

New Bluffs Preserve Parking Area will improve water quality

The Carpinteria Parks Department is making preparations to remodel the parking area at the end of Bailard Avenue at the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve. The new design will be more user friendly because it will be level and have better trail connections. It will be surrounded by native plantings that help provide food sources for indigenous animals. The new design will also provide better accessibility and feature a Bluffs Preserve overlook that will allow almost perfect views of the fifty-three acre property.

Perhaps most importantly, the project will be friendlier to the environment. This is because the parking area will be constructed of crushed stone that is a form of permeable pavement. Other forms include specialty concretes, paver stones and gravels. Pollution from rainwater runoff is a serious concern in our watershed, especially runoff from our streets, parking lots and driveways. Water washing across these surfaces picks up spilled oil, detergents, solvents, pesticides, fertilizer, and bacteria from pet waste. Storm water is not typically conveyed to our community's treatment facility, but eventually flows directly into our local creeks and then to the ocean. Therefore, the cleaner it is, the healthier we all are.

When storm water soaks into permeable pavement, it takes the bad stuff with it. Natural filtration of contaminated water through soil is the simplest way to control common pollutants and is a compelling advantage of permeable pavement. The contaminants then don't just rest in the soil. Permeable pavements function as effective bioreactors to degrade them. That's because of the presence of various species of bacteria, protozoans, metazoans and fungi. Lets just call them bugs. These indigenous organisms degrade oil into less harmful compounds. The permeable pavement's natural, gradual filtration provides a cost-effective method to reduce storm water runoff contamination.

The use of permeable crushed stone in the Bluffs parking area has other benefits too. By allowing moisture to penetrate through the parking area surface, adjacent plants benefit. Later when the moisture evaporates, it helps keep the parking area cooler in summer months just like an evaporative cooler works in your home or office. It can be more beautiful than blacktop. Finally, a crushed stone paving area is less likely to need major repairs saving the Parks Department maintenance cost later on.

Consider permeable pavement as a preferred alternative for your project. It contributes to the health of the community. For more information regarding the Bluffs parking Area project, please contact Matthew Roberts, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Carpinteria. (805) 684-5405 x449.