

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Serving 12,000 coastal residents

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6 October 1999

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San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Division
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

re: Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Draft Master Plan

Dear Mr. Herzberg,

The draft of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Draft Master Plan was reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Committee of the Midcoast Community Council on September 13, 1999, and by the Midcoast Community Council on September 22, 1999. About 50 people attended the two meetings in total, in addition to the members of the committee and the Council.

Following is the resolution passed unanimously by the Midcoast Community Council regarding the draft Master Plan:

Standing Committees

Parks and Recreation

Mary Hobbs, Chair

Planning and Zoning

Ric Lohman, Chair

Public Works

Joe Gore, Chair

Thank you to the County Parks and Recreation Division for its inclusion of the community in developing the Master Plan.

The Midcoast Community Council generally supports the recommendations in the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Master Plan.

It is important that discussion of some issues, and recommendations regarding their solution, be addressed in more detail in the Master Plan. We recommend that the following issues be re-addressed in more detail in the final version of the Master Plan to reflect the stated concerns of the community:

1. It is important to address parking issues in more detail in the Master Plan. The potential impact on the neighborhoods of fencing off the Reserve and charging for parking is very significant. The Council recommends that on-street parking regulations be determined, consisting of sticker parking authorizations, guest placards, posted signs, and consistent enforcement. These measures should be extended to all streets in the area, including the south end of the Reserve (Cypress St. neighborhood), the north side of the Reserve (Weinke/Juliana neighborhood) as well as the area between Highway 1 and the Visitor Center.
2. With the above controls in place, allow pedestrian access at no charge. The Reserve is the entire coastline of the Moss Beach community, and it would be unfair to the locals to block access for walks along the bluffs or along the beach.
3. Trail access issues (the Coast Trail and others in the Reserve area) need to be clarified in the Master Plan and not left undefined until the undetermined future. The Midcoast Community Council will sponsor a meeting soon to deal with trails in areas outside the main reef, and residents will be properly notified of this meeting. The County and other agencies involved with this planning should actively support the process of clarification of the trail alignment.

4. The impacts of fishing on the resources of the Reserve need to be adequately studied and identified. We encourage the County to explore the possibility of varying fishing restrictions depending on the area within the Reserve and the need for any restriction.
5. The Draft Master Plan recommends that the size of a group requiring reservations should be 4; the Midcoast Council recommends that this limit be raised to 6. The Draft Master Plan recommends that a group of 20 should be required to enter the reefs with a docent; the Council recommends that this number be lowered to 10.
6. Increased staffing, as outlined in the Master Plan, is critical to the success of the guidelines in the Master Plan. The County should place maximum priority on assuring that this staffing be made a permanent part of the management of the Reserve.
7. Allowing 300 people at a time in the Moss Beach and Frenchman's reef areas appears excessive and not backed by adequate scientific data. The Council urges the County to reconsider this number. Further, when portions of the reefs are closed to public access, the number of people allowed should be lowered commensurate with the loss of reef area.
8. If restoration of the freshwater marsh to saltwater marsh is seriously considered, study the impact of the abalone aquaculture operations in the Pillar Point Harbor on the marsh.
9. Include in the Master Plan a statement that the reef at Pillar Point would be included within the Reserve boundaries.
10. Strive to incorporate the sentiment and reasoning of the public input at the public meetings that are not reflected in these recommendations.

We appreciate the opportunity to represent the community in providing these comments to the County of San Mateo. Thank you again for working closely with us on this process. We look forward to improved protection of the invaluable resources at the Marine Reserve and the restoration of the depleted resources.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Perkovic, Chair