facebook page to stay informed and to share their experiences. Thank you for your likes/favorites, comments and shares!

connecting face to face

60th Anniversary Celebration—2016

Over 2,000 anniversary packages were sold which included a year's pass, discount tickets, a custom cap and other souvenirs.



Spring Celebration—Spring

A one day festival at Martial Cottle County Park celebrating "the Valley of Hearts Delight" attended by more than 3,500 visitors.

Plein Air Competition—Spring

Plein Air Art in the Park is an adjudicated outdoor painting competition in and around various county parks and open to artists of all ages.

Parks For Life Challenge—Spring/Summer

- Over 360 teams registered to take the Challenge!
- Nearly 1,000 participants - many include families and young millennials.
- 12,000 outdoor adventures conquered at 28 County Parks on 50,000 acres of parklands.

Jr. Rangers—Spring & Fall

- Free after-school program introducing youth to our county parks, and our plant and animal habitats.
- Nature explorations, cultural and historical experiences, relationship building with park staff and more!
- Congratulations to 267 Jr. Ranger participants in 2016!





Pix in Parks—Spring & Summer

Santa Clara County Parks are full of hidden hiking gems. Here are seven magnificent hiking adventures handpicked, all nearby, to get people outside and experiencing new terrain and spectacular vistas.

Parks Rx Day—Spring

Santa Clara County Parks celebrated National ParksRx Week with Park Rx Day, a day for people to give themselves the gift of good health, with free entrance to a County Park.

Harvest Festival, Martial Cottle County Park —Fall

- A celebration of the rich agricultural history of "The Valley of Heart's Delight."
- Historical, cultural, educational and recreational fun!
- "Field to Fork" fresh organic produce grown on site, farm themed games, hayrides, corn maze and more!

Amazing Race—Summer

Join hundreds of others of all ages for a fun-filled morning at Hellyer County Park. Teams will race against each other to complete challenges & games, earn prizes and learn some cool skills along the way.

Day On The Bay—Fall

- The annual Multicultural Festival at Alviso Marina
- Kayaking, bay trail walks, cultural performances and more!
- Enjoyed by over 10,000 residents.

Pianos in the Park!—Fall

- Play 5 pianos in 5 different parks.
- An unparalleled experience of unexpected music
- Where people of all ages and skill levels enjoy playing a piano outdoors in nature!

Fantasy of Lights—December Evenings

- County Park's annual holiday tradition, the spectacular light show at Vasona Lake County Park.
- Nearly 18,000 people enjoyed walking thru the event seeing the animated light displays, sipping on hot chocolate and visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus.
- The ever popular drive-thru hosted 21,500 vehicles.

Playhere Guide—Spring & Fall

Choose your activity at one or more of our 28 pristine County Parks, each guided by park staff or a docent specialist. Discover the natural, historical, cultural, recreational and educational opportunities available for your family, friends and you.



county parks' future priorities

protecting resources preserving
maintaining existing reducing
more everyone driving alternative
healthy park physical residents health
cultural countywide key county programs
well-being sites trail improving quality
access recreational parks providing regional
ecosystems technology new natural
change climate experience services
including trails connections
habitat expanding buildings



**SANTA CLARA™
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