



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

RELEASE DATE: Immediate

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## **Santa Rosa Parks Foundation to Fundraise, Collect Donations to Rebuild Fire-Damaged City Parks**

*Community donations are needed to fill funding gap*

Santa Rosa, CA (March 22, 2018) – The Santa Rosa Parks Foundation, in coordination with the City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department, has stepped up to lead fundraising efforts to help rebuild and rehabilitate City parks that were damaged in the October 2017 wildfires. The Parks Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, will head fundraising efforts and serve as the single collection source for an outpouring of community donations.

Seventy-five acres of City parkland, open space and landscape areas sustained damage during the wildfires, and the cost of those damages totals over \$40-million. Parks with significant structural damage include Coffey Neighborhood Park, Rincon Ridge Park, Fir Ridge Park, Francis Nielsen Ranch Park, and Nagasawa Park. Additionally, areas or amenities within Howarth Park, Rincon Ridge Open Space, Frances Nielsen Open Space, Thomas Lake Harris Open Space, and Parker Hill Open Space also sustained damage. The City's most severely damaged park is Coffey Neighborhood Park where upwards of \$5-million is needed to rebuild. Federal disaster funding for Coffey Neighborhood Park is estimated to be as little as \$1-million. This leaves up to \$4-million to be raised through other sources, such as community donations—just to rebuild Coffey Neighborhood Park alone.

“Since the October firestorm, the flood of goodwill from people wanting to help rebuild our City parks has been tremendous and continues to be the silver lining of a tragic event,” says Mayor Chris Coursey. “We are grateful to the Parks Foundation for stepping in to assist with fundraising and for providing the City with a means of collecting donations from the many groups and individuals asking to give,” he adds.

Donations to the “Restore S.R. City Parks” fund may be made online via the Parks Foundation website at [SRParksFoundation.org](http://SRParksFoundation.org). Groups and individuals wishing to designate funds to a specific park may do so through the online donation portal (look for the “add special instructions” tab) or by emailing the Parks Foundation directly at [info@srparksfoundation.org](mailto:info@srparksfoundation.org). At this time, it is not possible to designate funds to be used for a specific project or feature within a fire-damaged park. Groups and individuals wishing to make a large donation towards a designated park feature, such as a specific park playground, are encouraged to contact the Parks Foundation to initiate the conversation and explore possibilities.

“As a group of volunteers who love Santa Rosa’s parks and with a mission to improve our parks, we’re happy to help,” says Bill Finkelstein, President of the Santa Rosa Parks Foundation. “Like everyone in our community, our Foundation board members continue to be deeply affected by the fires, so when the City asked if our non-profit would collect and channel donations for park fire restoration, we were honored to do so,” he adds.

Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks is responsible for managing all park rebuild and restoration projects in accordance with City policies and with input from neighbors and community stakeholders. For Coffey Neighborhood Park, City staff have begun discussing restoration plans with members of the Coffey Strong neighborhood group. Outreach efforts to solicit additional input from residents will follow in the Coffey Park area and all neighborhoods where City parks were significantly damaged.

For more information about fire damage to Santa Rosa City parks and the plans for rebuilding and restoration, please visit [SRCity.org/RestoreParks](http://SRCity.org/RestoreParks). Questions may be directed to Kristi Buffo, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator, Recreation & Parks at 707-543-3276 or [kbuffo@srcity.org](mailto:kbuffo@srcity.org).

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