

# 2014 Parks Department System-wide Facilities Inspection Report

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## Background and Justification

In November 2014 the Parks Director initiated a system wide inspection program. This program was designed as a way to check park facilities and specifically the built environment for public health and safety, cleanliness, attractiveness, level of maintenance and service, as well as capturing the condition of the natural and cultural resources in some of the most visited areas. The inspection team consisted of numerous Ranger IIIs and administrative staff. Two additional goals of this inspection program were to build teamwork across districts and to provide an opportunity for Parks staff to see how other districts operate and approach maintenance of the aging infrastructure of the Parks system.

Several outcomes are anticipated from this report. Inspection conditions identified in this report will aid in prioritization of identified repairs and needed infrastructure, inform staffing needs in order to accomplish repairs and on-going maintenance, provide cost savings by ordering fixtures in bulk and provide an opportunity for rangers and administrative staff to share ideas and collaborate across districts in a new way. This in-house inspection will augment the *Facilities Inspection Condition Assessments* that occur on a five-year basis and are focused on capital projects. Additionally, these inspections will provide both field and administrative staff a better understanding of the whole park system and enable a better understanding of the Parks Department brand. One potential outcome of these inspections could be a guide concerning standardizing facilities, from water fountains and shade structures to restrooms and playgrounds. Standardization has the potential to improve repair and maintenance as well as to ensure visitors know they are recreating in a San Mateo County park. Standardization can lead to efficiencies and cost savings for replacement, repairs, and ordering.

## Methods

Over the course of three months the inspection team initiated a “training” inspection day to provide all team members to agree on the inspection forms and to calibrate the metrics used. It was then determined that small inspection teams consisting of at least one ranger from the district and one outside ranger or administration staff would make a team. These teams worked diligently from November to January to coordinate schedules and inspect the entire parks system. Once inspections were completed the Student Conservation Association GIS intern input the results into a large excel spreadsheet in order to facilitate easy searching, prioritization.

## Results

Through the course of the inspections it was observed that over the years the Parks Department has experienced brand drift. Park signage and facilities vary from park to park, often based on when the specific park was integrated into the system. Table 1 shows the parks that are in need of facility repairs and needed facility objects such as signage, bear-saver trash cans, and other items to improve visitor experience while in the park. A clear pattern that has emerged from the inspection data; older parks, often over 30 years of age, are experiencing significant maintenance needs and an overall decline in facilities appearance. The oldest parks represent the greatest need of updating and repairs. This trend is easily seen in District III accounting for 25% of the identified needed repairs and additional items out of

347 inspection results. This is significantly higher than any other district. District I and District IV contain the next highest percentage of needed repairs representing 10% each.

**Table 1 San Mateo County Parks with Facility Needs or Repairs by District**

District	Park	Needed	Repair	Total
1	Coyote Point Recreation Area	0	3	3
1	Crystal Springs Regional Trail	1	6	7
1	Junipero Serra Park	7	2	9
1	San Bruno Mountain	0	14	14
2	Crystal Springs Regional Trail	5	1	6
2	Edgewood Nature Preserve	2	1	3
2	Flood Park	0	5	5
2	Huddart Park	2	10	12
3	Memorial Park	9	48	57
3	Pescadero Creek Park	3	10	13
3	Sam McDonald Park	0	17	17
4	Fitzgerald Marine Reserve	3	1	4
4	Pillar Point Bluffs	3	0	3
4	Quarry Park	2	0	2
4	Sanchez Adobe	2	5	7
4	San Pedro Valley Park	5	15	20

**Next Steps**

**Prioritize repairs and replacements:** The Parks Department will prioritize the repairs based on those that are most critical to visitor health and safety first. Some repairs will be accomplished immediately. Other repairs and improvements will be itemized for implementation in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Inform budget:** Additionally, this information will lead to improved planning for budget requests in order to bring our aging infrastructure up to 21<sup>st</sup> Century standards and clarify and establish the San Mateo County Parks Department brand.

**Develop facility standards and consistency** which reflect San Mateo County Parks brand. This builds upon the work started previously with the Parks logo, consistent kiosks, benches and picnic tables, trail signage and bear-saver trash cans for all facilities.

**Integrate into Geographical Database:** The spreadsheet created from the inspections data serves as our facilities database. This database can be further improved by adding facility locations, making it useable in the GIS geodatabase in the future. Integrating this information into the GIS database provides a way to visualize the data and to ensure that repairs are done in the most efficient manner possible, e.g. by clustering identified repairs needed based on type and proximity. Additionally, there are some simple ways to improve the data collection through emerging technology. By creating a simple digital form with an embedded map the Parks staff can collect facilities information on tablets or smartphones removing the need for data entry work while also improving the quality and integrity of the data.

Develop digital form and purchase tablets: The Student Conservation Association GIS Intern, Rachelle Hedges, produced a succinct list of updates to the inspection form. She can work with County ISD staff to develop a digital form that is simple and easy to use. If the Parks Department can secure funds for at least six tablets this process can be greatly improved for the 2015 inspections and be used for other Parks program needs within both Operations and Natural Resource Management programs.

### Recognition

This work could not have occurred without the work of the Inspection Team. The members of the inspection team are listed in Table 2. It is important to highlight the efforts of one member of this team that went above and beyond to get this project done, Ranger Mark Donigan. Ranger Donigan submitted or co-submitted over 150 inspection forms. Ranger Dinora Dunsmore-Bertoni provided the needed communication to all members of the inspection team and Rangers Mark Rogers and Jason Brien both contributed to the development of the forms. David Vasquez provided considerable insights into ADA standards and concerns while in the field. Administration staff Lucy Mendez and Ramona Arechiga rounded out the team to provide the perspective of visiting public and natural resource considerations. Ramona Arechiga prepared this summary report. Rachelle Hedges, GIS Intern, entered all the data from the paper inspection forms.

Table 2 Inspection Team Members by Parks Unit

<b>Parks District/Location</b>	<b>Team Member</b>
District I	Mark Rogers
District I	Jason Brien
District II	Dinora Dunsmore-Bertoni
District III	Mark Donigan
District IV	David Vasquez
Administration	Lucy Mendez
Administration	Ramona Arechiga