

Parks and Open Space FY 2009-10 Performance Plan

I. MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to educating, inspiring and engaging the people of Marin in the shared commitment of preserving, protecting and enriching the natural beauty of Marin's parks and open spaces, and providing recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all generations.

II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department of Parks and Open Space consists of two divisions: the Parks and Landscape Division and the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD).

The department is responsible for planning, acquiring, and managing the County's approximately 15,000 acres of open space and 160 miles of public trails, as well as the County's park system that includes five regional parks, eight neighborhood parks, six bike paths, and 16 landscaping areas.

Parks and Landscape Division

The Parks and Landscape Division operates and maintains over 50 separate facilities for an estimated two million visitors per year. These areas include regional and local parks, bike paths, County Service Areas (CSAs), landscape medians, playgrounds, boat ramps, beaches, sport fields, and the Civic Center campus. Staff, volunteers and seasonal staff manage these areas while providing public education and other services. County parks also host numerous public and private groups providing educational and interpretive programming for participants.

The Parks and Landscape Division includes the following programs:

- Park Planning and Administration
- Park Facilities
- Landscape Services

Marin County Open Space District Division (MCOSD)

MCOSD manages over 15,000 acres of land contained within 34 Open Space preserves. Open Space preserves differ from County parks in that they are managed primarily for resource protection. District lands represent outstanding examples of Northern California environments including oak-bay woodland, oak savannah, fresh water wetlands, salt marsh, and grasslands. The District's primary land stewardship activities include trail, fire road, and drain maintenance; vegetation management to reduce fire hazard; enforcement of the Open Space District Code; and reclamation and enhancement of native habitat. Visitors to District lands enjoy activities such as hiking, horseback riding, mountain bicycling, and nature study. The Open Space District is a special district separate from the County of Marin and does not receive operating revenues from the County's General Fund.

The Marin County Open Space District Division includes the following programs:

- Planning and Acquisition
- Capital Improvement
- Maintenance and Operations
- Resource Management
- Environmental Education
- Volunteer Program

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

III. FY 2008-09 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed a Resource Management Plan Framework
- Began development of a Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan for all Open Space District lands (Phase 1 of Resource Management Plan implementation)
- Developed and began implementation of the Encroachment Resolution Initiative to address a backlog of encroachments on Open Space District lands
- Assigned and trained a staff member to be the Department's grants specialist, to improve the department's ability to successfully compete for public and private grants
- Preserved 117 acres of ridgeland between the Nicasio and San Geronimo Valleys by means of a conservation easement
- Completed Master Plan Update for McInnis Park and a new Master Plan for Creekside Park
- Completed renovation of Village Green Park Playground, Civic Center Lagoon Park and Black Point Boat Launch Renovation Project, Phase II
- Conducted public education campaign, together with an expenditure planning process, to develop and assess feasibility of a ballot measure to provide increased funding for open space preservation, wildland fire prevention, and agricultural land conservation
- Expanded Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices to all County of Marin managed sites and worked with the IPM Commission to update IPM Ordinance and Policy
- Provided extensive fire fuel reduction and habitat restoration work at the newly acquired Black Point Nature Preserve
- Assisted the Health and Human Services Department and the Department of Public Works on the design and construction of the Health and Wellness Campus to create a pesticide free, sustainable landscape
- Completed a significant realignment of the Vedanta Trail to reduce sediment and improve stream habitat, in partnership with the National Park Service, the Vedanta Society and the Marin Conservation Corps.

IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2009-10

Goal 1: Protect and restore our lands

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

This goal is aligned with the Countywide Goal of Environmental Preservation. Good stewardship of the department's parks and open space lands is essential if they are to provide the same benefits – clean water, healthy habitats, and healthy recreational opportunities - to future generations as they do to us.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives
1. Complete Vegetation and Biodiversity Plan and begin implementation
2. Begin development of Road and Trails Management Plan to assess and improve the overall condition of road and trails
3. Begin Conservation Easement Stewardship Initiative to improve easement monitoring and to develop standard conservation easement and monitoring protocols

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

4. Resolve at least three encroachments on open space lands
5. Restore habitat at the Aramburu Nature Preserve in partnership with the Marin Audubon Society

Goal 2: Grow and link the County's system of parks, trails, and protected lands

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

This goal aligns with the Countywide Goals of Environmental Preservation and Healthy Communities. Although the Open Space District has acquired over 15,000 acres and assisted in the preservation of hundreds more, the Countywide Plan targets an additional 15,000 acres for preservation.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Continue to pursue high priority land acquisition and conservation easement projects to close gaps in the open space system
2. Continue to pursue trail easements to close gaps in the countywide trail system
3. Collaborate with trail user groups to complete trail planning projects, construction, maintenance and fund raising efforts
4. Begin management of the multi-use pathway through the Cal Park Tunnel which includes maintenance of the riding surface, opening and closing the tunnel on a daily basis, garbage cleanup and graffiti removal

Goal 3: Foster discovery, learning and stewardship

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

This goal aligns with the Countywide Goal of Community Participation. Engaging volunteers in the stewardship of open space accomplishes essential maintenance and habitat reclamation work, brings communities together and provides community members with a sense of ownership of their parks and open space. Environmental education outings, led by the District naturalist and rangers, generate greater awareness of and appreciation for the County's parks and open space lands and the work of the department.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Expand participation in the Volunteer Program through partnerships with schools and community organizations
2. Grow the Department's newly-formed naturalist docent team to expand the community benefits of the Environmental Education Program

Goal 4: Connect communities with the land for recreation and health

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

This goal aligns with the Countywide Goal of Healthy Communities. This goal is about renovating County parks, facilitating access to the County's parks and open space lands, and encouraging their use so people can get and stay healthy by enjoying the many recreational opportunities they offer.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Complete Miller Boat Launch Renovation Project – Phase II
2. Complete design development and construction documents and begin construction of Creekside Park consistent with new master plan
3. Complete design development and construction documents for McInnis Park Master Plan Update

Goal 5: Fulfill the department's financial needs

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

This goal aligns with the Countywide Goal of Financial Responsibility. The current economic climate requires the department to conduct a thorough examination of its programs, services and ways of doing business, and to make well informed organizational changes so that it can continue to provide high quality public services.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Explore department restructuring strategies and develop a long-term restructuring plan
2. Coordinate with the Marin Open Space Trust and other organizations to continue land and trail acquisition activities

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

V. KEY CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

- Current economy will continue to challenge the department to sustain current programs and levels of service
- Need to continue educating trail users, Commissioners, Board members and the general public of the need to make well informed trail decisions based on natural resource data and best resource management practices
- Three of the Parks and Open Space Commission’s nine members will be new in FY 2009-10 and will have a learning curve related to responsibilities, protocols and department projects
- Increasing the sales tax as a means of solving the State budget crisis could affect the feasibility of a parks/fire/agricultural land preservation ballot measure in November 2010
- Critical need to begin implementation of the Department’s Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan given that the Bay Area is expecting its third consecutive drought year, though only the highest priority projects will be able to move forward without a new ongoing source of funding

VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

PARK PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Objective: Complete 20 capital projects by 2013

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of parks capital project designs completed	7	3	5	4
Number of parks capital projects completed	3	8	2	1
Efficiency Measures				
Number of parks capital projects completed per full time staff member	1.5	4	1	0.5
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent of parks capital projects goal completed	15%	55%	65%	70%

Department Comments: Park Planning was focused on the McInnis Master Plan update and the Creekside Master Plan in FY 2008-09. In FY 2009-10, emphasis will shift to design development and preparation of construction documents for the full Creekside Master Plan and for Phase I of the McInnis Master Plan update. Construction will follow for these major projects in FY 2010-11.

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

OPEN SPACE PLANNING AND ACQUISITION

Objective: Complete 20 land and conservation easement acquisition projects by 2013

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number and acreage of acquisition projects completed (all methods, including fee and easement)	4	9	6	6
Acreage of acquisition projects completed	6.19	175	50	104
Efficiency Measures				
Average cost per acre acquired	\$0	\$800	\$400	\$400
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent of total acreage targeted for preservation that has been preserved	51.71%	52.29%	52.46%	52.80%

Department Comments: The Department has no funding of its own to contribute to land preservation projects. Without an additional, ongoing and reliable source of funding, the Department cannot have a robust land acquisition program.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Objective: Ensure resident satisfaction with parks and open space

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of open space acres maintained	15,513	15,513	15,563	15,620
Number of parks acres maintained	852	916	916	921
Efficiency Measures				
Marin County Open Space District cost per resident served	n/a	\$17.19	\$17.97	\$17.97
Parks cost per resident served	\$16.55	\$17.51	\$17.42	\$17.42
Effectiveness Measures				

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Percentage of community survey respondents indicating they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with acquiring, restoring, and maintaining additional open space	n/a	78%	78%	78%
Percentage of community survey respondents indicating they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with maintaining facilities at County parks	n/a	86%	86%	86%

Department Comments: The biennial County community survey provides a general indication of resident satisfaction with Parks and Open Space services. Customer satisfaction is an indicator of how well the department is maintaining its lands and serving visitors.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Objective: Reduce total acreage of target exotic and invasive species

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Acres treated to control targeted non-native species (all treatment methods)	75	85	85	85
Efficiency Measures				
Cost per acre to control targeted non-native species	\$975	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Effectiveness Measures				
Acres treated where targeted species were effectively controlled	4%	5%	5%	5%

Department Comments: Acreage treated is limited by staff size and resources.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Objective: Increase the number of volunteer hours and work performed in parks and open space

**Parks and Open Space
FY 2009-10 Performance Plan**

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of volunteer hours worked in Parks and Open Space	15,455	22,000	23,000	26,000
Efficiency Measures				
Value of work performed by volunteers	\$314,460	\$447,920	\$468,280	\$571,220
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent change in number of volunteer hours worked per year	n/a	42.4%	4.5%	13%

Department Comments: Value of work is based on a rate of \$21.97/hour from the “Independent Sector” website (http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html#bottom). The California hourly rate has been used to calculate the value of work performed since this performance measure was developed.