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MCC hosts upcoming parks forum

Representatives will highlight trail planning, management at annual event

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By Julia Reis

Trail planning, coastal erosion and future park management will be among the topics touched on at a special parks meeting next week.

The Midcoast Community Council will host its third annual Midcoast Parks Forum at 7 p.m. on April 27 at Cypress Meadows. The event brings in officials from Coastside park agencies to update residents on its current and future local endeavors.

The presenters scheduled that evening are Marlene Finley, San Mateo County parks director; Golden Gate National Recreation Area Community Planner Christine FitzGerald; Granada Community Services District Park Advisory Committee Chair Pat Tierney; and Terry Kiser, with California State Parks.

The MCC unofficially started the forum in 2013, when it held an event focused on county parks, according to Vice Chair Lisa Ketcham. The forum expanded to encompass more park agencies in 2014.

“It’s always been a hit,” Ketcham said. “People like parks. It’s a happy topic.”

Much of the discussion on county parks will focus on long-term projects according to Finley. She plans to give updates on the Green Valley Trail project, which would provide a connecting point between Gray Whale Cove State Beach and Devil’s Slide Trail, and the Portolá Trail proposal. Last year, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors authorized the formation of a Portolá Trail committee to study the creation of a trail that

would follow the route of the Portolá Expedition. In 1769, Don Gaspar de Portolá led a land expedition on behalf of the King of Spain from Baja California north. The trek led to the Spanish colonization of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Finley says the county is interested in seeing this designated as a national historic trail. It would extend from Pacifica to south of Pescadero.

“That’s something we’re beginning to look at in our county,” she said.

Finley will also speak to the department’s intent to start examining future management and use at two Midcoast parks. County Parks will begin the process of creating a master plan for Quarry Park this year, and it will re-examine its master plan for Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in light of increasing visitation.

The Pillar Point bluffs will also come up at the forum. County Parks plans to shift the blufftop trail back in some spots to address erosion caused by high surf. The department is also working with the U.S. Air Force to improve an access route near its station.

County Parks has been working with Granada Community Services District as it gets ready to take on park projects. GCSD entered into an agreement with County Parks in 2014 for maintenance of the parks and assistance in developing an annual action plan outlining planned projects.

Based on prior assessments and input from residents and GCSD’s park advisory committee, County Parks brought a draft action plan to the agency’s March board of directors meeting. If implemented, GCSD would establish trails and amenities in some El Granada medians, install more benches and picnic tables in the community and spruce up the Clipper Ridge Park basketball courts.

The action plan will likely be brought back for board approval in May, once cost estimates have been prepared for the projects according to GCSD Assistant General Manager Delia Comito.

“We’re all pretty excited. We just need to know how much it’s going to cost,” she said.

Tierney, who is a professor in San Francisco State University’s recreation, parks and tourism department, will also talk about another project the district could take on. Several residents have attended recent GCSD meetings and advocated that a bike pump track be built for Coastside cyclists. At its last meeting, GCSD’s board asked that the advisory committee study the feasibility of putting such a facility on the Avenue Cabrillo median.

“It’s great that the community can expect to see some things getting done,” Comito said.

Cypress Meadows is located at 343 Cypress Ave. in Moss Beach. Visit midcoastcommunitycouncil.org for more information.

More Information

What: Midcoast Parks Forum

Where: Cypress Meadows, Moss Beach

When: 7 p.m. on April 27

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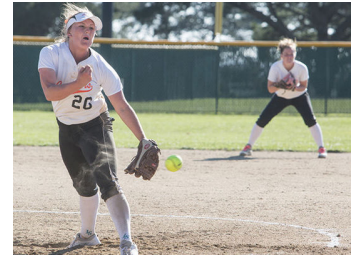
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