

The Freshwater County Park Playground Renovation Project

Final Proposal
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Introduction

The Freshwater County Park - Playground Renovation Project is a proposal designed to upgrade the existing playground equipment. The playground is one of several features at Freshwater Park. Additional park features include: restrooms, parking, volleyball court, picnic areas and barbeque grills, facilities for big events, and a seasonal swimming hole. The current playground structures are out of date and in need of replacement in order to maintain compliance with current playground safety standards and to increase attractiveness to users.

The following proposal includes two fully funded options for playground structure upgrades. The upgrade designs were chosen based on feedback from key stakeholders and users. Feedback collection methods are included in the proposal as well as details on funding sources and suggested budget options. This proposal for The Freshwater County Park - Playground Renovation Project will increase the safety and attractiveness of the playground while supporting the overarching goals of Humboldt County Parks and Trails systems to offer fun recreational experiences for residents and visitors.

Project Outline

Organization: Humboldt County Parks and Trails

- **Mission/Vision:** The mission of the Humboldt County Parks and Trails is to offer areas for residents to enjoy public land while also maintaining biodiversity and conservation to the region. Public health, accessibility, and protection of the environment are key to the mission of this organization (humboldt.gov, 2006-2013).
- **Core-product and core-product extensions:** The core-product of Humboldt County Parks and Trails is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. Core-product extensions include:
 - The playground area the play structures within it
 - The seasonal swimming area
 - Picnic areas including barbeque pits
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Volleyball Court

- Not enough visitors during off season
- **Future needs:** Aging playground equipment is in need of an upgrade to modern standards
- **Future goals:**
 - Maximize the opportunities for pleasure and enjoyment
 - Increase opportunities for children to develop and test age-appropriate skill
 - Support social cohesion
 - Meeting the interests and desires of park visitors
 - Attract more visitation outside the summer season

Goals and Objectives

- The main objective of the project is to replace the current playground structures in an effort to maintain compliance with current safety standards as well as to increase the opportunities for fun and recreation for park visitors.
- 1. Increase the opportunities for fun and enjoyment by updating the current play structures.
 - a. Research the current safety standards for play structures
 - b. Research play structures that offer age-appropriate play that is fun and challenging for their specific motor skill level
 - c. Ensure the play structures are accessibility to all children of all physical abilities to support social cohesion and increase individual self-efficacy
 - d. Incorporate the interests and desires of park visitors into the project upgrade by taking surveys and conducting interviews
 - e. Research two alternative surface materials
- 2. -Attract more park visitors to the park outside the summer season.
 - a. Offer benches and picnic areas that have shade/rain protection
 - b. Provide accessible trash cans, water stations, and upgraded barbeque pits

at the forefront. Rather than the typical swing and slide, which have clear types of play associated with them, Rockwell designed a collection of portable foam blocks that children use to connect and manipulate into whatever play structure they imagined. This article supported the understanding of this project in that it emphasizes a type of play that exercises the mind as well as exercising the body. In addition to space for gross motor skills development such as running, sliding, and climbing, it is important that the renovations at Freshwater Park includes opportunities for children to practice cognitive skills such as thinking and problem solving during play.

- In the article, “Designing Child’s Play Takes Serious Planning”, author Nancy White discusses many aspects that are looked at when planning a playground. In order to create an environment where children have the ability to grow physically, intellectually, creatively, and socially, there must be safe places where this growth can happen. White, an assistant professor of hospitality, recreation, and tourism at Cal State East Bay, first notes that a safe location for a playground is one that creates a barrier around the park, such as a fence or a steep slope. The Freshwater Park is in the perfect location because it has a large hill at one edge, and a parking lot between the park and the water attraction. According to White, along with the appropriate location, proper covering of the park with trees or shade structures are important to keep children out of the sun, as well as preventing rusting or rotting of the play structures. The author focused on the planning of a playground as a whole, and noted that age-appropriate playgrounds, accessibility, equipment selection, play value, sight lines, surfacing types, plants and much more, are very important when preparing for a renovation or building of a playground.

White’s main concern was that safety must be the key factor when building a playground. There are many agencies that have guidelines for safety, such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the International Playground Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA). These organizations are key when it comes to making sure the equipment is appropriate for the children, and safe for their age group. Planning a safe playground that parents and caregivers want to take their children takes quite a bit of effort. Many aspects must be looked at in order to ensure the safety of these parks. This article was a great overview of all the fundamentals that must be considered for the renovation of Freshwater Park.

- The Arcata Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a 2010 document that provided an official city assessment of the existing parks and facilities, the community needs, recommendations, and implementation plans. The master plan was a wonderful example of how to write a proposal for the Freshwater Park. In chapter 5 “Recommendations”, the document covered strategies and actions that were needed in order to sustain and enhance the city’s park and recreation system. This section of the document started by mentioning an issue, such as ADA upgrades, then it followed with the recommendations for how to change the existing space. This is a great way to outline this proposal because the first portion defined ADA compliance, and detailed steps for making changes if need. Following this format

Project Evaluation Part 2

Population Identified for Evaluation:

- Populations identified include: 14 second and third grade children at Garfield School in Freshwater, as well as parents, and local community members who use and live close to Freshwater Park.
- Data was evaluated from second and third grade students in Alyse Eckinrode's classroom. All students present on the data collection day, participated in the focus group. Data was also collected from at least 15 parents and/or local residents through a combination of in-person interviews or online survey submissions.

Methods

- Methods used to evaluate the population included: a focus group, a survey, and interviews.
 - Focus Group – A focus group was conducted at Alyse Eckinrode's 2nd/3rd grade classroom at Garfield School in Freshwater on Thursday, October 9, 2014 at 1:30pm. A power point (See questions on pages 11-13) was presented to the students which included images of existing playground structures at Freshwater Park Playground as well as images of modern playground structures. Students raised their hands when they liked something they saw. Questions were asked and notes were taken on playground structure preferences. In closing, flyers with instructions for the online survey were dispersed. It was requested that children take the flyers home to their parents.
 - Survey – Using existing questions from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as well as feedback from the Deputy Director-Environmental Services at Humboldt County Public Works Department, a list of highly relevant questions was generated. The questions were used to develop an online survey through Survey Monkey. The online survey website, SurveyMonkey.com, also allowed for the completion and tracking of survey data. Small flyers were passed out (Appendix 1) with a brief explanation of the goal of the project, the details on how to complete the online survey, and the deadline which was October 29, 2014. Survey Request Flyers were dispersed the following ways:
 - Handed out after the 10/9/14 focus group at Garfield (for kids to give to their parents)
 - Posted at Freshwater Park Playground from 10/9/14 to 10/25/14

Evaluation Methods

- In the focus group of 14 students from Alyse Eckinrode's second and third grade class at Garfield school, children were shown a power point of pictures that included Freshwater Park's Playground as well as pictures of playground equipment that is currently very popular. The children were asked a series of questions on every slide. Questions were answered by a show of hands which were counted. Personal feedback comments were recorded from the entire class.
- Interviews were conducted and Survey Request Flyers were passed out which instructed people to online survey regarding ideas and input for Freshwater Park Playground renovation.
- Interviews were conducted at Arcata Farmer's Market. Questions used in the online survey were asked during personal interviews, (Appendix 3) and recorded data based on the responses of several community members.
- Survey Request Flyers (Appendix 2) were posted on popular social media sites, such as Facebook.

Data Collected

- Focus group questions with responses
 - What are some things you like or love about Freshwater Park?
 - Slide with tower
 - Bars for gymnastics
 - Swings
 - What are some things you dislike about Freshwater Playground?
 - Baby structure
 - Sand box (cat uses it as a litter box)
 - Different sizes of swings for different ages
 - What are some things from your schools playground that you would like to see be added to Freshwater Park?
 - Zipline glider
 - Monkey bars
 - Chain bridge with more ropes
 - Things you can talk into
 - Fire pole
 - Basketball courts

Findings

Focus group findings included details on what different age groups of younger children wanted to see at Freshwater Park. The children expressed that the most desired playground items to have in a park included:

- 86% preferred a variety of slides, not just standard, straight slides (Figure 1-2 Page 14)
 - 100% preferred unique climbing structures that are not only high up, but ones you can crawl through and hang from (Figure 3-5 Page 15)
 - 100% preferred rock walls that are at different levels, not just a straight up and down rock wall (Figure 6 Page 16)
 - 86% preferred objects that you can sit and spin on by yourself or with the help of others (Figure 7-8 Page 16)
 - 79% preferred monkey bars that you use your whole body to climb up on and swing from at the same time (Figure 9 Page 16)
 - 93% preferred tire swings that are big enough to fit 3 friends or more at a time (Figure 10 Page 16)
- Findings from the interview/survey data collection was reflected in the results from the online survey (Appendix 3). Results showed a total of 38 responses, 74% of which were from people who had visited Freshwater Park Playground in the past. Common themes reflected in results were the reference for climbing structures, slides, ladders, and bridges. It was also demonstrated that the majority of responses were from parents of children aged 6-9 years. Detailed results including questions and comments can be seen in Appendix 3: Freshwater Park Playground Renovation Survey Questions and Results.

Recommendations

- Although there were a lot of different questions asked, and a lot of different responses, there were the top items that were most desired by the second and third grade class at Garfield School in Mrs. Eckinrode's class that were also mirrored in the interview and survey responses. The students also expressed that children like to have different play structures in separate parts of the parks, not in the same play area. Data collected showed that children love a variety of playground equipment that is unique and leaves room for creativity and imagination role play. Climbing structures that offer fun and challenging play as well as opportunities for balance, coordination and imagination were important to kids and parents. In conclusion, all of the findings from the focus group and the online survey lead to the decision to focus heavily on climbing structures and slides in the playground renovation proposal.



Figure 4

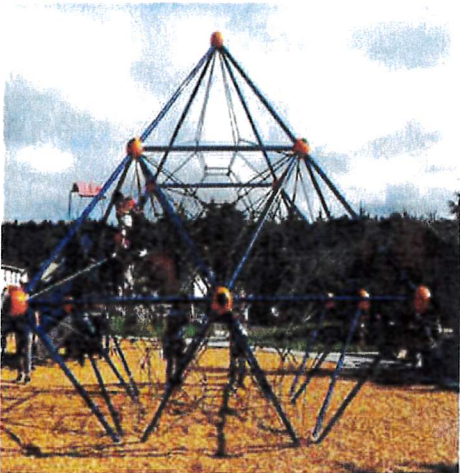


Figure 5



Figure 6

Project Planning

Summary of Playground Options

The idea behind the planning was to create two unique playground ideas with one being the more expensive option, and one being the less expensive option. Each option was created to reflect the findings from the evaluations conducted so that the highest quality parks could be created.

SWOT Analysis

Present Strengths:

- Easy to access location
- River draws in many people in the summer
- Prime area for events such as birthdays or weddings
- Safe area
- Natural environment is the focus

Present weaknesses:

- Wooden, out-of-date play structures
- No shaded areas for sun or rain protection
- Lack of advertising
- Limited maintenance opportunities

Future Opportunities:

- Increased public use
- Improved quality of natural resources
- Improved sustainability
- More accessible structures

Future Threats:

- Aging play equipment
- Inadequate state funding

OPTION 1:

Summary: Option 1 is the higher dollar amount and has bigger structures and more components. The focus was to add two main areas of the park: a 2-5 age range and a 5-12 age range. Burke Premier Play Environments was the company that was used to find the equipment for this option. The break down of this option is as follows:

- Voltage 3D-2367 is the 5-12 age range structure (Figure 11). It contains three slides, shaded areas, monkey bars, climbing equipment, and interactive areas. It is 49' X 48', has a fall height of 112", has a capacity of 105, comes in a variety of colors, and is listed as \$47,400.
- Orbitron (Figure 12) as an extra piece of play equipment to encourage group play along with coordination and balance. The Orbitron comes



Figure 11: Voltage 3D-2367



Figure 12: Orbitron

OPTION 2:

Summary: Option 2 is the less expensive choice. The focus still remained that the age range for the structures should be separate and ranged from 2-5 as well as from 5-12. The same company, Burke Premier Play Environments, was used to find all the equipment for this option. The break down for this option is as follows:

- Voltage 3D-2380 is the 5-12 age range structure (Figure 16). It contains two slides, climbing walls, monkey bars, shaded areas, and interactive play areas. This structure has a capacity of 70, a fall height of 93", comes in a variety of colors, and is listed as \$18,300.
- Voltage 3D-2351 is the 2-5 age range structure (Figure 17). It contains two slides, a rock wall, and interactive equipment. It has a capacity of 22, a fall height of 60", comes in a variety of colors, and is listed as \$10,400.
- KidForce Spinner (Figure 18). This is a sit down spinning piece of equipment that has a capacity of 1 and comes in a variety of colors. It allows children to practice balance and coordination and is listed as \$606.
- T-Swing for toddlers (Figure 14). This t-swing contains two seats for toddler swings. It weighs 134lbs, has a capacity of 2, comes in a variety of colors, is 7' high, and is \$974.
- 10' Pair Polyethylene Swing set (Figure 15). This is to replace the swings that are currently on the playground. It comes with the seat and the chains. It weighs 28lbs, comes in a variety of colors, and is \$350.

Strengths:

- Structures are already constructed, creating little hassle when installing
- Both age ranges are represented
- Variety of color options
- Fall heights are minimal
- Sustainable, long-lasting material
- Encourages interactive play
- Total cost is \$30,630
- It reflects conclusions drawn from the evaluation such as:
 - Large amounts of climbing equipment
 - Balancing areas
 - Monkey bar variety
 - Spinning equipment
 - Rock wall



Figure 17: Voltage



Figure 18: KidForce Spinner

Installation/Maintenance Schedule

Option 1 and 2: Same installation and maintenance schedule

Details of the installation process

- Contractors from the company Sun Country Systems will be used to prep the site and install both playground options.

busy summer months, up to six seasonal employees may be hired to assist in facility maintenance and/or staff the entrance kiosk. When larger projects arise, full-time staff or community service crews may be called (H. Seemann, personal communication, October 18, 2014). The current proposal includes upgrading with new equipment from Burke which includes free maintenance kits that are customized for each modular play structure. The kits include touch-up paint to match structure colors, graffiti remover, and a Playground Supervision Safety Kit from the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS).

Operations

- Mike Orr is in charge of Freshwater Park Playground operations. Hank Seemann, is responsible for overall planning and management

- No additional employees would be needed.

Project Risk Management

Current, modified, or new user agreement/informed consent

The only existing safety-related sign at Freshwater Park currently is not affiliated with the playground; it is near the swimming area and addresses swimming at one's own risk. The Freshwater Park Playground would require a new sign once the new equipment is in place. This sign will be similar to the sign at the Arcata Community Park (Figure 19). This has worked at Arcata Community Park efficiently so it is a good reference to use for Freshwater Park. The new sign will include the following information:

- Playground open from sunrise to sunset
- Play with caution
- Designed for children 2-12 years of age
- Children must be supervised at all times
- Do not play on equipment when wet, icy, or in bad weather conditions
- No pets inside play area
- No alcohol or glass near play equipment
- Report any broken equipment to #

User policies

According to Hank Seemaan, Deputy Director-Environmental Services at Humboldt County Public Works Department, there is currently no user policy or agreement in place at Freshwater Park (H. Seemann, personal communication, November 3, 2014). We do not foresee a need to implement a user policy after the new playground equipment is in place. Users should use the new equipment with caution. The sign that will be placed at the front of the playground will include information on who to contact if there are any problems with the equipment. It is recommended that the equipment only be used for ages 2-12.

Budget and Finances

Current Revenues

Humboldt County Public Works makes an annual profit through user fees totaling around \$25,000. This amount is shown in the General Budgets for both options; however, funding for this project can still be fulfilled solely on the grants that are listed below. The General Budget for Option 1 and Option 2 shows the total income and funding exceeds the total expenses by more than \$25,000.

The following tables are included below:

- Table 1: General Budget: Option 1 which reflects the budget for the Freshwater County Park playground renovation project, Option 1
- Table 2: Line-Item Budget: Option 1 which reflects the details of equipment included in option 1
- Table 3: General Budget: Option 2 which reflects the budget for the Freshwater County Park playground renovation project, Option 2
- Table 4: Line-Item Budget: Option 2 which reflects the details of equipment included in option 2

**Humboldt County Public Works - Freshwater County Park
Playground Renovation Project - Line-Item Budget - Option 1**

	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	COMMENTS
OPTION 1 EQUIPMENT	VOLTAGE 3D-2367	\$47,400	money bars, 3 slides, climbing equipment, interactive areas
	ORBITRON	\$2,576	equipment used to utalize group play, coordination, & blance
	THE LITTLE BUDDIES	\$13,900	2 slides, climbing wall, interactive aspects, shading. Ages 2-5
	T-SWING FOR TODDLERS	\$974	2 seats for toddlers swings
	10' PAIR POLYETHYLENE SWING SET	\$350	10 regular swings
	TOTAL EQUIPMENT FEES	\$65,200	

Table 2: Line-Item Budget - Option 1

**Humboldt County Public Works - Freshwater County Park
Playground Renovation Project - Line-Item Budget - Option 2**

	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	COMMENTS
OPTION 2 EQUIPMENT	VOLTAGE 3D-2380	\$18,300	2 Slides, climbing walls, monkey bars, shaded area, interactive play. Ages 5-12
	VOLTAGE 3D-2351	\$10,400	2 slides, rock wall, interactive play. Ages 2-5
	KIDFORCE SPINNER	\$606	Sit down spinner for 1, balance, coordination
	T-SWING FOR TODDLERS	\$974	2 seats for toddlers swings
	10' PAIR POLYETHYLENE SWING SET	\$350	10 regular swings
	TOTAL EQUIPMENT FEES	\$30,630	

Table 4: Line-Item Budget - Option 2

Fundraising

Grant 1: Building Better Communities

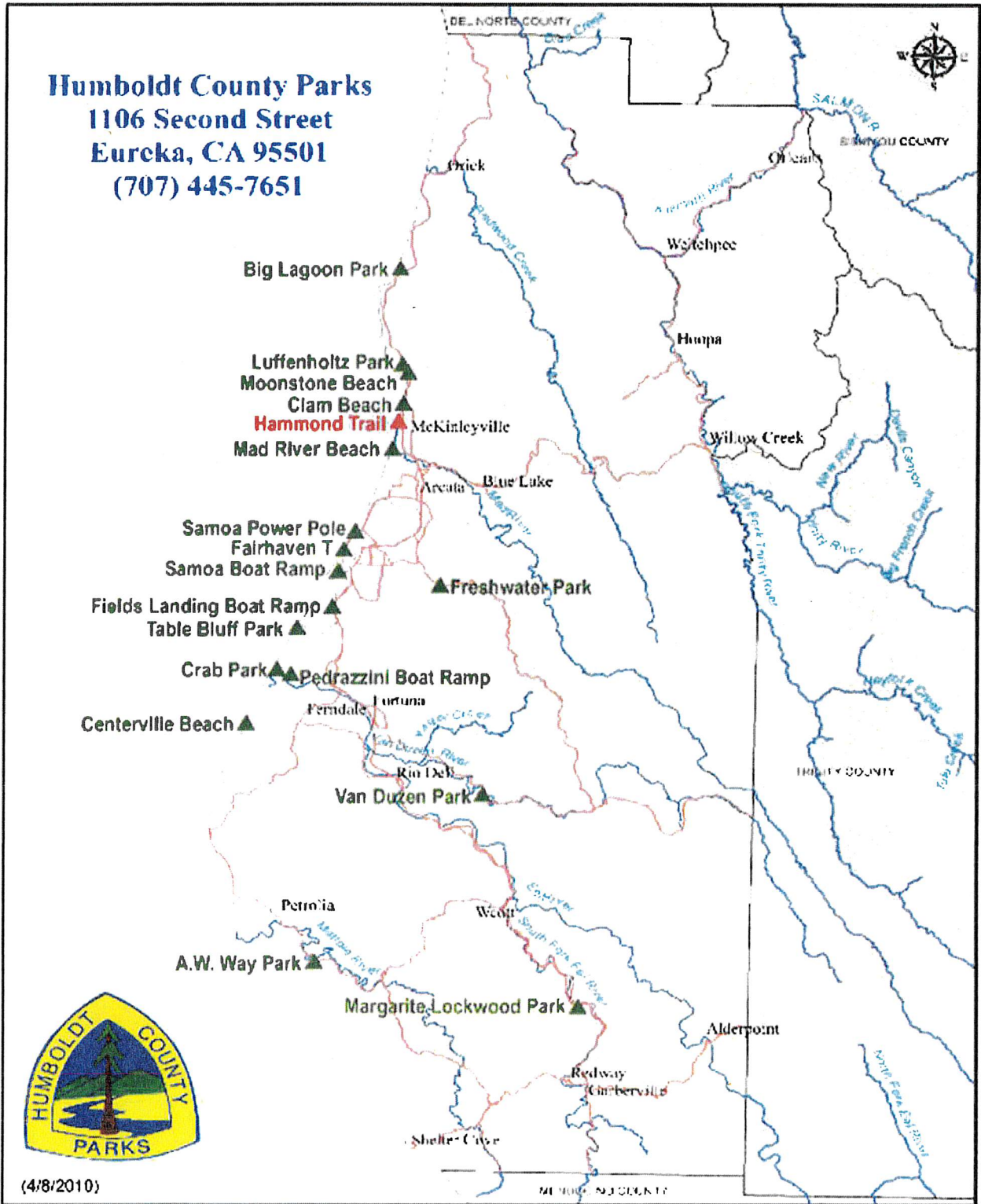
The Building Better Communities grant is offered through the National Recreation and Parks Association in partnership with the American Water Charitable Foundation and is focused on providing, “nature-based playgrounds and natural play areas for children, while also promoting water stewardship education” (Building Better Communities). The basis of the application details and process are as follows:

- 2015 grant applications due by December 5, 2014.
- PDF of the application is available on the website:
<http://www.nrpa.org/BuildingBetterCommunities/>
- Amount awarded ranges from \$50,000 to \$150,000.

Grant 2: Central Credit Union

The Community Investment Program grant is offered through the Coast Central Credit Union under the community investment program section. They, “provide larger donations (grants) to anywhere from three to six local organizations, twice per year” (Community Support). Details for this grant are as follows:

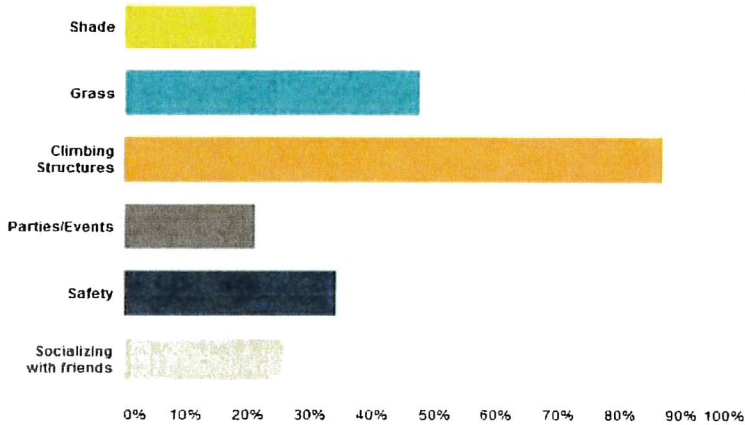
- Grant deadline is February 27th, 2015.



Appendix 1: Map of Humboldt County Parks System (Kmathews, 2010)

Appendix 3: Freshwater Park Playground Renovation Survey Questions and Results

Question 1. What comes to mind when you think of a playground at a park?



The first of all is Climbing Structures, 86.84%.

The second one is Grass, 47.37%.

The third one is Safety, 34.21%.

Shade, Events and Socializing with friends were also selected as shown below.

Climbing structures are necessary for a playground and they attract attention. Parents also consider grass and safety when thinking of a playground.

Survey participant comments from Question 1 include:

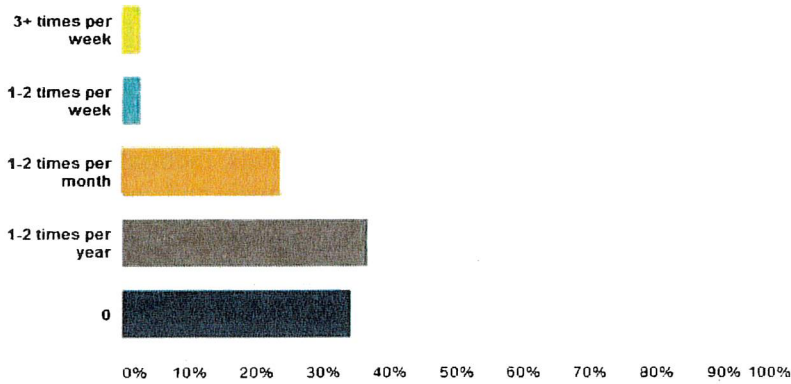
1. "Slides and enclosed so that parents can sit for a minute and let them run wild safely with a water fountain and a bathroom nearby."
2. "Natural Scenery/landscaping."
3. "A safe and multiuse playground with a versatile structure(s)."
4. "Monkey bars."

Question 2. Have you ever used the Freshwater Park Playground?

Yes. 73.68%

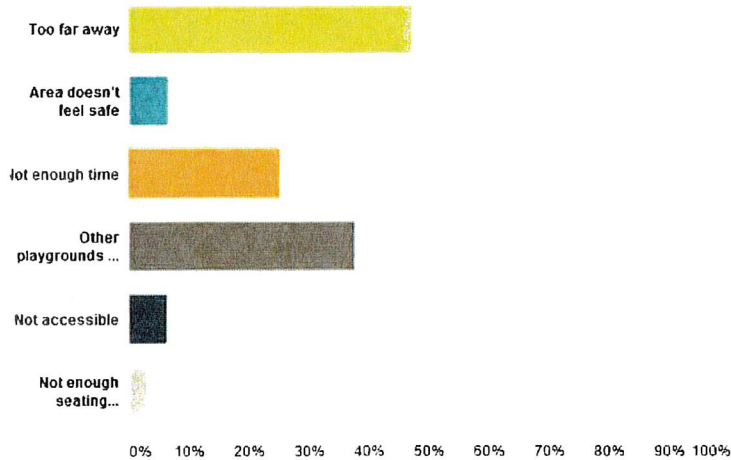
No. 26.32%

Question 5. How often do you visit Freshwater Park Playground during non-summer months?



36.84% is 1-2 times per year. 0 times is 34.21%. 23.68% is 1-2 times per month. Some of respondents haven't been to the Freshwater Park Playground so that they visit the playground 0 times.

Question 6. Why don't you and the children in your household choose to visit Freshwater Park Playground more often?



Too far away	46.88%
Area doesn't feel safe	6.25%
Not enough time	25.00%
Other playgrounds are more interesting	37.50%
Not accessible	6.25%
Not enough seating available	3.13%

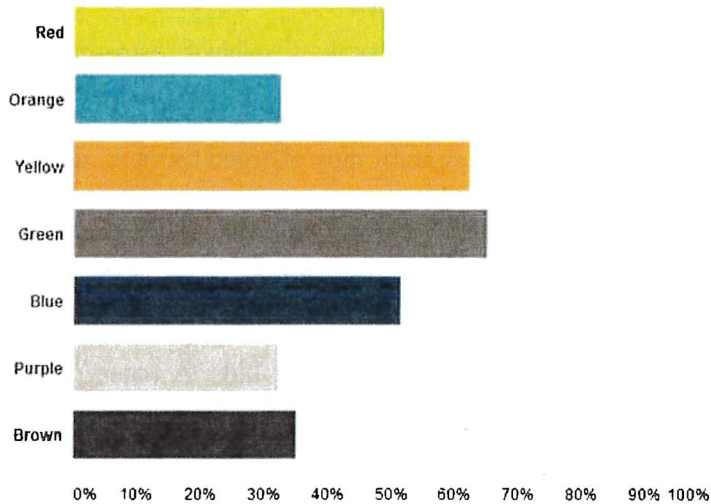
As shown, nearly half of participant felt that Freshwater Park Playground was too far away. Nearly 38% also felt that other playground were more interesting.

· Tunnels	47.22%
· Climbing Structures	69.44%
· Slides	69.44%
· Individual swing	55.56%
· Multi-person swing	50.00%
· Raised Platforms	38.89%
· Ladders/Bridges	63.89%
· Balance Beams/ Stepping Stones	50.00%
· Structures that allow them to spin	52.78%

Survey participant comments from Question 7 include:

1. "The spin stuff is too much at local parks already fun at first then annoying. Tunnels etc are great but please consider the heavy night drug use in this area an hiding spots etc would be very hazardous."
2. "They love a variety. Definitely swings, climbing structures and monkey bars are at the top of the list. They love structures with little "houses" or a place to play house. I love structures with bridges and places to peek out of."
3. "A multi-use structure that includes all the above."
4. "Rings."
5. "Monkey bars."
6. "Weeble wobble."
7. "Monkey bars, tire swing."
8. "Monkey bars."
9. "Some things that are different than most parks to increase interest."

Question 9. What colors would you like to see in the playground equipment? Please select all that apply.



Red	48.65%
Orange	32.43%
Yellow	62.16%
Green	64.86%
Blue	51.35%
Purple	32.43%
Brown	35.14%

Question 10. Do you have any other comments, questions, concerns, or recommendations for playground improvements?

1. "Some people may not have the money to pay to get in."
2. "Please use the recycled tire painted red for padding wood chips are so annoying we have to avoid those parks for kids under 2 completely."
3. "We love Freshwater park for the use and the water hole...we love to have picnics there! I have loved it all of my life!"
4. "I am into natural materials. Definitely do NOT want to see any ground up tires as a ground cover at a playground. There may be a link to repeated exposure to tire pieces and cancer and I would avoid taking my children to such a place."
5. "Check out Carson Park, Sequoia Park, Newburg park and freshwater school playgrounds. How can you insure it won't be vandalized since they don't lock the gate at night?"

APPENDIX A: SUGGESTED GENERAL MAINTENANCE CHECKLISTS**Surfacing (§2.4)**

- Adequate protective surfacing under and around the equipment.
 - Install/replace surfacing
- Surfacing materials have not deteriorated.
 - Replace surfacing
 - Other maintenance: _____
- Loose-fill surfacing materials have no foreign objects or debris.
 - Remove trash and debris
- Loose-fill surfacing materials are not compacted.
 - Rake and fluff surfacing
- Loose-fill surfacing materials have not been displaced under heavy use areas such as under swings or at slide exits.
 - Rake and fluff surfacing

Drainage (§2.4)

- The entire play area has satisfactory drainage, especially in heavy use areas such as under swings and at slide exits.
 - Improve drainage
 - Other maintenance: _____

General Hazards

- There are no sharp points, corners or edges on the equipment (§3.4).
- There are no missing or damaged protective caps or plugs (§3.4).
- There are no hazardous protrusions (§3.2 and Appendix B).
- There are no potential clothing entanglement hazards, such as open S-hooks or protruding bolts (§2.5.2, §3.2, §5.3.8.1 and Appendix B).
- There are no crush and shearing points on exposed moving parts (§3.1).
- There are no trip hazards, such as exposed footings or anchoring devices and rocks, roots, or any other obstacles in a use zone (§3.6).

NOTES:

DATE OF INSPECTION:

Security of Hardware (§2.5)

- There are no loose fastening devices or worn connections.
 - Replace fasteners
 - Other maintenance: _____
- Moving parts, such as swing hangers, merry-go-round bearings, and track rides, are not worn.
 - Replace part
 - Other maintenance: _____

Durability of Equipment (§2.5)

- There are no rust, rot, cracks, or splinters on any equipment (check carefully where it comes in contact with the ground).
- There are no broken or missing components on the equipment (e.g., handrails, guardrails, protective barriers, steps, or rungs).
- There are no damaged fences, benches, or signs on the playground.
- All equipment is securely anchored.

Leaded Paint (§2.5.4)

- Paint (especially lead paint) is not peeling, cracking, chipping, or chalking.
- There are no areas of visible leaded paint chips or accumulation of lead dust.
 - Mitigate lead paint hazards

General Upkeep of Playgrounds (§4)

- There are no user modifications to the equipment, such as strings and ropes tied to equipment, swings looped over top rails, etc.
 - Remove string or rope
 - Correct other modification
- The entire playground is free from debris or litter such as tree branches, soda cans, bottles, glass, etc.
 - Clean playground
- There are no missing trash receptacles.
 - Replace trash receptacle
- Trash receptacles are not full.
 - Empty trash

INSPECTION BY:

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