



Memorandum

**TO: PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION**

FROM: Mike Will

SUBJECT: PARK RANGER REPORT

DATE: January 29, 2019

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) accept the Park Ranger Report.

OUTCOME

The PRC will be updated on the status of the Park Ranger Program.

BACKGROUND

On February 7, 2018 Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS) provided the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) with a report on the Park Ranger program. The report provided updates status of the current program with respect to deployment of existing staff, hiring results, and emerging trends to protect and preserve the City's park lands, watersheds, and open spaces. Within the report PRNS outlined the status of the of the Watershed Protection Team to enforce no trespassing, no camping and environmental protection laws along the Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek Watersheds, including the portions of the Los Gatos Creek adjacent to the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The Watershed Protection Team is a collaboration with Santa Clara Valley Water District, Housing, and Environmental Services with PRNS funding two full time Park Rangers and the District funding two full time Park Rangers on a five year, renewable contract. Today's report will provide PRC with an update on status of the Park Ranger program, the status of the Park Ranger Working Group, volunteer support, and the current reorganization of the Park Ranger program and the implementation of the citywide deployment plan.

PARK RANGER WORKING GROUP

On March 15, 2018, PRNS presented the 2017 Park Ranger Program Annual Report¹ to the Public Safety, Finance & Strategic Support Committee. The update included information about program highlights, Watershed Protection Team activities, St. James Park patrols, resource successes, staffing retention challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Following the presentation, the Committee and community members raised concerns about the safety of Park Rangers as they perform their regular duties, and specifically as those duties relate to homeless encampments in parks and creeks.

To address these concerns, the Committee directed the Administration to cross-reference the Park Ranger Program Annual Report to the full City Council. PRNS presented a Supplemental Memorandum² to the Park Ranger Program Annual Report at the April 17, 2018 City Council meeting and recommended approval of a Park Ranger Program Working Group. The purpose of the group was to review and evaluate the current Park Ranger Program service delivery model and current work practices with the goal of formulating recommendations to be considered by the Director of PRNS. In addition, staff recommended that PRNS be directed to return to the Committee in late fall of 2018 with a report on the outcomes of the working group. In accordance with the City Council's direction, the Park Ranger Program Working Group was created and began meeting on May 31, 2018. The Working Group is a collaboration between City departments, agencies, and community members, including participants from PRNS,

San José Park Rangers, San José Police Department, San José Fire Department, Housing Department, Environmental Services Department, Human Resources Department, Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, Parks and Recreation Commission, Office of the District Attorney, Santa Clara Valley Water District, NAACP – San José Chapter, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, Friends of Los Gatos Creek, South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition, Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, and West Valley College – Park Management Program.

The Park Ranger Program Working Group convened eight meetings wherein participants worked through facilitated discussions to clarify the main roles of a San José Park Ranger and define the types and levels of service needed in creeks, neighborhood parks, regional parks, and trails. The group worked together to identify ways to eliminate or reduce the threat of personal danger from each of the following categories: 1) Public Safety – wildland fire suppression and patrol, emergency medical response, enforcing park rules, issuing citations, arresting individuals, encampment abatement, and creek patrol and enforcement; 2) Visitor Services – educating park users, providing health and human services, and developing and developing and conducting interpretive programs; and, 3) Resource Management – maintenance of natural environments, including maintaining hiking trails, wildland fire prevention activities, lake water testing, etc. Based on the information discussed through the Working Group, the following recommendations were made to City Council:

¹ The 2017 Park Ranger Program Annual Report may be viewed at http://sanjose.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?meta_id=622139

² The April 17, 2018 Supplemental Memorandum to the 2017 Park Ranger Annual Report can be viewed at <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6195061&GUID=B047744E-2FBE-4D67-9D9D-4D76988CA190>

- A. Accept the Park Ranger Program Status report and direct the City Manager to add Saturdays/ weekend hours to the Joint Patrols routine, or at least to SJPD-only patrols in the creeks; and
- B. Return to Council during the Budget process to discuss and determine whether to shift Joint Patrols out of voluntary assignment via Secondary Employment Unit, and into standard patrol.

City Council is scheduled to discuss this report on January 29, 2019.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Park Rangers continue to work closely with a number of volunteer, community and educational institutions to make park and resource improvements within City of San José parks and open spaces. Improvements have included trail work at Alum Rock Park, the removal of 183 tons of trash from the Coyote Creek (compared to 24 tons in 2017), and the provision of interpretive and docent services in Kelley Park and the Japanese Friendship Gardens. Volunteers have also been building and donating benches and fencing in a number of regional and neighborhood parks. Volunteers from West Valley College Park Management and Archeology programs continued to work on the historic structure exposed by the Lariat Fire. The project has elicited positive media coverage and through the media exposure project staff were contacted by the Lundy family, the historical owners of the structure. Under the direction of Andrew Kindon PhD, Chair of the Anthropology Department of West Valley College, students are continuing to conduct historic research, including interviews with the Lundy family and curating collected items to be returned to the park for future interpretive use.

The chart below shows the volume of volunteer activity that Park Rangers support at the various regional parks. Park Ranger supported volunteer activities have contributed over \$54,000 of service to PRNS.

Park	Number of Vol.	Number of Hours	Value³
Almaden Lake Park	11	37.5	\$1,090.88
Alum Rock Park	211	76.0	\$2,210.84
Kelley Park	134	413.0	\$12,014.17
Overfelt Gardens	4	175.0	\$5,090.75
Emma Prusch Farm Park	13	36.0	\$1,047.24
Watershed Protection	220	1,120.0	\$32,580.80
TOTALS	593	1,857.5	\$54,034.68

³ Value is calculated at \$29.09 per hour by the Independent Sector, a national non-profit policy and advocacy organization for volunteer activities.

PARK RANGER REORGANIZATION AND STAFFING LEVELS

In July of 2018, the Park Ranger Program implemented a citywide deployment model. Except for Alum Rock Park, Park Rangers are no longer assigned to a specific park or assignment. Full time Park Rangers now report to an assignment based on park activity and staffing levels. Alum Rock Park, due to its remote location and unique issues, has one fixed-post ranger that is rotated every 6 months. Other rangers may be assigned to directly report to a specific park for their shift or they may be assigned to a patrol a route and check on multiple parks.

With the new the deployment model there is no longer a dedicated Watershed Protection Team. Watershed patrol is now handled by Park Rangers assigned to the task, in cooperation with the San José Police Department. The Department has a target of three joint watershed patrol days per week.

In fiscal year 2018-2019, the Park Ranger program is currently budgeted for 14 full time peace officer Park Rangers, 4 Senior Park Rangers, and 2 Supervising Park Rangers, for a total of 20 full time peace officer Park Rangers. 19 of the full time positions are supported by the General Fund and one position is funded through the St. James Park Management District Fund, with two of the General Fund positions being funded by the Santa Clara Valley Water District. In addition, the department funds three 0.75 full time equivalent (FTE) benefited positions and has 3.34 FTE for un-benefited, part time non-sworn Park Rangers.

Currently the department has filled the two Supervising Park Ranger positions, the four Senior Park Ranger positions and six full time Park Ranger positions, leaving 8 vacant full time positions. Of the three 0.75 FTE benefited positions, there is one vacancy.

The department has been actively recruiting and testing for new Park Ranger candidates and has developed a good pipeline for hiring. Currently, the department has one lateral candidate scheduled to start field training in March 2019, and one academy graduate in the conditional job offer phase. There are also two recruit candidates in the final background check phase, and five recruit candidates beginning their background check process.

PARK RANGER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND HONORS

During 2018, the Park Ranger program responded to numerous public safety events, including 104 medical events, 30 wildland fires, and 22 search and rescue events. For comparison, in 2017 park rangers responded to 139 medical events, 14 wildland fires, and 14 search and rescue events.

Park Rangers also provided 14 interpretive programs with over 950 participants, up from 811 participants in 2017. Programs ranged from guided night hikes to Haiku Readings and Plein Air Art for Children. Many programs involved support from partners, including Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Happy Hollow Park and Zoo, the San Jose Astronomical Association, and others. New this year was an overnight program in the Japanese Friendship Garden. Alum Rock Park Rangers also partnered with the Youth Science Institute for the 33rd Annual Wildlife Festival with an estimated attendance of 1,950 visitors for the day's activities.

PARK RANGER PROGRAM 2019 WORK PLAN

The memorandum entitled *Park Ranger Program Status Report* will be presented to City Council on January 29, 2019. Staff anticipates that Council will provide direction and guidance on how to continue to operate the Park Ranger Program. Based on that direction, PRNS will develop the 2019 Park Ranger work plan. PRNS anticipates that the work plan may include:

Recruitment: PRNS will continue to recruit and hire for the vacant Park Ranger positions. Recruitment staff will continue to work with the Human Resources Department to actively pursue new eligible candidates.

Training and Safety: Park Rangers will continue to receive updates and refresher training on topics such as arrest control techniques; laws of arrest, search and seizure, driving, natural and historical interpretation; and emergency medical response. PRNS will also evaluate the use of the current ranger academy located at the Santa Rosa Junior College Public Safety Training Center. Alternatives to be considered may be the San Jose Police Academy, and a new Park Ranger academy being developed at West Valley College.

Distribution of the Park Ranger Duty Manual: The existing manual was created in the 1980 and last updated in the mid 1990s. The Department has contracted with a recognized risk management firm to develop a modern and comprehensive manual for the program. Review and distribution is anticipated to be completed within the next few months.

/s/

Mike Will
Division Manager, Parks Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Justin Long, Deputy Director, at (408) 793-5579



SAN JOSE
**PARKS, RECREATION &
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES**

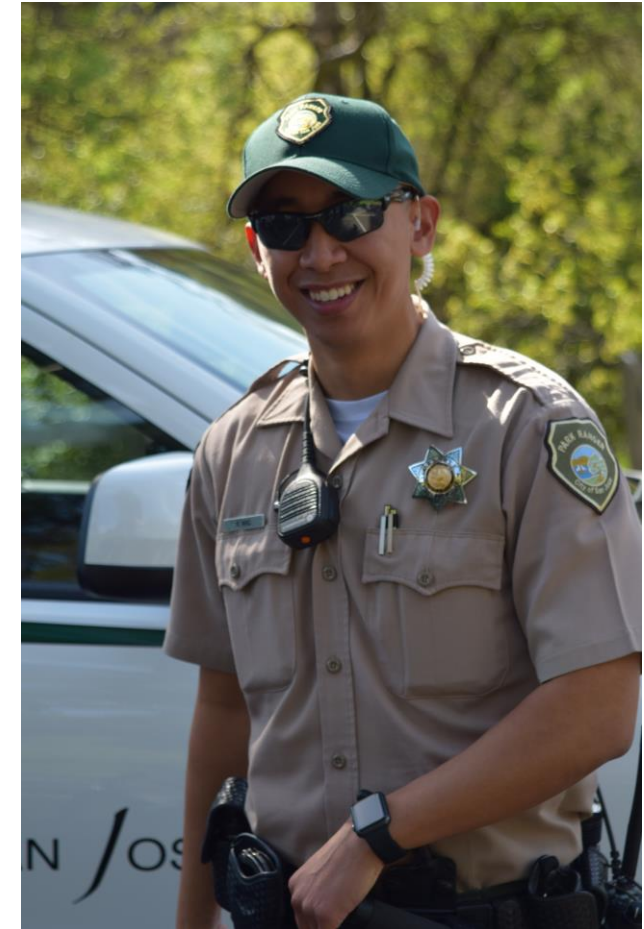
PARK RANGER PROGRAM

City of San José
Parks and Recreation Commission
February 6, 2019

Park Ranger Program

Mission Statement

The mission of the Park Ranger Program is to provide a safe, enjoyable park experience by protecting and educating the public; by providing recreational opportunities; and by protecting, preserving, and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the City's parks, trails and open spaces.



Park Ranger Program

Park Ranger Working Group

- Concerns raised about Ranger Safety
- Public Safety Finance & Strategic Support Committee (PSFSS)
Created the Park Ranger Working Group
 - Review and evaluate current Ranger service delivery
 - Make recommendation to PRNS Director
- Recommendation to the Committee:
 - Develop a plan for creating a Parks PD Unit for
 - Explore the expanded use of Secondary Employment Unit Police Officers to support Park Rangers when engaged in law enforcement activities related to homeless encampments

Park Ranger Program

2018 Volunteer Activities:

- Eagle Scout Projects
- Creek Clean-ups
- Docent Programs
- Trail Days
- Archeological Research and Preservation



Park Ranger Program

Park Ranger Reorganization and Staffing levels

- Citywide Deployment Model
- Joint Patrol Encampment Abatement
- Staffing
 - 2 Supervising Park Rangers – filled
 - 4 Senior Park Rangers - filled
 - 14 Full Time Park Rangers – 6 filled, 8 vacant
 - 3 Part Time Benefitted Park Rangers – 2 filled, 1 vacant
 - 3.34 Full Time Equivalent Part Time Un-benefitted Park Rangers – 13 people

Park Ranger Program

Park Ranger Program Highlights and Honors

- Public Safety Stats:
 - 104 Medical Events
 - 30 Wildfires
 - 22 Search and Rescue Events
- Interpretation – 14 programs with 950 Participants

Park Ranger Program

Historical Donations

- Ward Family Archive
 - Alum Rock Park from the Depression through WW2
- Lundy Family History
 - Archeological Site



Park Ranger Program

2019 Work Plan

- Outcomes from January 29, 2018 Council Meeting on *Park Ranger Program Status Report*
- Recruitment
- Training
- Park Ranger Duty Manual