



Monterey County

Parks Commission

Agenda Item #4

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- a. Receive Background Report of the Toro Park Trails Inventory;
- b. Receive Status Report on the efforts to establish a Toro Park Trails Task Force.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission:

- a. Receive Background Report of the Toro Park Trails Inventory;
- b. Receive Status Report on the efforts to establish a Toro Park Trails Task Force.

SUMMARY:

At the April 5th, 2018 Parks Commission meeting, RMA-Parks Department presented the Parks Commission with a framework for addressing the issues and opportunities associated with the Toro Park's trails and to return to your Commission with a draft of the Toro Trails Inventory, in addition to providing more information regarding the proposed establishment of a Toro Trails Task Force. The Task Force would consist of solution-oriented members of the public to assist the RMA-Parks with its goal to implement a sustainable trail system focusing on usability for all, safety, maintenance, enforcement and ecological design.

DISCUSSION:

County RMA-Parks staff has developed the trails inventory showing both authorized and unauthorized trails using several available resources recognized as sources of data. These resources include:

- The Toro Park map developed by Steve Chidester (1986) (**Attachment A**).
- The current Toro Trails Plan, which has been revised several times, the recent revision is dated Oct. 30, 2009 (**Attachment B**).
- Trail mapping and related material and information provided by the members of the original Trails Working Group (**Attachment C**).
- Fire breaks and emergency service routes provided by Monterey County Regional Fire District (**Attachment D**).
- GIS developed trails plan provided by Professor Fred Watson, CSUMB, GIS Mapping (**Attachment E**).
- Inventory of all known existing gates, service roads or points of entry via unauthorized openings in the perimeter fencing.
- County GIS information, aerials, and Google Earth imagery (1998 - 2018).

Toro Park trail users still use the Toro Trails Plan revised in Oct. 2009. However, the map does not represent the full network of existing trails, some of which were implemented illegally and without a

formal approval process or are considered “deer paths” or “cattle trails” that have, over time, evolved into recognized routes and became part of the trail system.

In 2016, a Toro Trails Working Group was formed with the intent of involving willing community members familiar with the trails at Toro Park and who were experienced trail users. The working group began to address the planning, design, development and stewardship of the trails, as well as map all known existing trails in a greater detail as well as provide associated trail profile information (**Attachment F**).

In addition to mapping all the known existing trails, the working group identified several items requiring further research and consideration:

- Several existing trails do not appear on the Toro Park Trail Map currently in use, yet have names associated, which make it appear that they are authorized or approved to be a part of the trail system.
- There are trails leading into and out of surrounding private properties, or developed subdivisions providing unauthorized access to and from the park
- Sections of unauthorized trail work was done resulting in removal of (native) vegetation that has led to accelerated erosion.
- Some trails have started out as informal cut-through access areas, deer paths or cattle trails.
- Some trails cross over the park property line, providing access to and from private properties.
- It's not always clear what trails are where due to the lack of trail signage.
- There are erosion issues on many of the trails.
- Trails have become unusable because of the lack of maintenance and overgrown vegetation.
- Fences have fallen or have been cut allowing access into areas that may be required to be off-limits.
- There are user conflicts between biking trails and designated hikers-only trails.
- The Cattle Grazing Lease at Toro had expired and a new, sustainable lease, with identified areas to graze is currently being developed, using the one developed by BSLT for Mark's Ranch.

Using the County generated trails map and with the information developed to date, Staff envisions the next steps entail verifying (truthing) the trails in the field, reviewing the requirements placed on surrounding developments, utilizing the material previously developed by the former working group, and documenting other issues, opportunities or constraints.


On April 11, 2018, Cam Sanchez, Interim Chief of Parks, sent a letter (**Attachment G**) to the former Toro Trails Working Group and other interested parties of the community notifying them of the RMA's intent to re-establish a working group to assist RMA-Parks staff with the Toro Park trails project. The purpose of the new group, hereinafter referred to as “Task Force” is to continue the work of the former working group to develop and bring forth recommendations based on specific objectives following an approval process before any implementation or changes are made to the trails.

With RMA-Park's staff direction, some of the Task Force objectives will include defining trails assessment criteria including technical data for 'truthing' all the trails both authorized and unauthorized,

developing trail design guidelines and standards, creating a list of trails recommended to be authorized, removed, and restored, and organizing and recruiting trail volunteer work crews and patrol groups to assist with the restoration, removal, and enforcement of the trails.

The Task Force will consist of community members representing various recreational user groups such as hikers, mountain bikers, cross country runners, and equestrians. RMA will also be requesting a representative from the Big Sur Land Trust and District 5 Supervisor Mary Adam's office to join the Task Force. The intent is to select one community member from each user group to retain a manageable size of participants. In addition to the Task Force members, other agencies will be invited to attend the Task Force meetings for technical expertise on an "as needed basis. Examples of these agencies include Monterey County Regional Fire, Monterey County Counsel, and California State University at Monterey Bay to name a few.

RMA-Parks is asking those interested in being part of the Task Force to send a letter of interest via email to the Administrative Parks Operations Manager, Sarah Trueblood at truebloods@co.monterey.ca.us <<mailto:truebloods@co.monterey.ca.us>> by Monday, May 21, 2018. RMA expects to have the Task Force members selected by June 30, 2018. It's anticipated that the Task Force will meet monthly at 1441 Schilling Place, Salinas, 93901, in addition to some meetings on site at Toro Park. The RMA-Parks Department will provide regular updates and status reports on the activities of the Task Force to the Park Commission to ensure transparency on the process.

Prepared by:  Sarah Trueblood, Parks Operations Manager; John Akeman, Parks Planning Manager

Reviewed by: Camerino Sanchez, Acting RMA Chief of Parks

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, Resources Management Agency Director 

Attachments:

Attachment A - The Toro Park map developed by Steve Chidester (1986)

Attachment B - The current Toro Trails Plan, last revision is dated Oct. 30, 2009

Attachment C - Trail mapping and related material and information provided by the members of the former Trails Working Group

Attachment D - Fire breaks and emergency service routes provided by Monterey County Regional Fire District

Attachment E - GIS developed trails plan provided by Professor Fred Watson, CSUMB

Attachment F - Toro Park Trails Inventory Map (*DRAFT - This is a working document and is not intended for publication for public use*)

Attachment G - Letter to the former Toro Park Trails Working Group dated April 11, 2009