

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks Department



DATE: May 26, 2015

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: June 4, 2015

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Marlene Finley, Parks Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report

Thompson Property, Pillar Point Bluff: County Parks acquired three Pillar Point Bluff properties totaling 139.544 acres (Pillar Point Bluff, Gunn, and Pillar Point Bluff South) from Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 2011. These properties are managed for their significant natural landscapes, habitats for the protection of threatened and endangered species, and recreation. Today, Pillar Point Bluff is a popular destination for hikers, cyclists, dog-walkers, and nature enthusiasts.

The Thompson property is the last remaining private property on Pillar Point Bluff. The 21-acre Thompson property is surrounded by the privately owned Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Community to the east, James V. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve to the north and south and approximately 1,200 feet of Pacific Ocean shoreline to the west. The property consists of open space land with coastal scrub and bluff vegetation, wooded areas and hiking trails. There are no structures. There are excellent views from the property of the Maverick's surf break, coastal tidepools and reefs below the bluff to the west.

POST secured grants from the California State Coastal Conservancy and Resources Legacy Fund and raised additional private funds to purchase the property for \$925,000 from the Thompson family. POST purchased the property in late March 2015 and has permanently dedicated the property for habitat preservation, open space protection and public access through an irrevocable offer to dedicate the property. POST has also received an additional \$25,000 grant from the Resources Legacy Fund for stewardship activities that will be jointly managed by POST and County Parks.

Parks is working with POST on a management agreement that would allow Parks to operate and manage the former Thompson property for public use, while POST retains ownership.

US Forest Service Leadership Visit: On May 13, Parks hosted a field trip for 10 US Forest Service leaders from throughout the country. Guests included the Assistant Under-Secretary for the US Department of Agriculture and the Deputy Chief of the National Forest Systems, among others. Following the tour, the group was joined by six more agency leaders who together convened at the Carriage House at Folger Stable to meet for two more days. The purpose of the visit to San Mateo County Parks was to learn, first hand, new models for successful community engagement and working with partners. Throughout the tour, representatives from many Friends, volunteer and partnership groups greeted the agency leaders.

Tour of Sam McDonald County Park: Leana Brunson McClain, grandniece of Sam McDonald contacted the Department with a request to see Chee-Chee-Wa-Wa (Sam McDonald House). Director Finley organized a tour which included Mr. and Mrs. McClain; Commissioners Okelo and Merrilees; San Mateo County Parks Foundation Executive Director Julia Bott; Foundation Chair Mary DeLong; members of the East Palo Community and park staff. Altogether 14 people toured the Sam McDonald home, group campsites and Jack Brook Horse Camp, all within Sam McDonald Park. Mrs. McClain gave Parks staff family photographs of the McDonald family. The tour concluded with a vision to restore the Sam McDonald house to include historical exhibits and a park ranger residence. Community members, Parks staff, the Foundation and others will partner to raise funds and awareness of the remarkable story of Sam McDonald. This project is listed in the Parks Strategic Plan for 2018 implementation.

Commissioners Workshop June 27th: The San Mateo Countywide Parks and Recreation Commissioners Workshop is planned for Saturday, June 27th at the Twin Pines Community Center in Belmont from 9 am to noon. The topic will be Healthy Communities. The invitations have been sent to all Parks and Recreation Commissioners serving on Cities, County and Mid-Peninsula Open Space District.

Annual Report 2013-2014: Report identifies County Parks Department's achievements and milestones for 2013-2014 and will be given to the Commissioners at the June 4 meeting. Report is also posted on the Parks website:
<http://parks.smcgov.org/documents/parks-department-2013-2014-annual-report>.