



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-23-150
Meeting 23-35
December 13, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 9

AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract to Community Initiatives (the fiscal sponsor of Latino Outdoors) to provide Community Engagement Events for Two Years

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Community Initiatives for an amount not-to-exceed \$88,000 over a two-year span to provide engaging outdoor experiences for diverse participants at various open space preserves and via online virtual presentations.

SUMMARY

In 2015, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) began collaborating with Latino Outdoors (which is fiscally sponsored by Community Initiatives) to bring families, youth, seniors, and new users to District preserves in keeping with the Board of Directors' (Board) outreach and inclusion goals. Under the 2023 partnership agreement, Latino Outdoors delivered 10 educational nature experiences, including family-friendly hikes and volunteer projects covering topics related to health and wellness, responsible recreation, Leave No Trace principles and an introduction to backpacking at Black Mountain (Monte Bello Preserve). Since 2022, over 50 youth attendees have participated in District-sponsored Latino Outdoors programs with their families. In previous years, the District's contracts with Latino Outdoors have been one-year terms. Extending the contract to a two-year term is intended to further strengthen the partnership and build increased capacity by allowing longer-term planning and streamlining of administrative processes. The Public Affairs outreach program partners with community organizations that already have programming expertise to provide public educational programs for target audiences, such as Latino Outdoors and Bay Area Older Adults.

DISCUSSION

Latino Outdoors is a nationally recognized nonprofit aimed at connecting communities with the outdoors, with a focus on Latino youth and families. Since its founding in 2013, Latino Outdoors volunteers and staff have led almost 800 outings nationwide, serving nearly 15,000 outing participants and engaging tens of thousands more through online programming and communications. Latino Outdoors is fiscally sponsored by Community Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Based on the 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the Latino community represented 17.8% of the District's overall population, yet they comprised only 6.7% of preserve users based on the District's 2017 Preserve Use Survey – indicating a significant

underrepresentation of preserve visitors. In keeping with the Board of Directors' strategic goal to connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision, which includes an objective to implement and sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies to build and strengthen partnerships, increase broad and inclusive public outreach and engagement, and instill DEI values across all levels of the organization, Public Affairs has successfully collaborated with Latino Outdoors since 2015 to provide outreach and education aimed at under-resourced/underrepresented communities. The Latino Outdoors staff have years of experience working with the Latino community in outdoor programs, as well as establishing relationships with other nonprofits and community groups serving similar audiences. Under the 2023 partnership agreement, Latino Outdoors delivered 10 educational nature experiences, including eight in-person outings and two virtual programs. Due to a staff leave of absence on the Latino Outdoors programming team, 2023 saw a decline in program participants compared to 2022. The Latino Outdoors programming team is anticipated to be back to full staff starting in January 2024.

In Person Outings:

	2022	2023
Total Participants	141	105
Youth Participants	35	18
Spanish Speaking Participants	135	83

Virtual Programming (views as of 12/5/2023):

	2021*	2022	2023
Number of Virtual Programs	5	2	2
Totals Views	7,371	9,992	560

**In 2021, Latino Outdoors fully converted their programming to virtual content due to the pandemic.*

The proposed contract with the local chapter of Latino Outdoors allows the District to continue providing engaging outdoor experiences for diverse participants at various open space preserves and online via virtual presentations. These guided nature experiences are educational, foster community engagement and raise awareness of the District, its mission, and the open space preserves within the Latino community. Furthermore, all virtual programming created will remain accessible via Latino Outdoors and the District's YouTube channels, allowing for long-term viewing and increased public engagement.

Under the proposed contract, Latino Outdoors would host 18 total community outreach engagements (16 in-person and two virtual events) between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025. The selected preserves, nature themes, dates, and ratio of events are flexible and may change as warranted, by mutual agreement. Latino Outdoors and the District will advertise both in-person and virtual events to the public through our social channels, website and other outreach platforms at least three weeks in advance of a scheduled outing.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is sufficient funding in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget to cover the cost of the recommendation.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

None

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board, the contract will be routed for final signatures with a contract start date of January 1, 2024.

Attachment(s)

1. Latino Outdoors 2023 Service Report
2. Latino Outdoors 2022 Service Report

Responsible Department Head:
Korrine Skinner, Public Affairs

Prepared by / Contact person:
Natalie Jolly, Public Affairs Specialist II



1000 Broadway, Suite 480
 Oakland, CA 94607
www.latinoutdoors.org
fiscally sponsored by
Community Initiatives
 EIN: 94-3255070

**Community Partnership 2023
 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District & Latino Outdoors
 Mid Year Grant Report May 18, 2023**

January 29, 2023: New Year Gratitude Hike

Location: El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve

Activity: Day Hike

Total Number of participants: 21

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	19	90%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	6	29%
Number of Families Participating together?	4	19%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	21	100%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	21	100%

Recap:

We had a wide range of group ages join us, from 2 years old to 66 years old! We had a handful of LO first timers, and several first timers to the preserve. The day started off a little wet, with some scattered showers, and very cold, but we eventually warmed up a bit and even saw some blue skies. One of our participants kept taking photos of all the trail junction signs because she didn't want to forget the trail we hiked, and said she was going to bring her daughter to this spot. We hiked through some redwoods, saw a couple banana slugs, and the cool red mushroom with white spots on it! At the end of the hike we enjoyed some bean and rice burritos. The kids especially enjoyed those!

March 19, 2023: Virtual Baylands Webinar

Location: [Online](#) broadcast on Midpen Youtube | LatinoOutdoors Youtube

Activity: Presentation on the importance of baylands, some of the animals that thrive in that environment and how we as a community and individuals can help protect these areas

Total Number of combined viewers and people reached as of 12/5/23: 104

April 29, 2023: City Nature Challenge: Nature Exploration Walk

Location: Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

Activity: Community Science, Bioblitz, Walk

Total Number of Participants: 23

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	11	48%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	7	30%
Number of Families Participating together?	6	26%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	22	96%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	22	96%

Recap:

This was a City Nature Challenge focused walk, so even though we only walked about 1 mile, we really took our time to make observations of everything that we saw. This Midpen preserve isn't heavily visited and is super close to cities and neighborhoods! We used various senses, hearing birds, and smelling and touching plants. People loved the hummingbird sage and sticky monkey flower! There were several people uploading directly to iNaturalist as we were on our walk for the City Nature Challenge. Our best observers were actually all the kiddos that joined. They were great and found all the bugs. They spotted snails, ladybugs and beetles! We concluded our walk with some more yummy food and I talked to them a lot about how they can continue their City Nature Challenge going through the whole weekend, how to make great observations, and the importance of community science!

May 7, 2023: Wildflower Walk

Location: Russian Ridge Wildlife Preserve

Activity: Day Hike, Wildflower Identification

Total Number of Participants: 17

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
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Spanish-speaking participants?	17	100%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	2	12%
Number of Families Participating together?	3	18%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	17	100%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	17	100%

Recap:

For our annual wildflower walk we visited Russian Ridge again. It was foggy and misty. We saw lots of flowers, despite it technically being a low abundance rating. Once we actually started looking at what initially just looked like grass from afar, we realized that there were actually a bunch of clovers, lupines, popcorn flowers and other flowers. I printed several of the Midpen wildflower guides for folks to use and it was really cool to see how engaged people were. Whenever we paused to look at flowers, I waited for someone to use their guides before I shared the names. We also took some time to talk about the terms plants are given like: "invasive" "weeds" "native", and learned about how they are classified in families, by genus and species. We chatted about the uses of plants, and I actually learned from a couple of participants that mugwort is called "estafiate" in Spanish. And it was awesome to take a moment to smell the mugwort, yarrow, and pineapple weed. This walk really was special because we had a lot of knowledgeable people join, and share their stories.

June 10, 2023: Hiking Scavenger Hunt

Location: Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Activity: Day Hike, Flora and Fauna Identification

Total Number of Participants: 10

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	9	90%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	1	10%
Number of Families Participating together?	2	20%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	10	100%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	10	100%

Recap:

We had a couple new LO participants joining us, and a couple regulars. The hike was rated moderate, and was shared by bikes and horses. At the end of our hike participants shared that

they didn't know if they were going to be able to finish the hike, but were so proud of how their body managed to make it up the hill, others expressed feeling gratitude, and happy that they got their body moving.

July 9, 2023: Habitat Restoration

Location: Rancho San Antonio Preserve

Activity: Restoration/Stewardship

Total Number of Participants: 8

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	5	63%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	0	0%
Number of Families Participating together?	1	13%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	6	75%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	6	75%

Recap:

We were a small but mighty group for this Habitat Restoration event. We learned from participants that the google maps directions sent them all to the wrong meeting location and that led to us losing some folks as well. It was mostly everyone's first time volunteering with Midpen, and we worked hard, by removing all of the summer mustard in our meadow patch, making way for more wildflowers during the next blooming period. People were excited to learn that Midpen regularly hosts these types of events, and since most of them were super local to the preserve, it seemed like they were definitely going to return to the preserve. After our event, folks continued to explore Rancho and stayed for a little hike.

July 22-23, 2023: Vamos Backpacking

Location: Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Activity: Backpacking

Total Number of Participants: 10

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	9	90%

Number Youth (24 and under)?	0	0%
Number of Families Participating together?	0	0%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	10	100%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	10	100%

Recap:

A participant posted on our social media post and said "great time with some amazing folks". The majority of our participants were backpacking for the first time. Overall it was a wonderful experience, people were feeling super proud of themselves for finishing and making new friends, but also were so ready to get back home to shower!

August 16, 2023: Backpacking Food 101

Location: [Online](#) broadcast on Latino Outdoors Youtube and Facebook channels

Activity: Presentation in conjunction with Heather Diaz from Let’s Go Outside Ya’ll on different perspectives and options when planning for backpacking food. The presentation focused on dehydrated foods.

Total Number of combined viewers as of 12/5/23: 456

November 25, 2023: #OptOutside Wellness and Mindfulness Hike

Location: Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve - Mount Umunhum

Activity: Mindfulness Day Hike

Total Number of Participants: 16

Survey Question	# of Affirmative Respondents	Percentage
Spanish-speaking participants?	13	81%
Number Youth (24 and under)?	2	12%
Number of Families Participating together?	3	18%
Belief in the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation strengthened or maintained?	16	100%
View of the importance of protecting open spaces improved or maintained?	16	100%

Recap:

This hike started at the Mt. Umunhum summit. Participants enjoyed a moderate 4 miles #OptOutside walk. We gathered partway through the hike to nature journal about the hike and

ATTACHMENT 1

how it made them feel. One woman shared the sense of peace she felt walking as a group along the trail. After the hike participants shared tamales made by one of the LO volunteers.



1000 Broadway, Suite 480
 Oakland, CA 94607
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Community Partnership 2021-2022
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District & Latino Outdoors
 October 26, 2022 Updated: 12/5/2023

Background

According to a 2017 survey by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), the Latino community represented 6.7% of preserve users, compared to 79.1% Caucasian users. To help bridge this gap, Midpen has partnered with Latino Outdoors (LO) since 2015. LO is a national organization with a Bay Area presence dedicated to fostering outdoor engagement by Latinx and other underrepresented communities. Since its founding in 2013, LO volunteers and staff have led almost 800 outings and served nearly 15,000 outing participants nationwide, while also engaging tens of thousands more through online programming and communications. Latino Outdoors is fiscally sponsored by Community Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The reporting period for the current partnership agreement is November 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022.

Outdoor & Virtual Programming and Engagement

Under the current partnership agreement, Latino Outdoors delivered ten educational nature experiences, including eight in-person outings (six hikes and two 50th Anniversary Events Tabling). This programming was set in eight different Midpen preserves, and covered topics such as health and wellness, responsible recreation, Leave No Trace principles, and an introduction to backpacking.

November 24, 2022: Gratitude Hike con Redwoods y Tamales

Location: Bear Creek Open Space Preserve

Activity: Day Hike

Total Number of Participants: **22**

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	11	50%
Number of families participating together?	4	18%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	10	45%

Recap

“This was our first event for the year, and it was great! It was really special because it was around Thanksgiving time, so our theme for the hike was gratitude. Once we reached the old-growth redwood grove, we gathered for tamales for lunch. We had one participant share with the whole group that she was so happy that she decided to join in on the hike, and that the whole group made her feel super welcomed, she had never seen a redwood tree as big as the one on the trail or eaten a tamal, so it was the perfect experience.” - Aurora Perez

January 13, 2022: Virtual Wildlife Webinar

Location: Online broadcast on LO Youtube | LO Facebook | MidPen Facebook | LO Instagram

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kLFALJyri0>

Activity: Presentation of wildlife at MidPen and beyond

Total Number of combined viewers as of 12/5/23: 600

February 12, 2022: Art for the Heart - Hike and Crafts

Location: Los Trancos Open Space Preserve

Activity: Day Hike with Crafts

Total Number of Participants: **16**

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	9	56%
Number of families participating together?	3	19%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	15	94%

Recap:

One of the participants shared that they didn't care for Valentine's Day because he thought it was only for couples, but after our event, he said he "felt the love" and realized that is a day for appreciation and love for friends, community, and nature.

April 2, 2022: Wildflower Walk

Location: Russian Ridge Wildlife Preserve

Activity: Day Hike | Wildflower Identification

Total Number of Participants: **32**

ATTACHMENT 2

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	18	56%
Number of families participating together?	6	19%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	30	94%

Recap:

We had seven children join in on this wildflower walk and they all loved it. One kid in particular, Leo, spent the whole hike taking photos of every flower and plant he came across. When asked what he thought about the hike, he said, it was the most beautiful place he's ever been to.

April 30, 2022: MidPen's Bayside Family Festival

Location: Ravenswood Preserve Cooley Landing

Activity: Tabling

Total Number of Participants that engaged with LO's Table: 50

May 21, 2022: Nature Hike and Scavenger Hunt

Location: Rancho San Antonio

Activity: Day Hike | Nature Scavenger Hunt

Total Participants: **22**

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	5	23%
Number of families participating together?	6	27%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	15	68%

Recap:

National Scavenger Hunt Day is celebrated on May 24th so it was the perfect theme for this outing. We

ATTACHMENT 2

created and printed loteria/bingo style cards for everyone to use to guide us through the hike. We took breaks to learn about the blooming CA Buckeye Trees, and to notice the difference between black berry plants and poison oak. We took a break at an awesome old, open air barn! Then Miguel, LO leader and Midpen staff stopped by to say hello and offered to give us a tour of the farm. The kiddos loved this opportunity! We had a chance to pet and feed bunnies, goats, chickens and sheep. At the end of the hike, one girl said, "If I knew hiking was this fun, I would do it more often."

June 5, 2022: Birding Walk

Location: Skyline Ridge Preserve

Activity: Day Hike | Birding

Total Participants: **36**

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	14	39%
Number of families participating together?	7	19%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	23	64%

Recap

We had a very rainy morning but still 36 people showed up for our birding event. LO leaders, Erick and Antonella, helped support this program, which was awesome because it was definitely a huge group! And despite the rain, we still saw several cool birds, including red-winged black birds, coots, and california scrub jays. We walked for about a mile and a half around Horseshoe Lake. We had two little kids join us who said that they were most excited about getting wet from the rain! People said they loved the misty environment and felt like they were out of this world. Various participants stayed after our event to explore the preserve even more!

September 10, 2022: MidPen's Coastside Community Celebration

Location: Johnston House

Activity: Tabling

Total Number of Participants that engaged with LO's Table: 62

September 19, 2022 to September 24, 2022 : Vamos Backpacking Video Series

Location: Online broadcast on LO Facebook | LO Instagram

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zogk5mWQKXA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2XrG5j30Mo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gbNpms40KI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqGAwIQJ9HM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tuZB6lgTWO>

Activity: Video series consisting of short videos on backpacking preparation and tips.

Total Number of combined viewers as of 12/5/23: 9,392

Recap:

This was a weeklong ¡Vamos Backpacking! video series for our Midpen partnership. From September 19th to September 23rd, we posted a short video on our instagram and facebook about how we are preparing for our upcoming backpacking trips. Everyday we would film, edit and put out one video. The video's content included: pre-planning, gear, food, packing, and scouting. Some of the comments we received include: "this is helpful!", "great video! Love that you showed a wide range of options because there are many ways to backpack." "thank you! great information"

October 8, 2022 to October 9, 2022: Backpacking Black Mountain

Location: Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Activity: Backpacking

Total Participants: **13**

Survey Question	Number of Participants	Percentage
Adults (20 to 40 years old)?	12	92%
Number of families participating together?	2	15%
Number of participants visiting the preserve and participating for the first time?	10	77%

Recap:

We had an amazing time backpacking Black Mountain. The 2 mile hike in, the non-potable water, restroom, and non-potable waiter, make this site a great introduction to backpacking. Once we arrived at the campsite, I did a tent set up demonstration, talked about Leave no Trace principles, and then after we were all set up, we played loteria! For dinner we had Itacate Chilaquiles and they were delicious. We

ATTACHMENT 2

witnessed the most beautiful sunset and moonrise. It was truly magical. One of the participants said that they loved the fact that they could be their authentic self, speak bilingually, and share cultural experiences or share movies and shows they saw growing up and felt really happy that we all understood. The next morning we did a reflection and then headed back to the parking lot. Some of the comments from our participants include: "Gran experiencia surrounded by an awesome group of people!" "ty ty for the opportunity to be within community <3"

Accomplishments

1. An incentive of \$2,000 is available if Consultant meets the average participation goals of 15 people per in-person event and 1,200 views per virtual event (LO will have up to 30 days following the event to tally view counts).
2. An additional incentive of \$2,000 is available if Consultant meets a goal of 25% participation per event from a target demographic of the 20-40 age group in all non-youth focused events.

1. Average participation for in person events (includes day hikes and backpacking trip): **23.5**

2. Target Demographic 20-40 age group for in person events (includes day hikes and backpacking trip): 49%