Task Force to complete Summary of Possible Uses

At the August 14th meeting, the Task Force continued the important task of Project Programming where possible uses are compiled for further study in the Master Plan. A summary of the Task Force’s work to date, along with input from Parks staff and members of the Technical Advisory Committee will be reviewed at our upcoming Task Force meeting on September 13th. From this point, our Master Plan consultant, Bellinger Foster Steinmetz, will develop the Proposed Program which will be presented to the public for review and comment at our next Community Meeting this autumn. Then, each proposed use will be evaluated for suitability when weighed against the project goals, existing site conditions, site suitability, County resources, and public comment. After initial public review, a Draft Program Document will be presented to the County Parks and Recreation Commission for endorsement in early November. From there, the Task Force will be involved in developing up to three alternatives for the Master Plan and study the potential benefits and drawbacks of each alternative.

(See our Master Plan Process Outline for more information on the steps involved in developing a Parks Master Plan at the Parks Department website: www.parkhere.org.)

Biological Consultant Rana Creek Completes Natural Resources Inventory for Master Plan

Since early March, Rana Creek’s hard working and talented group of scientists have been working on a comprehensive summary of the natural resources in the Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch park property. Field investigations for plant and animal communities and physical conditions such as soils, geology and hydrology have been conducted on over 4000 acres. In addition, their team of computer specialists have been busy compiling field data into an extensive GIS data base for mapping and study purposes. This part of our master plan process has taken over six months. But staff is very pleased with the preliminary findings. To give you an idea of the rich diversity of our newest parkland, 254 different species of plants have been identified, many of them native grasses rarely seen now in similar locations. Over 120 species of birds have been sighted on the property, with over 60 species using the site for nesting. The ridges of Bear Ranch are thought to be the southern-most range of the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly.

Portions of these investigations have been presented to the Task Force in past meetings and more will reviewed this coming month. Summaries of this work and other background information prepared by our consultant team will be available for public review in October as part of the Draft Program Document for the Master Plan. Work such as this is crucial to the understanding and future management of the park property for natural resource protection. It will also allow us to make informed decisions about where to plan for different types of uses during the master planning process.

Next Steps: Our next meeting is on September 13th at 6:30 pm at the Gilroy Senior Center. The Task Force will review programming input from Parks staff and the progress of the existing conditions summary. This will be in preparation for the public presentation of work to date planned for next month. Please join us. Past meeting notes and other information is available on the Parks Department website: www.parkhere.org
What is a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and What do they Do?

As you know, our Master Plan Task Force is a committee made up of interested citizens who both represent their community and act as an advisory body in the formation of a Parks Master Plan. Many types of public agencies have an advisory role to play in the development of a Master Plan as well. Most of these agencies are charged with protecting our personal well being, the physical, cultural, and natural resources that we value, and public services we rely on.

To solicit their input early and often, we have formed a separate committee made up of representatives of such agencies as the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the California Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Open Space Authority, Coe State Park, and San Martin Water District. (A complete list of the TAC members is available on our website or by phone request.) Their role is to advise the Task Force and staff on concerns that their agency may have with certain use proposals and guide us in making informed decisions that do not conflict with other public interest policies or regulations.

Parks staff will be meeting with the TAC at regular intervals and before major project milestones. Pertinent comments and input will be shared with the Task Force throughout the process. Since our introductory meeting with the TAC last month, we are happy to report that the initial response to our project has been most positive and supportive. We are anticipating that many of our TAC members will be participating in Task Force and general public meetings in the future.

Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch County Park Master Plan

Task Force Meeting
Thursday, September 13, 2001
6:30 pm
Gilroy Senior Center, 7371 Hanna Street, Gilroy

If you need more information, or would like to add a name to our mailing list, please contact:
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or visit our Parks Website at www.parkhere.org