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For Immediate Release

San Mateo County to Reopen Some Parks May 4; Visitor Compliance Required

Redwood City – The San Mateo County Parks Department will reopen trails in 13 of its 23 parks on Monday, May 4, after being closed since March 27.

Visitors will be required to hike single file on narrow trails, keep six feet apart from others, not congregate with people who aren't from their household, and carry face coverings.

“We are eager to welcome visitors back to San Mateo County Parks and for them to experience the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors and on the trails,” said Parks Director Nicholas Calderon. “During this time, it’s critical that park users follow the new rules developed to prevent overcrowding, discourage gatherings and that support social distancing. Let’s work together to ensure that parks are safe environments for everyone.”

The 13 parks that will open are located throughout the county and near heavily populated areas where walk-in access is possible. Some of the peninsula’s most popular parks are slated to open on Monday, including Edgewood, Huddart, Wunderlich, San Pedro Valley, Quarry, Pillar Point Bluff, San Bruno Mountain, Junipero Serra Park, and Pescadero Creek. The segment of the Bay Trail that goes through Coyote Point Recreation Area will be accessible, but the park will remain closed. Ralston Bike Trail, which crosses over Highway 280 and connects bicyclist to Canada Road, will also reopen.

Playgrounds, picnic areas, campgrounds, fields, visitor centers, and some restrooms and parking lots will remain closed.

To prevent the congestion on trails and in parking areas that occurred last month prior to park closures, the department will convert some single-track trails to one-direction routes, open a limited number of parking lots, prohibit road parking, and keep some trails closed to bikes. Dogs must be on leash in parks and trails where dog walking is allowed.

Crystal Springs Regional Trail will also reopen, but only to foot traffic for now. Bicycles won’t be allowed on the 15-mile trail that can be packed with hikers, joggers, skaters and parents pushing strollers any day of the week and especially on weekend and holidays when weather is good. The trail sees more than 650,000 people annually. “We’re asking bike riders to wait a little longer. It’s one of those difficult decisions we have to make as we work to meet the public’s needs and provide a safe outdoor experience during a very

unusual time,” acknowledged Calderon, who is an avid cyclist. Park staff will be stationed along the trail to prevent bicycle entry and to remind visitors to maintain social distancing.

The department will work towards opening additional parks in phases and based on factors that include visitor compliance with rules, the department’s ability to secure adequate cleaning and protective supplies for staff, and orders issued by the county’s health officer. During each phase, the department will monitor trail use through data collected on trail counters, staff observations, and visitor reports.

Beginning May 4, parks will open 8 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. daily. For a complete list of parks, parking lots, and restrooms scheduled to open May 4, visit SMCoParks.org

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