



Action Alert: Santa Clara County Parks

March 24, 2011

Dear Friend,

Next Tuesday morning, March 29, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors will consider a proposed update of the 1993 Acquisition Plan for the County Parks Department. There are ways the update could be improved, but equally important is preserving the mission of County Parks Department as **providing regional-level parks and trails**, instead of trying to imitate the cities' role in providing street-corner "neighborhood or pocket parks". **Please email or write to the Board of Supervisors and ask them to approve the staff proposal, to increase the emphasis on acquiring natural habitats, and to reject any proposal to drop "regionality" as the central concern of County acquisitions.**

What's Happening

The planning document for determining where parks and trails should be acquired is nearly 20 years old and in need of revision. **Both the County General Plan and the new update emphasize the concept that new acquisitions should serve regional needs**, while projects that just serve residents of a city should be provided by city governments. Because of this policy over the years, County Parks has partially constructed an "Emerald Necklace" of public parks on the outskirts of city limits that serve people from nearby cities and further away. It has also assisted or purchased regionally significant parks and trails within city limits that attract people from across the County.

A document circulated earlier this month by **two County supervisors suggested dropping the "regional" criterion from the plan and emphasized the need to serve areas of cities that are park deficient**. While it is somewhat unclear what could happen with this proposal, one possible implication is that if an area is park deficient, then any size park serving just that particular area could be acquired by County Parks.

Why this is Important

While park-deficient areas need neighborhood or pocket parks, that is not the job that the County can or should do well. Regionally attractive parks and trails tend to be larger, have more natural environmental values, build broader public support for the environment, and can be located within city limits. **We encourage locating regional parks and trails in park-deficient areas, but do not agree with a redefinition of any acquisition as being something the County Parks Department should do**. Our position also matches the public support for the County Parks Charter fund over the years, and multiple meetings held by the County Parks Department as it developed its plan.

What you can do

Email or write to the Board of Supervisors, or better yet, come to their meeting on Tuesday, March 29 at 9 a.m., at 70 West Hedding Street in San Jose. Ask them to **approve the staff proposal for the acquisition plan, increase the emphasis on acquiring natural habitats, and reject dropping "regionality"** as a criterion for parks.

Please email the County Supervisors and County Parks Department (just copy and paste the emails below):

mike.wasserman@bos.sccgov.org;

queta.herrera@bos.sccgov.org;

dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org;

ken.yeager@bos.sccgov.org;

liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org;

parkinfo@prk.sccgov.org

To learn more:

[Parks Acquisition Plan](#)

[County Supervisors Agenda](#) (See Item 15)

Thanks for speaking up! Your voice does make a difference!

- The folks at [Committee for Green Foothills](#)