



**SONOMA
COUNTY
REGIONAL
PARKS**

STRATEGIC

PRIORITIES

2023-2025

SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS



Organizational Goals

- Champion and demonstrate the value of parks for all
- Inspire and foster community health and wellness
- Be excellent stewards of natural and cultural resources
- Create and maintain a safe, high-quality park system

Language and Definitions

Three-year Strategic Plan Goals: Choices about the organization's priorities

Strategic Priorities: Strategies for achieving goals

Metrics: Measurements of progress

Tactics: How we will accomplish priorities

Vision

Sonoma County's parks and trails are core to the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities. Our parks and programs inspire people and provide opportunities for them to connect mind, body and spirit. Sonoma County Regional Parks is a model organization passionately protecting land, stewarding natural and cultural resources and providing public access to the outdoors.

Mission

Regional Parks preserves irreplaceable natural and cultural resources and offers opportunities for recreation and education that enhance the quality of life and well-being of Sonoma County's residents and visitors.

Values

Innovation, equity, inclusion, sustainability, accessibility, accountability

Trends

Sonoma County Regional Parks is taking stock of broader trends affecting our region. We recognize the escalating climate crisis, including more frequent and severe floods, fires, extreme heat, smoke and drought. We are designing parks that are climate resilient and that provide sanctuaries for both people and wildlife during extreme weather events. We are keenly aware that one third of Sonoma County residents report having a disability, and we are responding by making our parks and park programs fully welcoming and more accessible. We are responding to increased park visitation on the heels of a global pandemic that brought more people outdoors, and more people experimenting with new outdoor activities than ever before. The need for parks and open space preserves, playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas and trails, is as high as it has ever been, and we are dedicated to meeting that demand while stewarding these places that define the county.

Strategic Planning Goals for 2023-2025

The following goals represent areas of particular focus for Sonoma County Regional Parks over these three years. While this strategic plan does not capture all of our work, it does articulate our priorities.

- **Invest in a climate-adapted parks system**
- **Assure financial and organizational stability**
- **Make parks more equitable and accessible**
- **Enhance visitor experience**
- **Reduce the impacts of visitors on the parks**

Rationale

Invest in a climate-adapted parks system

Our parks can reduce some of the direct impacts to the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by shifting to renewable technologies and better managing waste in the parks. We are adapting our park infrastructure to be more climate durable in the face of increased wildfires and floods, and we are planning for our department to be better prepared for future climate emergencies. Finally, we manage our landscapes with an eye toward making the region more climate adapted and resilient.

Make parks more equitable and accessible

The communities that we serve are diverse and we want everyone to have equitable access to the healing benefits of nature and time spent outdoors. We are also investing to make our workforce reflect the demographics of the county and to evaluate our parks and programs with the goal of equity in mind.

Reduce the impacts of visitors on the parks

With more visitors in our parks and park use becoming less seasonal and more year-round, we want to invest in strategies that reduce human impacts to the ecosystem, as well as on impacts to neighborhoods and communities around the county.

Assure financial and organizational stability

It is critical that Regional Parks clearly demonstrates the investments of voter-approved funding, and tells the story of how those dollars are leveraged with grants, donations and earned revenues to develop and maintain quality county-wide park system.

Enhance visitor experience

To provide a better visitor experience, we strive to provide a clear message and easily understood information. We are introducing a new family of visitor information signs to replace outdated and sometimes confusing information in our parks. We are also updating technologies to make it easier than ever to reserve a site or purchase a park membership.

Reporting

Sonoma County Regional Parks will report on these strategic priorities and their associated metrics during annual budget hearings at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and post the information on our website. In addition, a special annual report will be provided on all projects funded by Parks for All Measure “M” and presented to the Citizens Oversight Committee.

GOALS & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES KEY METRICS

Invest in a climate-adapted parks system

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Decarbonize and electrify facilities, equipment and fleet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement climate adaptation plan • Deploy 12 electric vehicle chargers • Purchase 12 electric vehicles • 25% new tools to be electric • 20% vehicle miles reduced • 25% of propane/natural gas reduced |
| 2. Create and redevelop resilient infrastructure in parks and facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 rainwater systems installed • 10% of water reduced per year • Doran Adaptation & Resiliency assessment complete |
| 3. Manage ecologically for landscape scale resilience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 projects implemented • 2 grazing plans updated • 3 forest management plans • 1-3 per year burn days |
| 4. Prepare for and respond to future emergencies and manage risk on parks land and staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff plans and trains for fire, flood, earthquake, pandemic, tsunami emergencies • 4 staffed trained as resource advisors for fires • 100% staff trained on disaster service worker protocols |
| 5. Minimize and manage waste | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # tons of methane prevented by compost actions • # wildlife resistant receptacles • # single use plastics avoided • Reduction in miles driven for trash pick-up |

Make parks more equitable and accessible

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6. Improve equitable access to parks (external) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 accessible infrastructure projects completed • # web pages created/updated with accessibility information • Language access plan developed • Accessibility training for front line staff completed • All staff training on accessibility for people with disabilities • Tracking system for accessibility and equity feedback expanded • # memberships held by low income residents, veterans, seniors and people with disabilities |
| 7. Increase tribal inclusivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and begin implementing Tolay co-management agreement • # tribal partnership projects • Launch tribal parks pass |
| 8. Advance Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility & Inclusivity manager hired • Progress toward workforce demographics mirroring county demographics • # professional development opportunities offered • 90% of mentors and mentees satisfied with mentoring program |

GOALS & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES KEY METRICS

Reduce the impacts of visitors on the parks

9. Expand visitor coms to address increased use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of messages through # of outlets • # point-based interp days addressing resource issues
10. Maintain/expand/improve infrastructure to support increased use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # shuttle trips • # miles of trail improved • # of increased restrooms • # of increased camp sites
11. Enhance programs to support increased use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of partnerships • Leave No Trace goals met
12. Manage N.R. impacts from increased use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a data tracking system for staff to track contacts (including dogs off leash) • # new partnerships established • # of trails re-aligned

Assure financial and organizational stability

13. Staff needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New onboarding system finalized • Professional development and training plans developed and implemented organization-wide • Assess and measure retention • Clearinghouse for best management practices and internal trainings
14. Staff office/storage/yard needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff with adequate workspace • Facilities assessment—year one • Stand up a facilities committee • Five-year facilities plan developed
15. Improved interdivisional communication and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of staff who need digital mapping data have adequate access to timely support • 100% of staff who need visitor use data have adequate access to timely support
16. Sharing the impact of Measure M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Measure M branded social posts, signs • # new stories that reference Measure M funded projects • New annual report format 2024 • More places on the website with Measure M references

Enhanced visitor experience

17. Improved and standardized signage and branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Spring Lake signage pilot • Refresh bulletin boards in parks • Sign guidelines complete • Membership survey completed
18. Improve existing facilities and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # projects completed
19. More and diversified “new” parks, programs, facilities and recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 new parks/facilities • # miles of trail • # overnight opportunities created • # recreation programs offered • Research renting tubes, bikes, kite sand stand-up paddleboards • Hire a recreation supervisor • # of recreation contracts
20. Updated and improved technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All purchases are available online • All duty stations have reliable internet • Frequently asked questions on common rules and regulations completed



Invest in a climate-adapted parks system

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
1. Decarbonize and electrify facilities, equipment and fleet			
Install EV chargers for public and staff			
Electrify tools and equipment			
Annually assess employee commute and reporting locations to reduce GHG			
Convert to electric vehicles/alternate transportation			
Assess infrastructure and operation for carbon reduction			
Amplify visitor information on how to reduce climate impacts when visiting our parks			
2. Create and redevelop resilient infrastructure in parks and facilities			
Develop and install rainwater catchment systems			
Assess and implement water use reduction (campgrounds, marinas, irrigated turf)			
Assess Doran trailheads, camping and park infrastructure for sea level rise			
Install climate durable infrastructure (wildfire, rx fire and emergencies)			
3. Manage ecologically for landscape-scale resilience			
Riparian and wetland restoration across multiple properties			
Update/draft grazing management plans			
Develop forest management plans at Hood Mountain, Mark West Creek and Monte Rio Redwoods			
Increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire			
Implement shaded fuel breaks in strategic locations			
Assess and manage permeability for wildlife by removing derelict fences and installing wildlife-friendly fencing where needed for stewardship			
4. Prepare for and respond to future emergencies; manage risk to parks land and staff			
Develop and exercise preparedness plans			
Train staff as resource advisors as part of emergency response team			
Staff county-declared emergencies as needed			
5. Minimize and manage waste			
Implement compost programs			
Install wildlife friendly trash infrastructure			
Reduce single use plastics at park programs and events			
Waste assessment for garbage/recycling containers in parks			

Make parks more equitable and accessible

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
6. Improve equitable access to parks			
Improve the physical infrastructure for ADA accessibility			
Detailed info for park/trail to inform visitors of experience and level of accessible features			
Language access plan created			
Training and resources for staff on accessibility			
Improve the tracking system for accessibility feedback			
Improve access to park memberships and passes			
Improve accessibility for park programs			
7. Increase Tribal Inclusivity			
Complete co-management agreement at Tolay			
Develop collaborations with tribes in more parks			
Partner with tribes on cultural fire			
Create a tribal park pass			
8. Advance Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity initiatives			
Hire an inclusivity/accessibility manager			
Research potential of cultural resource staff/archeologist			
Make progress toward the workforce reflecting the racial composition of Sonoma County			
Increase professional development opportunities on equity topics			
Solidify the department's mentorship program			

Reduce the impacts of visitors on the parks

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
9. Expand visitor communications to address increased use			
Provide real time info for visitors to avoid overcrowding at key destinations			
Inform visitors on how to hike and recreate responsibly around cattle, sheep and goats			
Educate visitors to address impacts on surrounding neighborhoods			

Reduce the impacts of visitors on the parks *(continued)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
10. Maintain/expand/improve infrastructure to support increased use			
Expand parking capacity and approaches			
Renovate and develop new trails			
Expand and improve restrooms			
Identify opportunities for additional campgrounds/campsites			
Research visitor use patterns and trends			
Expand shuttle services			
Update/upgrade staff field reporting locations			
11. Enhance programs to support increased use			
Develop new partnerships to manage impacts to resources			
Implement Leave No Trace strategies throughout the parks			
12. Manage N.R. impacts from increased use			
Amplify dog on leash education and enforcement			
Better manage where people visit within the parks including identifying and removing social trails			

Assure financial and organizational stability

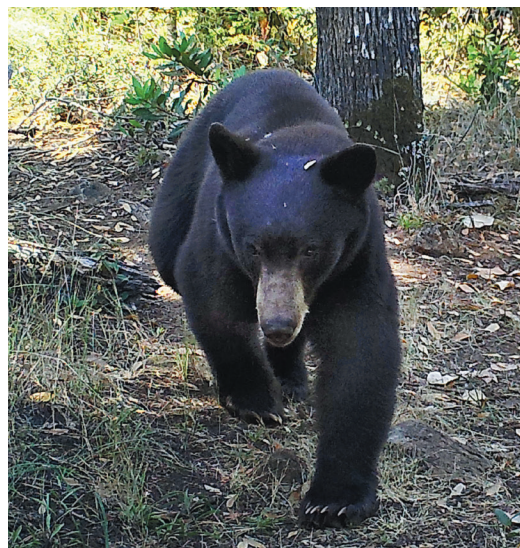
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
13. Staff needs			
Formalize staff onboarding process			
Standardized training on best management practices for staff across teams			
Expand workforce housing opportunities			
Develop a staff retention strategy			
Develop staffing assessment to determine appropriate staffing needs			
14. Staff office/storage/yard needs			
Retain a facilities and space planning consultant			
Create multi-year plan for workspaces and equipment needs correlated to current needs and expected growth with possible hire for needed outside experts			
Create new work spaces and staff reporting locations throughout the county			
Assess internet, equipment and other infrastructure needs in the field			

Assure financial and organizational stability *(continued)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
15. Improved interdivisional communication and collaboration			
Expand GIS resources			
Review and update reporting structures and overall org chart			
Invest in accurate visitor use data			
Research and develop maintenance management software			
Implement electronic document management system			
16. Sharing the Impact of Measure M			
Create an interactive summary of expenses by park and supervisorial district			
Incorporate Measure M annual report info into annual department-wide report out to community			
Implement branding to showcase what has been accomplished; plant the seed early and often			

Enhance visitor experience

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
17. Improved and standardized signage and branding			
Implement new sign standards			
Conduct membership survey on purchasing preferences and visitation interests			
Create multi-language interpretive plan			
Evaluate how the public views the department: services, uniforms, public meetings, printed materials			



Enhance visitor experience *(continued)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
18. Improve existing facilities and infrastructure			
Spring Lake 50th Anniversary projects			
Joe Rodota Trail bridges			
Maxwell Farms redevelopment phase 1			
Tolay Lake gathering area built			
Taylor Mountain trails – 8 miles added			
Monte Rio Redwoods – Initial Access provided			
Healdsburg Veterans Memorial beach – CEQA phase 1			
ADA improvements at Spring Lake campground, Gualala Point and Maxwell Farms			
Russian River Parkway phase 1 (2 parking areas, restrooms, ADA river access)			
Hudeman Slough redevelopment complete			
Larson Park redevelopment			
19. More and diversified “new” parks, programs, facilities and recreation opportunities			
North Harbor Bodega Bay Trail built			
California Coastal Trail – Kashia and Stewart sections built			
Gleason coastal access developed			
Master plans completed for Carrington, Russian River Parkway, Calabazas, Wright Hill, Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach, Wohler, North Sonoma Mountain and Mark West			
Copeland Creek trail from Sonoma State University to Crane Creek complete			
Hire a stand-alone recreation supervisor			
Expand contracting with recreational experts			
Conduct a feasibility study to expand river patrol			
Conduct a feasibility study to expand boat rentals to one additional site			
20. Updated and improved technology			
Expand online functionality to include reservations for picnic areas and permits for educational and special uses			
Update internet services at all field stations			
Updated web content frequently asked questions			



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