

County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
June 3, 2019
Agenda Item IV
Oral Communications
by
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On April 17 we explored Scott Creek Beach. We found no signage prohibiting pets from the beach, as required by the 1996 Biological Opinion agreement with the USFWS. Although the beach was virtually empty at 3:00 pm, we did discover dog footprints on several stretches of the beach. We saw no evidence of Snowy Plovers.

The 1996 BO agreement was required for the County to create the visitor access infrastructure it proposed. That agreement contained specific mitigation management actions, including major Snowy Plover nesting site protections and in restoring and protecting over three acres of coastal strand and dune habitat.

Meanwhile USFWS designated Scott Creek Beach as critical habitat for Snowies in 1999. This is serious business. County Parks has a responsibility to follow through with its original agreement with USFWS. Apparently Point Reyes Bird Observatory, now known as Point Blue, which accompanied Fish & Wildlife and County Parks on a site visit prior to the BO, has all but given up trying to get the County to implement its official agreement.

On May 8, I emailed Jeff and inquired if the prohibition of pets at Scott Creek was still Parks policy. He responded - that was his understanding but upon a cursory review of Parks rules and regulations he could not find the prohibition. He added that he knew that Parks had signs in place at one time and he would research this further.

I also asked Jeff if he had a copy of the Biological Opinion for this County Beach. And if not, I could send it to him. He asked for it and I sent it. But its more than signage of the prohibition of dogs on the beach that concerns us.

We think the BO has fallen through the crack over that past 23 years. It is difficult to see evidence of actions agreed upon in the BO. We're sure there are many reasons for this, none of which are acceptable. Parks must make sure it has a budget to meet its official responsibilities. We have constantly requested sufficient budget from the Board of Supervisors to allow Parks to finance its legal obligations. We'll do so again at the upcoming budget hearings.

Meanwhile, tonite we're here to request that this Commission schedule an agenda item on Scott Creek Beach for its August meeting. Commissioners can study the 1996 BO ahead of time and be prepared to discuss its requirements with the goal being a vote to recommend to the Parks Director that he begin a process that leads to the implementation of the Biological Opinion, complete with a schedule and work plan.