

Marsh Creek State Park

Opportunity Meeting Need

Prepared by



The John Marsh Historic Trust



THE VALUES OF MARSH CREEK STATE HISTORIC PARK

Educational Opportunity: Thousands of local students will no longer have to travel to Sutter's Fort in Sacramento for hands-on California history. Also, a new Contra Costa Community College District campus is being built across the street, and will open in 2020.

Economic Development: Parks provide a big boost to area businesses, and increase property values in neighboring communities. A 2017 study for East Bay Regional Parks District shows their parks provide benefits to residents, businesses, and visitors that total about \$500 million annually, including \$200 million in annual economic activity in the East Bay that would not occur in its absence.

Community Building: A place for people to gather, celebrate, enjoy nature and do volunteer work. It will be a place for weddings, U-pick lunches, birthdays, quinceaneras and family reunions.

Historic Preservation: Archaeological resources more than 7,000 years old, Native American burial grounds, America's Westward Expansion, Mexican land grants, California statehood, agricultural development, early medicine, and landmark architecture are all linked to pioneer John Marsh, Rancho Los Meganos and Marsh Creek State Park.

Outdoor Recreation: 3,700 acres of open space with plans for 70 miles of trails, 200 camping and day-use sites, RV and equestrian facilities, and connection to hundreds of miles of regional and State Park trail networks.

<u>Cultural Heritage</u> Preservation and study of the multicultural landscape that has been historically present in the MSCP, especially ancient people, Native Americans and Hispanics. A place for cultural gatherings and celebrations.

Environmental Stewardship The park contains nearly a dozen threatened and endangered species, a mile of Marsh Creek, and 3,700 acres of oak-studded hills and grassland.

How the JMHT is delivering those values:

- Funding improvements: JMHT has help to raise \$3 million in grants and donations
- More than 750 elementary, high school and college students have made field trips to the park.
- We conduct guided hikes, and provided special access days for artists and historical groups.
- We host Astronomy Nights working with LMC instructor/astronomers.
- Thousands have participated in our annual Heritage Day family events to learn about nature, history and culture.
- We make dozens of free public presentations to community groups, service clubs and the public library.



The John Marsh Historic Trust's Interpretive Center will allow us to improve the number and quality of activities we conduct in the Marsh Creek State Historic Park, delivering some of the value inherent in the park and building public awareness for the need to open the entire park.

The IC will help us reach our ultimate goal, which is moving the MCSHP higher on the priority list for scarce State Parks funding. In addition to the recreation and educational benefits listed below, the park has great potential for helping economic development in the surrounding communities.

The Center will include a shade structure, picnic tables, restrooms, parking and interpretive signage. We have worked with State Parks to create a design, site plan and fund the completion the initial phase of the IC. The Trust has funded \$20,000 for an initial phase of construction which excludes revising existing outdated Interpretive Panels and Restroom facilities. In order to provide on- site Restroom facilities, educational materials, train volunteer docents, and allow for contingencies and administration, we plan to raise an additional amount of \$10,000. We hope the City of Brentwood and the Agricultural Enterprise Committee will recognize the value of the Interpretive Center at Marsh Creek State Park, and support developing updated Agricultural History Interpretive Panels with a \$7,000 grant. To date, our activities have included:

- Field trips for about 200 4th-grade students for hands-on history learning activities. Our program was developed in partnership with the Brentwood Union School District to be meet Common Core standards, and saves significant expense and time that districts now incur traveling to Sutter's Fort in Sacramento for similar programming.
- Annual visits from Liberty High School Special Education and Youth in Government programs.
- Five Heritage Days, annual events featuring displays and hands-on learning about the park's history, culture and potential. Attendance is about 2,000 people per year and growing.
- Six hikes totaling several hundred participants through otherwise inaccessible areas of the park. Hikers come from as far away as San Francisco and Sacramento.

Once the IC is built in early 2025, it will enable us to expand programming to possibly include:

- Regular access to the park grounds by opening it on a drop-in basis on scheduled weekends.
- Providing a Farm Trails site, where some of the 250,000 annual visitors to Brentwood's U-pick farms can stop for lunch, and learn about Marsh's role in creating East Contra Costa's Agricultural Legacy.
- Coordinating with the City of Brentwood and East Bay Regional Parks District to provide trail/walk/run/bicycle events utilizing the Marsh Creek Trail, which is being extended through Trilogy to within a quarter-mile of the IC location.

According to a 2017 report from the East Bay Regional Park District, their parks deliver \$500 million in Annual Economic Value each year, including \$191 million in Regional Economic Impact. (Summaries of these statistics are attached. The full report is available here: https://tinyurl.com/EBRPD-report) Also, a 2009 study by the Trust for Public Land estimated that park visitors (both overnight and day-use) spend between \$48 and \$104 per day in neighboring communities. It was estimated that 35 percent of that revenue was profit above the costs of conducting the business. Sales tax revenue to the city is in addition to that 35 percent.





