



# SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS

REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2024



# Who we are

## REGIONAL PARKS AT A GLANCE

Parks and facilities:

**60**

Total acres:

**18,078**

Miles of trail:

**258**

Campsites:

**248**

Annual members and pass-holders:

**27,000**

Program participants:

**2,563**

Field field trip participants:

**10,870**

Volunteers:

**1,300**

Volunteer work hours:

**35,000**

*COVER:  
A Caminitos al Parque participant at Spring Lake Regional Park.*

*◀ Upper Colgan Creek Trail, Taylor Mountain*

Sonoma County Regional Parks is a diverse system of 60 parks that connects our communities to the benefits of nature. We were founded in 1967 with one small park and now manage more than 18,000 acres spanning the county’s mountains and valleys, rivers and coastline.

Many of our parks offer wild landscapes and miles of trails. Others feature campgrounds, beaches, sports fields and playgrounds. We operate the county’s largest ocean marina and largest extracurricular environmental education program. Nearly 15 percent of county households have a Regional Parks annual membership.

Our mission is to contribute to the vibrancy and well-being of our communities and provide essential opportunities for people to connect with nature. We achieve this by expanding access to recreation experiences, serving as responsible stewards of the region’s cultural and natural resources and ensuring parks are clean, safe and welcoming.

Our vision is to create inclusive environments where visitors enjoy exceptional customer service, employees feel valued and engaged and park facilities are beautiful, modern and efficient. We are focused on adapting to and reducing the impacts of climate change and to fostering the values of sustainability, innovation, equity and accountability.

**We unveiled an updated logo in 2024. The refreshed design features enhanced details, colors, readability and contrast while still retaining its core essence. We see this update as a natural progression for our growing park system.**



## HOW WE’RE ORGANIZED

**Parks Administration** manages the core financial, human resources and customer service functions with a focus on equity and inclusion.

**Community Engagement** contributes to community well-being by providing health, wellness, environmental education, recreation and cultural experiences for a wide diversity of park users.

**Marketing and Communications** connects the public to parks and programs through marketing, public information and membership sales.

**Natural Resource Management** protects and restores the natural function of our parks, providing clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, fuels abatement, grazing and resilience to climate change.

**Park Operations and Park Maintenance** ensures the safety and security of park users with regular maintenance, adequate patrols, emergency preparedness and visitor education.

**Park Planning and Acquisition** oversees the build-out of our park system by leveraging grants to acquire land and easements as well as plan for and build park infrastructure.

**Marinas** oversees three Bodega Bay marinas that support commercial and recreational fishing.

# Sonoma County Regional Parks



The Sonoma County Regional Parks system includes 60 parks and facilities. This map highlights some of the key properties.

## COMPLETE LIST OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

- Andy's Unity Park
- Arnold Field
- Bird Walk Coastal Access Trail
- Black Point Coastal Access Trail
- Bluff Top Public Access Trail
- Chanslor Ranch
- Cloverdale River Park
- Coastal Prairie Trail
- Colgan Creek Trail
- Crane Creek Regional Park
- Del Rio Woods
- Doran Regional Park
- Ernie Smith Community Park
- Foothill Regional Park
- Forestville River Access
- Gualala Point Regional Park
- Guerneville River Park
- Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach
- Helen Putnam Regional Park
- Hood Mountain Regional Park and Preserve
- Hudeman Slough Boat Launch
- Hunter Creek Trail
- Joe Rodota Trail
- Kenwood Plaza Park
- Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail
- Larson Park
- Maddux Ranch Regional Park
- Maxwell Farms Regional Park
- Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Preserve
- Moran Goodman Park
- North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Preserve
- Occidental Community Center
- Pebble Beach Coastal Access Trail
- Pinnacle Gulch Coastal Access Trail
- Ragle Ranch Regional Park
- Riverfront Regional Park
- Running Fence Watson School Historic Park
- San Antonio Creek Trail
- Santa Rosa Creek Trail
- Scotty Creek Beach
- Sea Ranch Coastal Access Trails
- Shaw Park
- Shell Beach Coastal Access Trail
- Shiloh Ranch Regional Park
- Shorttail Gulch Coastal Access Trail
- Soda Springs Reserve
- Sonoma Valley Regional Park
- Sonoma Valley Regional Trail
- Sport Fishing Center
- Spring Lake Regional Park
- Spud Point Marina
- Steelhead Beach Regional Park
- Stengel Beach Coastal Access Trail
- Stillwater Cove Regional Park
- Sunset Beach River Park
- Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Preserve
- Tolay Lake Regional Park
- Tom Schopflin Fields
- Walk On Beach Coastal Access Trail
- West County Regional Trail
- Westside Regional Park
- Wohler Bridge Fishing Access

# Letters from Our Directors and Board Chair



## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE



We are pleased to share this comprehensive report of Sonoma County Regional Parks' 2023-2024 accomplishments.

Our growing parks system benefits from a one-eighth cent sales tax that is used to care for and renovate existing parks, develop new parks and trails, innovate programs for the entire community and restore degraded lands while stewarding natural resources. This year's report focuses on how we have been able to leverage those sales tax dollars. Every dollar we receive is matched with other funds to amplify our ability to keep parks safe and beautiful while investing in large-scale improvements like trails, community spaces, restrooms and sports fields.



In the past year, we completed the first phase of our largest park redevelopment to date, refurbishing sports fields, adding new restrooms, and enhancing public access and visitor amenities at Maxwell Farms Regional Park in Sonoma. In Santa Rosa, we have just opened 8 miles of new trails at Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. And we have continued our legacy of offering recreation access in partnership with Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, which recently acquired Chanslor Ranch near Bodega Bay.

We hope this parks report will enhance your perspectives on what is required to ensure our lands, facilities, programs and services meet our community's needs. It takes a dedicated team of parks staff, a network of local businesses that provide critical goods and services and the support of parks members, visitors, the Board of Supervisors, our Sonoma County Parks Foundation, local tribes and many non-profit and statewide partners.

We are working to stretch every dollar and to invest wisely in your parks system. We start every day thinking about how to secure a future where everyone has access to the outdoors and nature has a chance to heal and thrive.

In gratitude,

**Bert Whitaker**, Director  
**Melanie Parker**, Deputy Director  
 Sonoma County Regional Parks

**“We are deeply grateful to our local community for their support in funding their city and regional parks and preserving our natural resources for future generations to enjoy.”**

## BUILDING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE



The value of parks to our physical and mental health cannot be overstated. Parks are where we can connect with nature, engage in physical activity and find peace and relaxation. Parks improve our quality of life, provide environmental benefits and offer spaces for families and friends to come together.

Investing in our parks is not only a priority, it is essential for a comprehensive and well-rounded suite of county services.

In my 14 years on the Board of Supervisors, I have seen our Regional Parks department continuously improve the parks system and the delivery of its services. The department is adapting to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population while preserving the beauty of our parkland.

In this report, you will see how park leaders have built a more resilient system by weaving together multiple revenue streams, including the local Parks for All - Measure M sales tax.

These sources are helping ensure the long-term sustainability and accessibility of our parks. The strategic use of these funds demonstrates not only financial responsibility but also a commitment to the preservation of these vital public spaces.

**David Rabbitt**  
 Chair of the Board of Supervisors, 2024



# What we do: Invest in parks



## TAYLOR MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK & OPEN SPACE PRESERVE



*Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve is one of Sonoma County's most popular hiking destinations, especially when hills are covered spring flowers.*

*Volunteer labor from the Redwood Trails Alliance and others helps offset park construction costs.*

*Eight miles of new trails feature creek crossings, dramatic sunsets and expansive views of Santa Rosa and beyond.*

**We reached a major goal at Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve in late 2024: the construction of 8 miles of trails that open hundreds of acres of parkland for the first time.**

**This ambitious project, the largest of its kind in years, lets visitors experience more of the stunning ridgetops, woodlands, streams and meadows that define this Santa Rosa park.**

The story of how we reached this milestone on this land is one of stewardship, partnership and perseverance, and it's an arc shared by many of your favorite regional parks.

First, let's look at Taylor Mountain's beautifully sculpted oak forests and meadows. Like much of Sonoma County, the forests were cultivated by Indigenous people for thousands of years, primarily with low-intensity fire. This perpetuated habitat for wildlife, wildflowers, pollinators, birds, trees and so many invisible interconnected systems into the early 1800s. Later land use that focused on livestock grazing had mixed effects but did contribute to the oaks' survival and help stave off pressure to develop the mountain.

Across Sonoma County, lands like Taylor Mountain were being carved into smaller and smaller parcels. In the case of this mountain, opportunity presented itself several decades ago in the form of a few willing sellers who wanted their holdings to be forever protected as open space.

Fortunately, Sonoma County voters had the foresight for such opportunities when they authorized the Sonoma County

Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in 1996 and 2006. These authorities established a quarter-cent sales tax to support land protection and acquisition. Ag + Open Space purchased Taylor Mountain's 13 parcels for \$21 million and knit them into one unit of 1,100 acres, permanently protected with a conservation easement.

Ag + Open Space transferred the land to us, and we opened Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve in 2013 with 3 miles of trail. Guided by a community-driven master plan, we have steadily expanded the trails network to 15 miles and added other key amenities, with more planned. We initially achieved this by securing state funding through one-time bonds like Propositions 84 and 68 and using developer impact fees, Sonoma County Parks Foundation donations and invaluable volunteer labor.

However, it was Sonoma County voters' approval of the Parks for All – Measure M sales tax in 2018 that has been instrumental in our ability to complete this project and to fully steward Taylor Mountain and other parks. With this one-eighth cent tax, we are leveraging additional construction funding, keeping parks safe,

expanding recreation and education offerings, monitoring wildlife populations, restoring watersheds and implementing sustainable grazing practices.

Taylor Mountain, in the geographic heart of Sonoma County, is an "urban open space," with more than 60,000 people living within 2 miles of the park. A feature that makes the park so special is its sweeping vistas and the perspective they provide. These panoramic views - the type usually accessible only to affluent landowners - let park visitors better understand our communities and their relationship to surrounding landmarks like Mount St. Helena, the Geysers, Hood Mountain, Trione-Annadel State Park and the coastal ridges.

Thanks to you, the voters of Sonoma County, for choosing to invest in the conservation, stewardship and development of iconic parks. Taylor Mountain is one of our best examples of how investments over time create "forever opportunities" for people to connect with nature and experience a sense of awe for the county's landscapes.

# What we do: Invest in parks



## TOLAY LAKE REGIONAL PARK

▼ The community gathering area is the first element of the park master plan to be constructed. The design can

support large performances as well as smaller programs and gatherings. Its location on a gently sloping hill provides views of Tolay Lake, Tolay Creek and Tolay Valley.

A gathering area constructed at Tolay Lake Regional Park in 2024 represents a significant step in the park's development and our co-management partnership with Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. The 1.5-acre space will host community events, celebrations and cultural and environmental education when it opens in 2025. The area honors the lake's sacred status for the Tribe and features terraced seating, an open-air stage with scenic views, accessible pathways and culturally significant plants. Funded by a combination of tribal contributions, state grants, donations, mitigation fees and local Parks for All – Measure M sales tax revenue, this \$1.86 million project reflects our commitment to preserving and sharing this important natural and cultural resource.

**“We’re pleased to work with Sonoma County Regional Parks to create an accessible gathering place that reflects our Native American traditions of sharing stories and meeting with our community.”**

**GREG SARRIS**  
Chairman  
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

## CHANSLOR RANCH

▲ Chanslor Ranch is rich in natural, scenic and recreational resources, and its location adjacent to the future Carrington Coast Ranch Regional Park & Open Space Preserve sets the stage for a new linkage of public lands along the Sonoma Coast.

Chanslor Ranch in Bodega Bay joined Sonoma County's recreation lands in the spring of 2024 when we opened it to the public for daily use. The former guest ranch had been recently purchased by Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, which will place a conservation easement on the property before transferring ownership to us in 2025. With short-term funding from Ag + Open Space, we restored a parking area, installed trail signs and cleared safety hazards to prepare the property for immediate public access. The site quickly became popular with hikers and equestrians who enjoy the trails, beautiful views and easy access to Highway 1 and Sonoma Coast State Park. We'll work with the community to expand recreational opportunities and stewardship of the land after we take ownership.

## MAXWELL FARMS REGIONAL PARK

We celebrated the completion of a \$9.3 million renovation at Maxwell Farms Regional Park in the summer of 2024. This 40-year-old park, a cornerstone of Sonoma Valley recreation, now boasts modernized amenities, including all-weather soccer, baseball and lacrosse fields, accessible pathways, expanded parking, EV charging, a redesigned entrance and a signal crossing at Verano Avenue. Funding for this multi-year endeavor came from general fund tax revenue allocated by the Board of Supervisors, state grants, Parks for All – Measure M sales tax, park mitigation fees, Sonoma County Parks Foundation donations and accessibility earmarks. We are planning a second phase of improvements that will include a pump track, skatepark, pickleball courts and trail renovations.

▼ Sonoma Valley children join us to celebrate the first phase of renovations at Maxwell Farms Regional Park in July 2024. New sports fields, pathways and other improvements are made possible through a combination of funding sources. The renovations address growing population needs, new recreation patterns and the preservation of Sonoma Creek habitat.

**“I’m thrilled to see the remarkable transformation of Maxwell Farms Regional Park, and I am looking forward to what’s coming in the future. These upgrades bring new life to our beloved park.”**

**SUSAN GORIN**  
Sonoma County Supervisor who secured crucial project funding



# What we do: Protect natural resources



## SHILOH RANCH REGIONAL PARK

The region's diverse ecosystems face numerous threats, including habitat loss, invasive species and the escalating impacts of climate change. These challenges jeopardize the survival of native species and compromise the health of native landscapes. Our work at Shiloh Ranch Regional Park in Windsor exemplifies our multi-faceted approach to stewarding natural resources and bringing balance to the lands we manage.

Through the summer and fall of 2024, we restored a seasonal wetland in the backcountry of Shiloh Ranch, halting future erosion around the park pond by filling rutted gullies and renovating the spillway and channel that drains to Mark West Creek. We removed invasive species and added native plants to improve wildlife habitat and rerouted problematic trail sections to create a more attractive destination for visitors.

We took down Douglas fir trees in other sections of the park to promote the growth of fire-resistant oaks, and instead of chipping or burning the Douglas firs, we used the wood to create natural sediment controls along the restored creek channel.

The pond restoration follows several years of strategic vegetation management at Shiloh Ranch, which buffered southeast Windsor from the catastrophic 2017 Tubbs Fire.

We created fuel breaks around the park's boundaries to better protect the community from future wildfire, cleared dead or overgrown brush to support forest health and conducted prescribed burns that provided essential training opportunities for our stewardship and forestry crews.

The wetland restoration was primarily funded by a \$1.3 million grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the local Parks for All —

Measure M sales tax. In general, the majority of our natural resources work is made possible by Measure M revenue, with supplemental funding from the Sonoma County Parks Foundation.

▲ A Regional Parks stewardship crew leader monitors a prescribed fire that is restoring Shiloh Ranch Regional Park habitat and making the park more resistant to wildfire risk.

▼ A major renovation of the wetland habitat at Shiloh Ranch is an example of how Measure M tax funding supports major grant opportunities.

▼ Improving the forest health by clearing brush and managing other vegetation is an ongoing priority for Regional Parks.

▲ A 2023 prescribed fire at Tolay Lake Regional Park is one of the first large fires we coordinated with

partners. We are now using fire to manage vegetation in parks throughout the county.

### PRESCRIBED FIRE

To proactively manage wildfire risk, control invasive species and enhance biodiversity, we've expanded our use of prescribed fire. We are especially proud of supporting the return of cultural fire to Tolay Lake Regional Park. In mid-2023 and again in 2024 we burned Tolay grasslands in partnership with park co-managers, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. We are increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire systemwide, using "good fire" at Shiloh Ranch, Monte Rio Redwoods, Sonoma Valley regional parks and beyond.

### RAINWATER CATCHMENT

A new water catchment system at Helen Putnam Regional Park will relieve stress on local streams and aquifers during dry months. The system will collect and store up to 46,000 gallons of winter rainwater for summer use, providing water for irrigation, grazing animals and wildfire response. It is a model for other parks with limited water sources like Putnam. The project was supported by Sonoma County's Climate Resilience Fund and county infrastructure dollars from the 2nd Supervisorial District.

▼ A rainwater storage tank is installed at Helen Putnam Regional Park in mid-2024, a project that can serve as a water-conservation model for other parks. The saved water will be used for irrigation, grazing animals and wildfire response.

### MORE HABITAT RESTORATION

We made significant progress in restoring native habitats at Doran Regional Park and Hood Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. Through collaborative efforts with partners and volunteers, we pulled invasive ice plant dune grasses at Doran and planted native grasses to create essential habitat for Western snowy plovers and other wildlife. At Hood, we supported the recovery of the native Sargent's cypress trees, a unique species impacted by wildfires that swept over the park's serpentine ridgeline in 2017 and again in 2020.

**"We are doing our best to make the ecosystems we steward more resilient to the impacts of climate change."**

**LEN MAZUR**  
Stewardship crew leader  
Regional Parks

▲ Together, we're making a difference. Our dedicated staff and volunteers are restoring delicate ecosystems.



# What we do: Create community connections



## FOOTHILL REGIONAL PARK

◀ A participant in our environmental education field trips records his observations at Foothill Regional Park in Windsor.

▲ A new gathering area serves offers a space for the community to connect and features a tile mosaic depicting the park's destruction and rebirth following the 2019 Kincade Fire.

We've educated hundreds of Sonoma County students about climate change and wildfire recovery at Foothill.

**Time spent outdoors promotes healthy bodies, minds and communities, and we strive to make sure everyone has equal access to these benefits.**

Supporting the community's connection to Foothill Regional Park in Windsor has been a guiding principle of our work to restore and improve the park after it burned in the 2019 Kincade Fire.

In 2024, we completed a new park entrance and gathering spot featuring a 30-foot tile mural that tells the story of the park's destruction and rebirth. The colorful mural was designed by an area artist in collaboration with local young people.

The gathering area is a base for our "Regeneration after Fire" and "Weather or Not" field trip programs that annually serve hundreds of North County elementary school students. Through hands-on activities and guided hikes, children learn about ecosystem health related to wildfire or how life in the park responds to weather patterns and changes in the seasons.

We've also improved community access to Foothill by adding ADA parking, picnic tables and bilingual interpretive signs that inform visitors about the park's plants, wildlife and fire recovery.

New infrastructure throughout the park is designed to be not only more inclusive but more resilient

and to offer greater protection to the surrounding neighborhoods in the event of another wildfire.

Many of these improvements were funded by a grant from Kaiser Permanente, contributions from Rotary Club and the Sonoma County Parks Foundation and revenue from the Parks for All – Measure M sales tax.

## REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

We designed and led hundreds of programs and outings in 2023 and 2024, all offered within a framework of equity, diversity, inclusion and cultural sensitivity. Programs are primarily funded by local Parks for All – Measure M sales tax revenue, grants, registration fees, membership sales and support from the Sonoma County Parks Foundation.

Our **Caminitos al Parque** program introduces low-income Latinx families with preschool-aged children to the wonders of nature through bilingual guided hikes. This is a creative collaboration in which the nonprofit Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County refers participants. Nearly 300 children and their parents or guardians attended in 2024.

**Storywalks** is anovel partnership with Sonoma County Library to encourage youngsters to read by displaying children's book pages along park trails. More than 150 young readers and their families attended community celebrations at the beginning of the 2024 StoryWalks held at Ernie Smith and Helen Putnam parks and Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach.

**YES! Parks (Youth Exploring Sonoma)** introduces low-income, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth to nature through hiking, paddling, environmental education and volunteer projects. Started in 2017, YES! Parks now includes three sections: YES! Coast, YES! River and YES! Mountain. Collectively, they include field trips that expose youth to camping, cycling and service work during the multi-month sessions. And in 2024, we won a \$297,000, competitive state grant to further support the YES! programs.

On the other end of the spectrum, our **senior programs** are wildly popular: Winging it Wednesdays participants enjoy monthly bird walks for all experience levels. Senior Saunters is a low-impact hiking series that connects older adults to parks and each other. The Wild Words Book Club brings readers together online to experience the magic of nature through literature.



# What we do: Promote health, safety & recreation



## RANGER PROGRAM

Parks are vital community hubs where people seek safe, positive and meaningful experiences. The park ranger, a cornerstone of our parks system, embodies these values.

We envision these dedicated professionals as more than just enforcement officers. They are also community ambassadors, environmental stewards and experts on the parks' unique features. Rangers play a crucial role in creating a welcoming atmosphere, ensuring compliance with park rules and responding to medical emergencies.

To better align our ranger program with these goals, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in mid-2024 adopted an ordinance that changed the designation of county park rangers from peace officers to public officers. This designation enables us to develop a more tailored hiring and training program and to create more opportunities for individuals with diverse backgrounds to become rangers.

A sheriff's Department Parks Unit now provides comprehensive law enforcement services in the regional parks, a new resource that will help keep rangers from being drawn into dangerous situations without the proper enforcement tools or support.

We have the utmost respect for park rangers in general and for the individuals currently serving in this role. They are passionate, hard-working employees who have dedicated their lives and careers to becoming the very best rangers that they can be.

As guardians of our natural spaces and ambassadors of a welcoming environment, rangers play a pivotal role in how visitors experience and enjoy the parks.

▲ A ranger speaks with a visitor on the coastal bluffs of Stillwater Cove Regional Park. Regional Park rangers help visitors enjoy and appreciate more than 18,000 acres of parkland across Sonoma County. Rangers play an essential role in making parks inviting, inspiring, safe and accessible.

▼ Inspiring the next generation of conservationists! A ranger teaches children about Bodega Bay's diverse marine life. Our rangers are committed to fostering deeper connections between people and nature.

▲ A Regional Parks lifeguard fits a Vamos a Nadar participant with a life jacket during a water-education class. Vamos a Nadar has connected hundreds of Sonoma County children with discounted swimming lessons.

▼ Thousands of children and families enjoy the floating water park and kayak and paddleboard rentals at Spring Lake Regional Park each summer. Parks provide a place of respite as climate impacts affect seasonal temperatures.

## WATER SAFETY

**Vamos a Nadar: (Let's go Swimming)** program in 2024 celebrated 20 years of teaching Sonoma County children and families to be safe around water. Regional Parks' lifeguards, local pools and swim instructors all collaborate to offer the free bilingual program for families with children ages 5 to 18. Families then receive a coupon for two weeks of discounted swim lessons. Nearly 250 participants completed the program in 2024.

**River Patrol & life jackets:** Regional Parks' River Patrol was out in force during the summer of 2024. The roving team of lifeguards visits popular Russian River beaches Fridays through Mondays, and made four rescues, 12 assists and 6,780 safety contacts. Another summer success story is our loaner life jacket program, which makes life jackets available for free use at river parks. Use has increased from 5,994 in 2021 to 28,714 in 2024.

## SWIMMING AND BOATING

Kids and adults alike splashed into the Spring Lake Regional Park water park and swimming lagoon in droves in 2024: 19,326 tickets to the water park were sold over the summer, an almost 20% increase from 2023. The water park is an inflatable, floating playground on the swimming lagoon, with paid sessions available daily all summer. Swimming and water play elsewhere on the lagoon are always free and continue to be a wonderful way for families to cool off. And nearly 4,000 visitors explored adjacent Spring Lake on rented paddleboards and kayaks.

▲ A couple enjoys a hike amid the redwoods at Riverfront Regional Park near Windsor. Guided hikes, bird walks, book clubs and other

programs for older, active adults are popular offerings, especially as Sonoma County's senior population continues to grow.

## OUTDOOR SKILLS

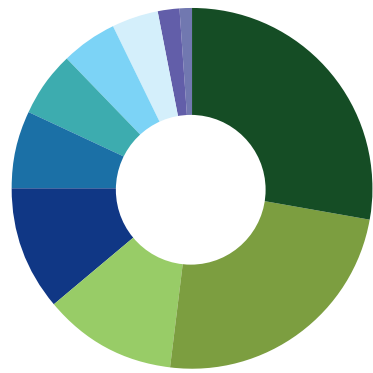
We continue to introduce new ways to build visitors' outdoor skills, and we see growing interest in adventure-ready first aid. Programs include basic and advanced wilderness first aid and certificates in CPR. Additionally, our Leave No Trace outreach continues to empower visitors to deepen their connection with nature. Leave No Trace teaches visitors how to enjoy Sonoma County's outdoor spaces responsibly and respectfully, while minimizing our impacts on natural resources.



# Regional Parks Financials Fiscal year 2023-24



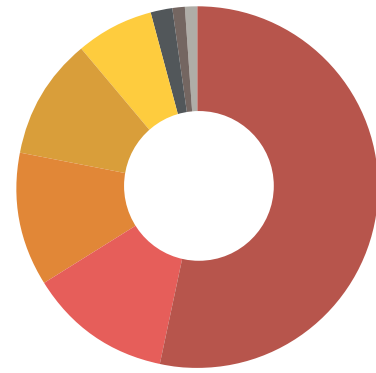
## REVENUE



**TOTAL REVENUE \$38,272,527**

- Measure M 28%
- Operating Income 24%
- Other County Departments 12%
- General Fund – Ongoing 11%
- Transient Occupancy Taxes 7%
- Other 6%
- Grants 5%
- General Fund – One Time 4%
- Foundation 2%
- Park Mitigation Funds 1%

## EXPENDITURES



**TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$38,272,527**

- Salaries & Benefits 54%
- Contracted Services 13%
- Capital Projects 12%
- Services & Supplies 11%
- County Service Charges 7%
- Other 2%
- Equipment 1%
- Administrative Fees 1%

## MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT

Examples of how we leverage or combine the funding we earn, raise or receive to broaden our reach in the parks and in the community:

### NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

At Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park & Open Space Preserve, we used about \$20,000 of Parks for All – Measure M sales tax revenue to secure \$300,000 in grants from the California State Coastal Conservancy to clear flammable brush along the trails of this new parkland. That work then allowed us to partner with CalFire and local fire districts to use those cleared trails as defensible boundaries for our first prescribed fire at Monte Rio. The fire partnerships are invaluable “in-kind” contributions in which the agencies donate their time and expertise to advise on and manage these projects.

### PARKLAND ACQUISITION

We made a key investment in the ecological and recreational landscape of the Sonoma Valley and northeast Santa Rosa by purchasing a small but significant property next to Hood Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. The \$550,000 purchase of the site known as “100-Acre Ranch” links a vast network of more than 11,000 acres of public land across the southern Mayacamas Mountains. We were able to buy the property by combining \$200,000 in Parks for All – Measure M sales tax revenue and \$30,000 in local park mitigation fees with contributions from our nonprofit partners at Sonoma Land Trust (\$250,000) and Sonoma County Parks Foundation (\$50,000) and a private grantor (\$50,000).

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Each year, we provide environmental education to more than 10,000 school children who join us on park field trips. However, a lack of bus or parent transportation is often an obstacle for some schools that would like to participate. In the past year, we helped eliminate this barrier by using \$148,650 in Parks for All – Measure M sales tax revenue and grant funding to provide transportation stipends to Title 1 schools in Sonoma County.

**“The Sonoma County Parks Foundation proudly supported the important acquisition of 100-Acre Ranch, made possible through community collaboration and a commitment to preserving our vital natural resources.”**

**MELISSA KELLEY**  
Executive Director, Sonoma County Parks Foundation.

# Regional Parks strategic priorities for 2025



## Visitor posts



### INVEST IN A CLIMATE-ADAPTED PARKS SYSTEM

#### DECARBONIZE AND ELECTRIFY FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND FLEET

- Electrify tools and equipment
- Annually assess employee commute and reporting locations to reduce greenhouse gasses
- Convert to electric vehicles and alternate transportation
- Amplify visitor information on how to reduce climate impacts when using parks

#### CREATE AND REDEVELOP RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE IN PARKS AND FACILITIES

- Develop and install rainwater catchment systems
- Assess and reduce water use in park facilities
- Assess Doran Regional Park trailheads, camping and park infrastructure for sea-level rise
- Install climate-durable infrastructure

#### MANAGE ECOLOGICALLY FOR LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESILIENCE

- Restore wetlands and riparian areas in multiple parks
- Update grazing management plans
- Develop forest management plans for Hood Mountain, Mark West Creek and Monte Rio Redwoods
- Increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire
- Implement shaded fuel breaks in strategic locations
- Remove derelict fences

#### PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO FUTURE EMERGENCIES; MANAGE RISK TO PARKS LAND AND STAFF

- Develop preparedness plans
- Train staff as resource advisors for emergency-response teams
- Staff county emergencies as needed

### MINIMIZE AND MANAGE WASTE

- Implement compost programs
- Install wildlife-friendly trash infrastructure
- Reduce single-use plastics at park programs and events
- Assess garbage/recycling containers in parks

### MAKE PARKS MORE EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

#### IMPROVE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS

- Improve physical infrastructure for ADA accessibility
- Provide accessibility training and resources for staff
- Improve access to park memberships and passes
- Improve accessibility for park programs

#### INCREASE TRIBAL INCLUSIVITY

- Develop collaborations with tribes in more parks
- Partner with tribes on cultural fire

#### ADVANCE JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY INITIATIVES

- Make progress toward a workforce that reflects Sonoma County's racial composition
- Increase professional development opportunities on equity topics

### REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF VISITORS ON THE PARKS

#### EXPAND VISITOR COMMUNICATIONS TO ADDRESS INCREASED USE

- Provide information for visitors to avoid overcrowding at key destinations
- Inform visitors on how to hike and recreate responsibly around livestock
- Educate visitors to reduce impacts on surrounding neighborhoods

### MAINTAIN/EXPAND/IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT INCREASED USE

- Renovate and develop new trails
- Expand and improve restrooms
- Identify opportunities for additional campgrounds/campsites

#### ENHANCE PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT INCREASED USE

- Develop partnerships to manage impacts to resources

#### MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES IMPACTS FROM INCREASED USE

- Amplify dog-on-leash education and enforcement

### ASSURE FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

#### STAFF OFFICE, STORAGE AND YARD NEEDS

- Create new workspaces and staffing locations throughout the county

#### IMPROVED INTERDIVISIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- Expand GIS resources
- Invest in accurate visitor use data

#### SHARING THE IMPACTS OF MEASURE M

- Create an interactive summary of expenses by park and supervisorial district

### ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

#### IMPROVED AND STANDARDIZED SIGNAGE AND BRANDING

- Evaluate how the public views the department: services, uniforms, public meetings, printed materials

▲ *California Quail, Sonoma Valley Regional Park*

▼ *Foothill Regional Park*

Crane Creek Regional Park is one of my favorites. I love the granite boulders in the creek bed. The sound of rushing water in winter and spring. The sight of the rolling hills and oak woodlands comforts me. Feels like home.

@deborah\_dog\_leader\_mysteries

Started feeling those Sunday Scaries creeping in so I listened to my body and mind and gave them what they needed: some extra time outdoors to reset, reflect and prepare for the week ahead. Ventured out to one of my favorite local hikes. I forgot my AirPods, and honestly, I am so glad I did. The silence was needed, just listening to the birds around me and the stillness was so calming.

@journeywithjustine\_ at Foothill Regional Park ▼

We went to Sonoma Valley Regional Park for the first time and loved it! Perfect little hike before lunch in Sonoma or Glen Ellen. Plus, they have a huge dog park for those pups who still have energy after a hike, like mine.

@juliarose.marketing ▲



# Regional Parks Funding and Supporting Organizations

**Regional Parks achieves its goals by leveraging partnerships with a variety of organizations, including the following:** Cal Fire, California Conservation Corps, California Department of Boating & Waterways, California Native Plant Society Milo Baker Chapter, California State Coastal Conservancy, California State Parks, Catholic Charities, Cloverdale Fire Protection District, Community Action Partnership, County of Sonoma, Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria, Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, Graton Fire Protection District, Habitat Conservation Fund, Kashia Band of Pomo, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, LandPaths, Marin Sonoma Weed Management Area, Monte Rio Fire Protection District, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North Sonoma Coast Fire Protection District, Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District, Pepperwood Preserve, Point Blue Conservation, Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District, Redwood Coast Land Conservancy, Redwood Empire Food Bank, Redwood Trails Alliance, Roseland School District, Santa Rosa City School District, Schell-Vista Fire Protection District, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, Sonoma County Ag Commissioner, Sonoma County Fire District, Sonoma County Library, Sonoma County Office of Education, Sonoma County Parks Foundation, Sonoma Ecology Center, Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma Mountain Institute, Sonoma Valley Athletic Corps, Sonoma Valley Fire Protection District, Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative, Sonoma Water, Timber Cove Fire Protection District, UC Davis Marine Lab, Ward Ranch Livestock



**“Our beautiful campground was only a short walk away from possibly one of the most gorgeous hikes we’ve ever been on. The lushest greenery and towering trees all around us. We’ve both lived in Southern California our entire lives and could not believe we were still in California with such gorgeous natural surroundings. We stopped and marveled at a new plant at least every three minutes. I’m telling you: We were stunned!”**

@redwoodroamers at Stillwater Cove Regional Park ▶



# Appendix Measure M Financials Fiscal year 2023-24



Sonoma County voters in 2018 overwhelmingly approved Parks for All – Measure M, a one-eighth-cent sales tax to support county and city parks for 10 years. Two-thirds of the funds go to Sonoma County for its regional parks, and one-third is divided among the cities, according to population size.

The measure’s expenditure plan outlines appropriate uses for the revenue. The county and cities each determines how best to prioritize the allocated funding, and a citizen oversight committee ensures the funding is spent as intended.

In fiscal year 2023-24, the total tax revenue was more than \$16 million. The cities and the county can use the money to:

- Invest in maintenance of parks, trails, signs, buildings and other infrastructure
- Improve playgrounds, sports fields, restrooms, picnic areas and visitor centers
- Improve park access by extending or building trails, bike paths, coastal trails and river trails
- Reduce wildfire risks through vegetation management
- Open new parkland to the public
- Protect natural resources, including waterways and wildlife habitat
- Offer recreation, education, and health programs in parks

This report offers a detailed accounting of how the county and cities spent these dollars and where they are accruing savings for future projects.

## SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS

2023-2024 MEASURE M TOTALS	REGIONAL PARKS	CITIES
Beginning Measure M balance	\$4,590,298	\$11,203,703
Revenue received	\$11,099,973	\$5,265,062
Expenditures	\$10,501,901	\$2,880,874
Available balance for future years' projects	\$5,188,370	\$13,621,299

## MEASURE M IMPACTS

The benefits of Measure M are evident in city and regional parks throughout the county. Aging parks are being redeveloped. Open spaces are being acquired, and trails are being built. Habitat is being protected. New programs are connecting families to the outdoors. And just as important, Measure M revenue is providing the capital the county and cities need to attract additional funding through state, federal and private grants.

## MEASURE M CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:

- Christopher Borr
- Carol Eber
- Leslie A. Graves
- Justin Lindenberg
- John Mills
- Meredith Rennie

## COUNTY & CITY MEASURE M SPENDING SUMMARIES 2023-2024

### CLOVERDALE

Cloverdale received \$207,993 from the Parks for All – Measure M funds for fiscal year 2023/24. Pairing that revenue with funds accumulated from previous fiscal years, the parks department budgeted essential maintenance projects. These included repairing damaged play structures and continuing with vegetation management to mitigate fire risks in the Porterfield Creek Open Space Preserve. The city also added a third member to the park maintenance staff, as well as hiring seasonal, part-time staff for summer.

### COTATI

Cotati has opted to save its Parks for All – Measure M funds for improvements to the Putnam Park project. Construction is slated to begin at the 8.8-acre park this year and be completed by spring of 2025. Improvements include updating a multi-use field, relocating a fenced dog park for easier access, constructing paved picnic areas throughout the park

and adding a water fountain. Also, the park will be getting a walking path, benches, lighting, landscaping and exercise equipment.

### HEALDSBURG

Healdsburg invested its fiscal years 2022-2024 Measure M funding in Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space. The improvement project created a new trailhead for the preserve that includes sustainable trail access, an ADA trail component and a Fitch Mountain interpretive program. The Villa Dog Park, one of Healdsburg’s most-used park facilities, was also renovated and reconstructed. These projects cost \$2.9 million, of which, \$253,000 came from the Parks for All – Measure M fund.

### PETALUMA

Improving park access and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle pathways in Petaluma remain a top priority. The recently completed Park Access Improvement Project, funded by \$326,000 from Parks for All – Measure M, upgraded deteriorating paths at McDowell,

La Tercera and McNear Parks with reinforced concrete. These improvements promote a healthier, more inclusive community for all ages and abilities by removing physical barriers. La Tercera Park will also feature new furnishings and drought-tolerant landscaping, developed in collaboration with Daily Acts.

### ROHNERT PARK

Rohnert Park continues to bring the community together through free events for all ages. Parks for All – Measure M funded 1.5 full-time positions and seven new events. The city used \$60,000 for RP Jubilee on July 4. The free event featured a concert, expansive kids zone with nine inflatables, a rock-climbing wall, giant live video gaming, bubble foam pit, arts and crafts and lawn games. Measure M’s approval has allowed the city to offer more community events than previously possible.

### SANTA ROSA

In 2024, Santa Rosa expanded its popular summer camp program at Howarth Park to include children

ages 4 to 5. Camp Wa-Tots brought the same quality staff and fun activities as the iconic Camp Wa-Tam. The inaugural 2024 tots camp sold out with 180 campers. It was budgeted at \$45,000 a year, made possible by the community’s support of Parks for All – Measure M. Program staff will expand registration to 240 campers in 2025.

### SEBASTOPOL

Popular Ives Park got a boost from Parks for All – Measure M funds as Sebastopol used \$61,500 as matching funds to replace the pathway that runs from the southwest picnic area along Calder Creek. This provides an opportunity to update and replace the uneven, potholed path to be ADA-compliant. This will ensure the park and trail facilities are accessible to all users.

### SONOMA

Sonoma is banking its Parks for All – Measure M funds from the 2023-24 fiscal year to help fund two capital improvement projects. Plans for the historic Depot Park, just north of Sonoma Plaza, call for improved restrooms, a new

water fountain and an enhanced state-of-the-art bioretention feature that will use innovative techniques for natural water filtration and drainage. Olsen Park, a 2-acre park, currently includes a basketball court, picnic tables and a play structure. Existing elements will be evaluated, and improvements scheduled.

### WINDSOR

Windsor completed a long-anticipated pickleball court project this past funding year. Dedicated pickleball courts were first discussed over a decade ago. Since then, the community raised more than \$50,000 to contribute to this effort. Fires, the pandemic and rising construction costs led to delays. However, with the help of Proposition 68 and with \$325,580 of Parks for All – Measure M funds, the town has built five new, dedicated pickleball courts at Hiram Lewis Community Park.

### REGIONAL PARKS

Sonoma County received nearly \$11.1 million in Parks for All – Measure M funds in 2023-2024. This funding helped us complete

the renovation of Maxwell Farms Regional Park, open new trails on Taylor Mountain and restore sensitive habitat at Shiloh Ranch, Hood Mountain and Doran Beach. Measure M dollars provided for a summer of Spring Lake Water Park operations as well as new recreation and education programs for children, adults and seniors countywide. Measure M funding also allowed us to reduce the risk of future wildfire in parks, promote biodiversity and control invasive species.

# Measure M Financials Fiscal year 2023-24



## MEASURE M REVENUE, EXPENSES AND BALANCES


This information presents the Measure M funding available to each incorporated jurisdiction and to the county. Fund balances remaining may be used to accrue savings to be invested in park projects in future years.

BACK COVER:  
Colgan Highlands Trail — Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve



**Cloverdale**


Beginning Measure M balance	\$248,580
Revenue received	\$207,993
Expenditures	\$166,793
Available balance for future years project	\$289,779



**Cotati**


*(fund balance used to complete Kotate Park)*

Beginning Measure M balance	-\$689
Revenue received	\$112,734
Expenditures	\$0
Available balance for future years project	\$112,045




**Healdsburg**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$236,154
Revenue received	\$174,231
Expenditures	\$253,028
Available balance for future years project	\$157,357



**Petaluma**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$360,344
Revenue received	\$881,918
Expenditures	\$1,196,101
Available balance for future years project	\$46,161




**Rohnert Park**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$958,212
Revenue received	\$660,153
Expenditures	\$424,519
Available balance for future years project	\$1,192,846



**Santa Rosa**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$8,268,880
Revenue received	\$2,634,859
Expenditures	\$650,036
Available balance for future years project	\$10,253,703



**Sebastopol**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$273,911
Revenue received	\$119,185
Expenditures	\$68,643
Available balance for future years project	\$324,453




**Sonoma**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$372,757
Revenue received	\$163,427
Expenditures	\$0
Available balance for future years project	\$536,184



**Regional Parks**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$623,360
Revenue received	\$4,101,851
Expenditures	\$2,961,936
Available balance for future years project	\$1,763,275



**Windsor**

Beginning Measure M balance	\$734,134
Revenue received	\$385,892
Expenditures	\$121,477
Available balance for future years project	\$998,549

**Parks for All – Measure M has forged meaningful collaborations between Sonoma County and all nine cities. Wherever you go to relax or play in Sonoma County, you’ll find the benefits of Measure M and its partnerships.**

	MAINTENANCE, SAFETY & RECREATION	IMPROVED ACCESS	NATURAL RESOURCES
Beginning Measure M balance	\$623,360	\$1,588,264	\$2,378,674
Revenue received	\$4,101,851	\$3,866,028	\$3,132,094
Expenditures	\$2,961,936	\$4,174,104	\$3,365,861
Available balance for future years project	\$1,763,275	\$1,280,188	\$2,144,907



**SONOMA COUNTY**  
**REGIONAL PARKS**  
REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2024

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