



DATE: October 22, 2015

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

FROM: Stephen E. Abbors

THROUGH: Assistant General Managers and Department Managers

SUBJECT: Diversity Program

This memorandum with addendums serves to describe the District's Diversity Program for the Board. The Diversity Program aims to increase awareness and inclusion of the diverse needs, desires, and perspectives of the larger community. Diversity in this discussion is inclusive and encompasses areas such as ethnic background, socio-economics, age, open space awareness, and preserve user groups.

Listed below are the top four new opportunities to consider as the Board reflects on the District's Diversity Program for Fiscal Year 2016-17. The four focus areas capture many of the new future opportunities that were originally brainstormed and listed in Addendum 1.

VISITOR USAGE SURVEY - Recommend commissioning a professional field study to set a benchmark of current preserve usage that includes demographic information such as: age, ethnic background, residency, barriers to entry (i.e. parking, transportation), specific usage (i.e. hiking, nature study, cycling). Participation would be voluntary and highly encouraged. This benchmark is critical to develop target goals and track performance measures. At this time, we can only rely on anecdotal information.

COOLEY LANDING EDUCATION CENTER - Recommend expanding the District's partnership role with the City of East Palo Alto to either actively find a suitable operator or fully take on the day-to-day operations of the Cooley Landing Education Center. Latter approach would require additional staffing – same staff could address the next item below.

EXPANSION OF VISITOR SERVICES DIVISION - Recommend expanding the District's interpretive programming by supplementing the volunteer/docent program with initially an additional full time staff (1 FTE) to lead school programs, a mobile/additional visitor center, and expand/manage outside partnerships. In subsequent years, recommend adding 2 year-round internship positions to support this program. Current staff dedicated to managing the volunteer and docent programs have no capacity to expand the interpretive program.

BOARD POLICY - Recommend the Board consider whether development of a Board Policy on the Value of Diversity is warranted at this time.

ADDENDUM 1 (Potential Future Opportunities)

Outreach Activities

- Intensify outreach efforts to specific geographic areas with high potential return:
 - East Palo Alto/Belle Haven community of Menlo Park – pursue opportunities for the District to work with health care providers, gang prevention/after school programs, youth development and safety programs.
 - Rancho San Antonio – take advantage of high visitation and high diversity to expand programming, interpretation, and awareness; work with Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition to promote safe bicycle routes to the preserve.
 - North Fair Oaks section of Redwood City – partner with existing organizations like Siena Youth Center to develop healthy habits and create access for low-income youth.
- Promote the District to new government agencies.
- Host more events similar to the Founders Day Event on a smaller scale as open house events.
- Publicize events on an ongoing basis, especially on social media– geocaching, scavenger hunts
- Increase social media use with pictures (Pinterest and Instagram)
- Partner with other park and open space agencies on Latino collaboration project to fund two dedicated outreach positions within Latino Outdoor focusing on South Bay and Peninsula region.
- Participate in 2016 Open Roads/New America Media collaboration to incorporate ethnic programs and cultural events focused on outdoor recreation as part of the NBC program.

Partnerships

- Expand current partnerships:
 - Work with Acterra and CCCs to expand youth employment as part of ongoing projects (e.g. Hendrys Creek restoration project, volunteer projects, etc.)
 - Expand Deer Hollow Farm partnership - increase funding and/or docent resources to increase programs/ transportation assistance
 - Expand partnership with Committee for Green Foothills to bring diverse families on docent-led hikes
 - Continue to diversify the volunteer and docent programs, recruiting new participants with diverse interests, language skills, and backgrounds
 - Provide \ introductory programs for adults, families and youth who are new to open space.
 - Continue partnerships with the Native American community in planning and implementation of the Mount Umunhum site improvements for public access, recreation, interpretation and stewardship. Outreach again to the Muwekma Tribe as interpretive plans are developed.
- Establish new, non-traditional partnerships:
 - Attend town and community events not attended before – including faith-based events, non-profit events (San Mateo County Gardeners Association, Boys & Girls Clubs)
 - Establish new partnerships with educational programs such as Vida Verde
 - Engage with retail vendors, such as REI, Dick’s Sporting Goods, etc., to promote the District.
 - Create a grant program to fund community based programs that increase diverse outreach.
 - Engage with Community NGOs that have cultural membership, experience and expertise in working within their socio-cultural groups (e.g. Black Leadership Kitchen Cabinet, Asian American for Community Involvement, La Raza Roundtable groups in Santa Clara County)

Public Access Projects

- Expand the District's partnership with the City of East Palo Alto on operations of the Cooley Landing Education Center.
- Engage the East Palo Alto and Belle Haven communities in future public meetings on the Bay Trail project (e.g. potential joint onsite PNR Committee/City Planning Commission meeting).

Employee Training

- Schedule Diversity/Cultural Awareness and Humility Training for all staff
- Leverage partnership opportunities with Santa Clara County and San Mateo County, which already provide Cultural Competency programs, training and outreach.

Recruitment Methods

- Create a more intensive internship program that recruits at different levels: high school, college, and master's programs; establish an internal youth corps program and partner with local youth programs to bring high school and early college students to work seasonally for the District (field maintenance, public outreach, social media) - potential opportunity to work with La Puente del Sur located in Pescadero to bring coastside youth into the environmental field through paid internships/seasonal employment.
- Use outreach events to advertise District jobs/functions – equipment operators, biologists, etc.
- Establish both Seasonal Ranger and Ranger Aide positions to encourage careers in Operations.
- Seek or develop leadership academy for entry level staff and first time supervisors.
- Promote leadership programs and trainings, with strong encouragement to women and people of color to apply for opportunities.
- Attend local school/college job fairs/career days - partner with wildlife organizations to package programs on conservation and associated careers. Partner with local school districts to provide information to guidance counselors/career planning programs.
- Add bilingual skills as highly desirable as part of job announcements, where appropriate.
- Develop a recruitment plan with goals.
- Play Midpen videos at movie nights in local communities, as previews to movies at theatres, and at outreach events.
- Remove applicant names and names of academic institutions when reviewing applications.

Board Policy on Diversity

Staff researched numerous partner and government agencies to learn about best practices related to diversity policies. If directed by the Board, staff would consider incorporating the following principles:

- Recognition of the District's diverse community.
- Appreciation of the value that diversity brings to the organization.
- Importance of communicating the value of diversity at all levels of the organization.
- Commitment to involve the many cultures, ethnicities, and races in District activities and programs through outreach.
- Common set of principles based on fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, acceptance of responsibilities, commitment to equality, and dedication to expanding opportunities for all.
- Responsibility to face challenges and seize opportunities created by diversity.
- Fostering of relationships, respect, and understanding between diverse groups.
- Providing opportunities for staff and the Board to become more aware about diversity.
Greater representation and participation of diverse populations at all levels of the District organization and community life.

ADDENDUM 2 (Current and Past Activities)

This addendum provides a comprehensive list of the District's diversity outreach actions over the past two years to bring people of diverse backgrounds to District Preserves and engage them to participate in day-to-day District work. This list includes outreach activities, partnerships, public access projects, employee training, and recruitment methods.

Outreach Activities

Current

- Participating in two (2) health promotion events for Latino populations – Sana Sana, an initiative of San Mateo County's Healthy Latino Collaborative and the North Fair Oaks Bike Rodeo.
- Participating in Cupertino's Diwali Festival, a community event for Hindus.
- Latino Outdoors Partnership Program – two Spanish speaking hikes in partnership with Whisman School District; staff and docent training on interacting with Latinos in Open Space Preserves.
- Collaborating with Santa Clara Valley Audubon to offer pilot high school program called RAILS, "Research, Advocacy, Identification, Leadership, and Stewardship", to explore skills that will help students excel in higher education and careers in biology, field ecology and environmental education – included a field day for 5 students at Bear Creek Redwoods with District staff and docent.

Past

Youth Outreach

- 3 park management internship projects in 2014 (two were interpretation internships).
- 5 Eagle Scout projects in 2014; one in 2013.
- 2 Girl Scout Gold Award projects.
- Welcomed 1,211 children to the Daniels Nature Center in 2014.
- *Spaces & Species* school program: field trips to 785 students (3rd – 5th grades) in 2014 and 823 in 2013– of 32 classes that participated in 2014, 9 received transportation funding assistance.
- An additional 2,200 elementary school students participated in nature discovery education at three different District preserves in partnership with Environmental Volunteers.
- Hosted annual Wingding Family Fest at Skyline Ridge: 2014 - 400 attendees, 2013 - 300 attendees.
- Discussed environmental careers at the Saratoga High School Career Day.
- 14 media stories targeted to families and youth.
- Presentations to the Mountain View Youth Commission, the San Mateo County Youth Commission (Environmental Committee) and outreach to green clubs at high schools and colleges.
- Partnership with College Track, a nonprofit that helps youth apply to and stay in college.
- New chicken coop at Deer Hollow Farm – important for youth engagement and learning.

Ethnic/Racial Diversity Outreach

- Launched Walk-with-a-Doc program, hosting 2 walks led by bilingual physician volunteers.
- Entered into new partnership with Latino Outdoors to lead Spanish-language hikes and provide cultural diversity training to staff and volunteer.
- Led 2 Spanish-language hikes and 2 classroom activities for English learners in 2014.
- Held 2 Spanish-speaking docent-led interpretive hikes in honor of Spanish Heritage Month in 2013 and 2014.
- Held African American History Month celebration at Ravenswood OSP in 2013 and 2014; over 120 guests, including 50 children in 2014.
- 9 media stories targeted to diverse audiences.

- Participated in Soul Stroll for health, a large-scale health event targeting African Americans.
- Participated in more events that target Asian immigrants and families of diverse income levels.
- Worked with the City of East Palo Alto on the design and future programming of the new Education Center at Cooley Landing.
- Worked with multiple agencies and jurisdictions on the conceptual design of the Ravenswood Bay trail connection project.
- Translation of “Explore your Backyard” general brochure into Chinese, Korean, and Spanish.
- 2 Spanish, 1 Mandarin radio/tv programs highlighting Midpen trails and preserves.
- Partnership with New America Media to expand outreach to diverse communities.
- Luncheon for ethnic media leaders at Picchetti Ranch OSP.

Broad Outreach

- Two 12-week ad card program on Caltrain and SamTrans buses to reach out to large audiences.
- Hosted Founders Day with estimated 600 attendees representing many communities.
- Open Space Vision Plan – with multiple public workshops across entire District jurisdiction, online Mindmixer interactive site, focus group meetings, stakeholder questionnaires.

Partnerships

Current

- Collaborating with Chief Valentin Lopez and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band on the design and implementation of the interpretive elements at Mount Umunhum summit to recognize and celebrate the significance of their place of origin and history on the mountain top.
- Working with Save the Redwoods League to provide pilot program that brings high school students to redwood forests to understand redwood ecology and climate change impacts through hands-on citizen science activities. Will begin November 2015 at Purisima Creek Redwoods OSP with 2 classes from Woodside HS in Redwood City - student diversity 59% Hispanic, and 49% of school population on free-lunch program; and 2 classes from Menlo-Atherton HS, in Menlo Park - student diversity 43% Hispanic, and 39% of school population on free-lunch program.
- Collaborating with regional open space and parks agencies, and public health/health care organizations, and the Institute at the Golden Gate on the Healthy Parks, Healthy People (HPPH) initiatives. Includes: docent-led 1st Saturday HPPH hikes at various District preserves; working San Mateo County Parks and Family Health Services departments (and other partners) to research and provide new health-based family activities; exploring opportunities with Santa Clara County Parks to offer explore an urban/regional park partnership
- Collaborating with Student Conservation Association, which partners with East Palo Alto School District to host an annual week-long volunteer project.

Past

- Provided Summer Nature Adventures week-long day camp for children in 2nd-6th grade in 2013, 2014, and 2015 in partnership with Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, City of Mountain View, City of Cupertino, Environmental Volunteers, and Santa Clara Valley Water District. Between 20-30 children participated.
- Since 2014, District staff coordinated and collaborated extensively with multiple jurisdictions, agencies, and partners to seek input on and further refine the District’s proposed nomination of six (6) PCAs in San Mateo County and nine (9) PCAs in Santa Clara County. District conducted outreach to over 19 agencies, jurisdictions and organizations to build support.

Public Access Projects

Current

- Working with the City of East Palo Alto on the operations of the new Cooley Landing Education Center and Park
- Working with multiple agencies and organizations on the completion of the Ravenswood Bay Trail Connection Project, where the completion of this project will expand shoreline access to residents of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven area of Menlo Park.

Employee Training

Current

- Researching diversity trainers/programs for good fit and relevance to the open space and conservation field.

Past

- Latino Outdoors Education Sessions for staff and docents
- Fair and Impartial Policing for field staff
- Cultural Bridges to Justice training for managers and senior staff

Recruitment Methods

Current

- Creating a video highlighting Midpen professions and types of projects/work