

Sonoma County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Submitted by: Melissa Kelley

- Informational
- Action

Commission Meeting Date:	Deadline: n/a
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Agenda Title: Sonoma County Parks Foundation Update

Executive Summary: The Sonoma County Parks Foundation is the nonprofit organization that raises funds for Sonoma County Regional Parks and its programs. The organization is supervised by a volunteer board of directors, with two directors appointed by each County Supervisor and up to nine at-large board members elected by the Parks Foundation’s board.

Most of the funds raised by the Parks Foundation come from individuals through gifts of cash or online donations, contributions from IRAs or Donor Advised Funds, gifts of stock, or bequests through a will or trust. The Parks Foundation also partners with Sonoma County Regional Parks’ staff to write grants and occasionally hosts fundraising events, such as the Spring Lake Water Bark.

The Parks Foundation had a record-breaking year in FY 2021-22, awarding nearly \$1.8 million in grants to Regional Parks. These grants funded key projects such as:

- The purchase of Cougar Landing, a key property that will enhance the Sonoma Valley wildlife corridor and expand Hood Mountain Regional Park & Preserve
- Significant improvements at Helen Putnam Regional Park, re-routing trails, controlling poison oak, and adding signage to improve wayfinding in the park
- Climate adaptive fire recovery at Foothill Regional Park
- Progress on a new bike path parallel to Occidental Rd. that will improve the safety of the West County Trail.

Foundation staff has set a fundraising goal for FY 2022-23 of \$1.3 million.

Following are highlights of current fundraising efforts:

- Youth programs, such as field trips, summer camps, the Youth Crew work experience interns, YES! Coast and more
- Climate action projects, including a fleet of e-bikes for park rangers

- Natural Resources projects, including habitat protection for the snowy plover at Doran Regional Park and support for a new water catchment system at Helen Putnam Regional Park
- Major rebuilding efforts at Maxwell Farms Regional Park and Larson Park
- Construction of 8 more miles of trails at Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Preserve
- Celebration of the 50th anniversary for Spring Lake Regional Park.

Alternatives/Consequences: NA

Discussion / Actions Requested: NA

Staff Recommendation: NA

Requested Commission Action: Please help spread the word about the Parks Foundation and our fundraising efforts and refer any individuals who are interested in supporting the Parks Foundation to our website or to Executive Director Melissa Kelley.

Attachments: Visit our website at www.SonomaCountyParksFoundation.org for more information.