



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** September 25, 2019

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Front Country Trails Program Volunteer Recognition

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission recognize the Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers, Montecito Trails Foundation, and Dave Everett of the Multi-Use Trails Coalition for their volunteer maintenance of the front country trails.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

The City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara, and the Los Padres National Forest share jurisdictional oversight of Santa Barbara's Front Country Trails (FCT). Located within the front range of the Santa Ynez Mountains, the main front country trails include: Arroyo Burro, Jesusita, Tunnel, Rattlesnake, Cold Spring (East and West), San Ysidro, and Romero Canyon. With these trails, over 35 miles are available and heavily used by Santa Barbara South Coast residents and visitors.

The City Parks and Recreation Department, on behalf of the three agencies, coordinates the three main volunteer workdays (State Trails Day, National Trails Day and National Public Lands Day) with the help of key volunteers from SBMTV, Montecito Trails Foundation, and Dave Everett. As part of program support, all agencies supply staff for the events and financially sponsor the post-event lunch. These community events engage a variety of trail user groups (bikers, hikers, trail runners, equestrians, as well as youth and infrequent trail users) in trail maintenance stewardship.

Role of Volunteers

Volunteers play a crucial role in trail maintenance, report and document trail conditions, and provide leadership in spreading the word on proper trail etiquette. Since FCT agencies have few resources for trail maintenance, the volunteer work provided by local groups is a valued service to the Santa Barbara community. Several groups are actively engaged in trail stewardship within the front country trails, including:

- Santa Barbara Trails Council
- Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers
- Dave Everett of Multi-Use Trails Coalition
- Montecito Trails Foundation
- Los Padres Forest Association

Many of these groups have long been involved in the discussions among public agencies and trail user groups related to trail maintenance, management, user conflict, and education concerns. Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers (SBMTV), Montecito Trails Foundation (MTF), and Dave Everett of Multi-Use Trails Coalition consistently work closely with the agencies, providing important information on trail use and conditions and donating numerous hours of their time to enhance and improve Santa Barbara's trail system.

SBMTV has promoted trail access for all trail users since 1988. They play an important role in trail user education and etiquette through signage and printed/electronic information and with the distribution of bike bells. SBMTV plays an integral part in volunteer maintenance events, providing tools, logistics, outreach, volunteers, and trained trail leaders. As a group, they provide several hundreds of hours conducting trail maintenance events in both the front and back country, and are involved with other local and regional trail steward groups.

MTF focuses on historic Indian and Spanish trail preservation, land easement acquisition, and development of new trails per Santa Barbara County's General Plan. MTF has been working to improve and maintain existing trails with a network of volunteers for public use since 1964. Following the 2017 Thomas Fire and Debris Flow, MTF faced one of its biggest challenges, to fund and rebuild almost the entire trail system overseen by them, an expensive and extensive project to undertake. MTF has been very active in organizing the repairs and fundraising to finance the repairs, so that the public can get back out and on the area's scenic trails. To date, over 85 percent of the trails and connectors that were destroyed by the Thomas Fire have been repaired and are now open to the public.

Dave Everett of the Multi-Use Trails Coalition is also a local trail resource. Dave's use of GPS technology provides the community with trail maps available as downloads to mobile devices, personal GPS devices, and desktop computers. He also provides an Interactive Trail Maintenance Map using Google Earth and these maps are used by the City to review trail conditions during volunteer trail event planning and as a way to communicate locations of trail work amongst agency staff. Dave's excellent photo documentation also conveys trail conditions and work locations pre-event, while illustrating before-and-after conditions post-event. Dave often tackles the hardest jobs, including re-establishing or re-aligning a lost trail due to large slides and rock removal. He recently participated in Public Lands Day on September 21, 2019.

Several Parks Division staff are trained in sustainable trail maintenance practices. They participate in trail maintenance events, leading volunteers or handling large tools like

weed whips and hedgers. In addition, Forestry staff provide assistance with removal of trees and limbs using chain or pole saws.

Over the past year, 165 volunteers (over 1,100 volunteer hours) assisted in the maintenance of roughly 15 miles of trail, including events at Cold Spring Trail, San Ysidro Trail, Jesusita Trail, and Romero Trail. Work included clearing brush to widen the corridor and improve lines-of-sight, repairing slides and re-establishing and re-aligning lost trail, removing fallen trees and limbs, removing dangerous overhanging branches, and creating water drainage channels to reduce trail erosion.

**PREPARED BY:** Matthew Parker, Parks Manager

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