

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: November 01, 2023

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Dr. Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) staff undertook from mid-September through mid-October 2023 in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. FEMA – Winter 2023 Storm Damage Compilation

Administration and Operations Divisions' staff continued working on FEMA damages reporting requirements. The District recently received its first reimbursement of \$6,633.75 for the replacement of the deDampierre ballfield fence that was destroyed.

2. Policy Creation/Updates Project

Administration Division staff are working on various policies and updates which will be presented for Board approval in the coming months.

3. Year End Audit

Staff are reviewing FY22-23 activity and preparing documents for the annual financial audit and preparation of the Financial Statements. The bulk of audit activities generally run annually, from July through December/January. Clifton Larson Allen completed field work during the week of October 10 – 13.

In addition to the annual financial audit, the District was notified on September 21, 2023 that the California Department of Finance's Office of State Audits and Evaluations, would be conducting agreed-upon procedures for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District's COVID-19 Fiscal Relief Certified Application. This audit began on September 28, 2023 and ran concurrently with the Annual Audit. The District received \$1,059,975 in COVID relief funds in February 2022.

The initial request for documentation to support the COVID-19 Fiscal Relief Certified Application funds have been provided for review. An exit conference was completed, and staff are waiting for results of the audit.

4. Pre-qualified Consultants and Contractors

Administration Division continued to assist MPRPD's staff in developing an expanded list of pre-qualified consultants and contractors. MPRPD developed a list of pre-qualified architects, landscape architects, and engineers 5-years ago. This list of pre-qualified professional consultants has served the District very beneficially over the past five years. With the anticipated RCU Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project and other projects approaching, additional consultants with expertise in environmental consulting will be added to the existing pre-qualified consultant list.

The District's online e-procurement tool, known as **OpenGov Procurement**, shall be used by all MPRPD divisions to pre-qualify consultants. After the consultants are ranked on their qualifications and narrowed into a small pool to select from, staff from the appropriate Division will present the Board their respective proposed professional service agreements for the specific services required.

5. Palo Corona's Project-B Construction in General

The next phase of permanent electrical service work will be performed by PG&E. Construction preparation and installation dates have been revised. This work is currently scheduled for October 23 for staging and construction to take place on October 30.

SWCA continues to provide biological monitoring services for the project.

6. Recruitment

Recruitment efforts continue for Operations and Maintenance and Environmental Education positions. We anticipate interviewing for EECO positions soon.

7. Training

Staff participated in training including HR Business Partner, and Best Practices for Board/Staff Roles and Communication.

8. CFD Reporting

Staff worked with consultant, SCI Consulting, on year-end reporting requirements for the District's Community Facilities District.

9. Committees

Staff met with several Board members, division personnel, and key stakeholders to explore key components that will help improve MPRPD's many products and their delivery, identify potential means how broad-scale improvements can be achieved, and identifying means of expanding MPRPD's relevance within district boundaries and beyond. Research continues.

Several key parties still remain to be interviewed. Once contact is made with all parties and their information is obtained, the numerous recommendations will be compiled into key 'groups'.

These findings will be presented to the agency's various Committees for review and prioritization. The Committees' recommendations will then be presented to the full Board of Directors for their consideration and direction, and staff's subsequent implementation.

10. Office Space Assessment

An initial spatial needs assessment was performed by several staff. This exercise will be expanded to include additional staff to ensure that their needs and recommendations are heard. Initial concepts were developed and shall continue to be developed and refined. An architectural consultant will be secured to help evaluate staff's recommendations, leading to improvement of work areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO)

1. Community Outreach

A. LGO! Fund

Staff are developing a comprehensive outreach campaign which includes bringing in key foundation speakers to present to the MPRPD board, staff, and volunteers; researching donor outreach and solicitation; and raising community awareness about the opportunity to fund conservation, stewardship, education, and recreation efforts at MPRPD.

B. Pacific Coast Athletic League Cross-Country Championships Media Alert

MPRPD, Big Sur Marathon Foundation (BSMF) and SPOKE Consulting released a media alert, focusing on MPRPD's and BSMF's partnership. To date, this partnership has facilitated more than 5,000 Youth from 100+ Monterey County schools, and numerous colleges and universities, to compete in numerous cross-country meets, and connect with one another on Palo Corona Regional Park's Community Trail.

These meets have especially been successful reaching out to and inviting many youth from disadvantaged and under-served communities, including their families, friends, and coaches, to enjoy Palo Corona Regional Park. Many of these youth, often from the Salinas Valley, have been excited to "discover" this park and have vowed to return. We are proud to announce that many have.

Media was invited to join the running event's youth, coaches, family, friends, staff, and board members at the Pacific Coast Athletic League Cross-Country Championships for All Divisions, on October 28, from 9:30am to 12pm.

C. Social Media Posts (September 16 - October 15, 2023)

For this reporting period, posts consisted of district news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming, the LGO! Fall/Winter season's guide announcement, the LGO! Fund promotion, volunteer outreach, Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday,

Monterey Bay Festival of Birds – a Palo Corona event promotion, and educational content about the flora and fauna of MPRPD parks.

Many of the following MPRPD social media accounts grew in September through October.

i. **Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict (1) Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) | Carmel CA | Facebook**

1. October 15 Follower Count: 2,382 (+100)
2. Facebook Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 9,360 (↑ 6.6%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (September 16-October 15):
 - a. October 11: Upcoming Star Party at GRRP (4,000 reach) (118 likes/reactions)
 - b. October 7: Upcoming Monterey Bay Festival of Birds Palo Corona Raptor Encounter (2,900 reach) (96 likes/reactions)
 - c. October 1: Carmel River After the Rain at GRRP (2,000 reach) (52 likes/reactions)

ii. **Instagram stats - @mprpd_lgo: Monterey Peninsula Parks (@mprpd_lgo) • Instagram photos and videos**

1. October 15 Follower Count: 1,360 (+28)
2. Instagram Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 972 (↓ 29.4%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (September 16-October 15):
 - a. September 20: Rattlesnake at GRRP (440 reach) (50 likes/reactions)
 - b. October 1: Carmel River After the Rain at GRRP (326 reach) (39 likes/reactions)
 - c. October 7: Upcoming Monterey Bay Festival of Birds Palo Corona Raptor Encounter (334 reach) (38 likes/reactions)


Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)
 Published by Let's Go Outdoors · October 15 at 9:00 AM ·

📍 Space is going quick! Reserve your spot today for "Toxicities, Outdoor Poisons, and Your Pet" and learn directly from a veterinarian how to keep your pet safe outdoors.

📅 Saturday, October 21st from 10 am - 12 pm
 📍 Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center... See more


LET'S GO OUTDOORS!

Saturday October 21st Register Today!

Toxicities, Outdoor Poisons, and Your Pet
 10am-12pm
 Garland Park-Visitor Center




Calling all Monterey Peninsula Pet Parents!
 Learn how to protect your pets from toxins. We will identify the most common toxicities and talk about ways to help avoid visits to the emergency room.
Instructor: Dr. Bill Sullenberger, Emergency Service Head BluePearl
Ages 10 - Adult


Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)
 Published by Let's Go Outdoors · October 7 at 6:00 PM ·

📍 **Monterey Bay Festival of Birds** (hosted by The Bird School Project) free presentation next weekend!

📍 Raptor Presentation at Palo Corona
 📅 Date: Sunday, October 15, 2023
 🕒 Time: 2 pm - 4 pm
 📌 Registration is NOT through MPPRD. Register for this FREE event through [The Bird School Project](#) Monterey Bay Festival of Birds website here: <https://birdschoolproject.ticketspice.com/monterey-bay...> (link in bio.)
 📄 J... See more




Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)
 Published by Let's Go Outdoors · September 17 ·

📍 Volunteers needed; join our volunteer crew!
 📍 Help meet and greet the public at our visitor centers.
 📍 Connect with the community, attend volunteer enrichment events, educate the public, help protect our parks, and more!
 📄 F... See more

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District




VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join our volunteer crew! Help meet and greet the public at our visitor centers.

- Connect with the community
- Attend volunteer enrichment events
- Help protect our parks

www.mpprd.org/volunteer-community-alive
 For more information see website or call (831) 372-3196 ext. 113




Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)
 Published by Let's Go Outdoors · September 16 ·

📍 The MPPRD Let's Go Outdoors Fund (held at the Community Foundation for Monterey County) supports safe, accessible parks and open space for recreation, enjoyment, and protection of natural and cultural resources, and native habitat and wildlife throughout our more than 20,000 acres of protected lands.

📍 Your contributions help underwrite essential projects like fire management and mitigation preparedness, floodplain restoration along the Carmel River, an off-leash dog area a... See more




MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
Let's Go Outdoors Fund
 held at the Community Foundation for Monterey County

DONATE TODAY
SUPPORT PROJECTS LIKE:

- ✓ Fire management and mitigation preparedness
- ✓ Off-leash dog area at Palo Corona Regional Park
- ✓ Floodplain restoration along the Carmel River
- ✓ Stewardship, educational, cultural, & historical programs
- ✓ And many other special projects

DONATE TODAY
bit.ly/LGOFund




 Here for Good
 Community Foundation
 for Monterey County



D. Teacher Open House at the PGMNH

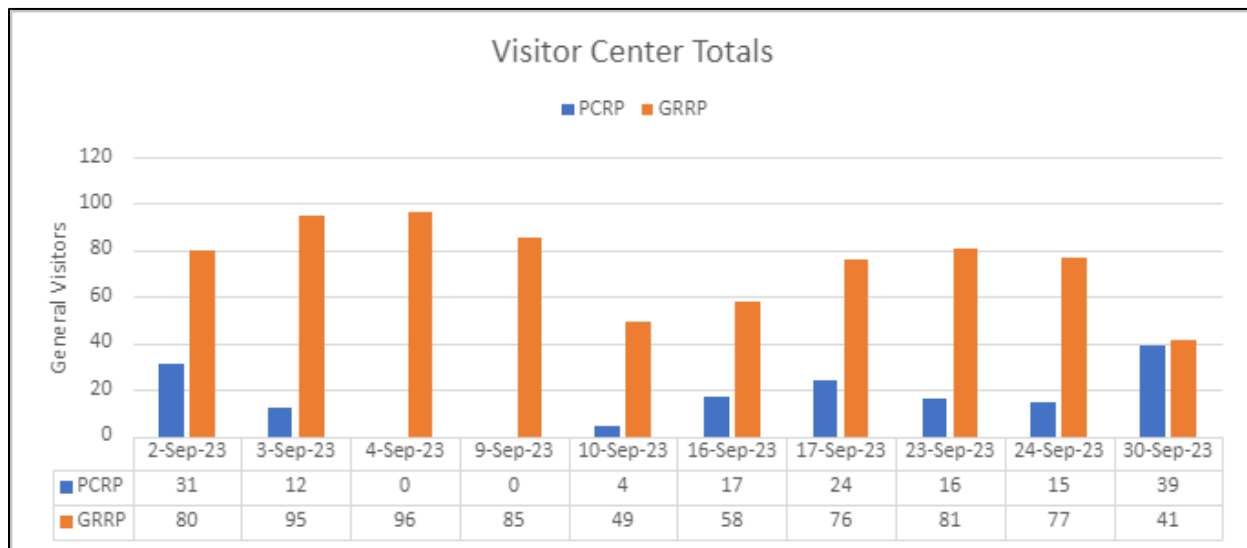
EECO staff advertised to, and discussed with, teachers the funding opportunity provided by the Transportation Grant. The presentation was given at the Pacific Grove Museum’s Teacher Open House on Saturday, September 23, at 4 pm. Teachers from Monterey County were invited to see what the community has to offer for environmental education programming, resources, and other related opportunities.

E. Transportation Grant

Community Foundation for Monterey County has received three applications for grants since the launch of the Transportation Grant program in July 2023. Two applications were from existing partners with active MOU’s and the third applicant is an organization with which MPRPD has had minimal interactions. Staff shall provide a six-month update in early 2024.

F. Visitor Center Totals

Staff are continuing to record visitation during weekends, 10 am - 4 pm, at both the PCRPP Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers in September 2023, including Labor Day (Monday, 9/4). Dates with 0 contacts recorded (9/4 and 9/8 for the DC) indicate that the center remained closed due to limited staff availability.



Visitor contacts at the PCRPP DC and GRRP VC in September 2023.

2. Education and Interpretation

A. Educational curriculum

Staff continues to develop activities in preparation for launching a suite of online teachers and educational resources by the end of the fiscal year.

B. PCPR Tree and Anthropocene Exhibits

Staff met regularly with scientific illustrator intern and the Anthropocene exhibit designer to develop two new, interactive displays for the PCPR Discovery Center. Staff is nearing finalization of the exhibits and is looking towards fabrication and installation.

3. Facilities GRRP Outdoor Classroom

Since the last reporting, a geotechnical survey has been conducted (report pending), and contracts with environmental and archaeologists completed. Staff is presenting this project to the Board at the November meeting, and shall request authorization to purchase the prefabricated classroom structure from ROMTEC, Inc. The next phases include release for construction bids and county permitting. The projected delivery date of the structure is in the spring 2024 and project construction completion is slated for summer 2024.

4. Let's Go Outdoors! Guide and Programs

A. Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Season

The Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Guide-led programs began on October 05. Eight MPRPD-sponsored programs took place between October 05 and 15. The largest crowd had approximately 150 community members who participated in the Live Raptor Encounter, presented by Antonio Balestreri at PCPR in partnership with the Bird School Project during Monterey Bay's Festival of Birds.



Monterey Bay Festival of Birds, a bay-wide 3-day event, sponsored a free "Live Raptor Encounter" presentation with longtime MPRPD supporter, Antonio Balestreri

B. New Hike

This new, LGO! sponsored backcountry hike to the Palo Corona Cabin totals 15-miles round trip.



MPPRD Volunteer Naturalist Andrea Eisler, Steve Ibrahim, and Stanley Dudek (photographer) enjoyed lunch with program participants at the Palo Corona cabin before returning to the PCPR parking lot. This newly returned LGO! backcountry hike is 15 miles round trip.

5. Special Use Permits (SUPs)

SUPs for access to PCPR now include conditional language regarding species of special concern. Working with staff, permittees are made aware and understand about the presence of endangered species on the site, and that they must take special precautions to stay on paved areas and designated trails, and ensure that all participants comply with these conditions.

Staff prepared the following Special Use Permits (SUP) during this reporting period:

A. Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) 2023 Million Dollar Challenge Bike Fundraiser, October 13-20

<https://www.challengedathletes.org/events-million-dollar-challenge/>



120-bicyclists participating in the CAF's 620-mile enjoyed California's awe-inspiring coast, riding to raise funds for adaptive athletes. The event stopped at PCRP's Rancho Canada Unit and utilized the newly constructed plaza as a hydration and fuel station.

B. Carmel Unified School District – Carmel Middle School Phys. Ed.

Carmel Middle School students walked the trails at PCRP as part of their physical education classes on September 12 and 13.

C. Bird School Project – Festival of Birds

Led by the Bird School Project and Festival of Birds affiliates, three birding hikes at PCRP took place during the Monterey Bay Festival of Birds event weekend on October 13, 14, and 15.

D. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

During the month of November, CDFW staff will utilize PCRP's backcountry trails to access Bixby Creek. CDFW Research Coastal Monitoring Program (CMP) is studying federally listed South-Central California Coast Steelhead in the Big Sur Coast Biogeographical Population Group (BPG). Techniques include electro-fishing to conduct "low flow" surveys and determine species abundance and population trends.

E. Turkey Trot Fundraiser

Carmel Valley Athletic Club's annual Turkey Trot event will be held on the South Bank Trail, starting at Rancho San Carlos Road. This fundraising run occurs on Thanksgiving morning with proceeds going to the Monterey Food Bank.

F. Capital City CPR – Wilderness First Aid

Two days of Wilderness First Aid training was held at Garland Ranch Regional Park, hosting indoor and outdoor sessions and scenarios. Rangers recently participated in a similar workshop.

6. Volunteers

A. Volunteer Enrichment

On September 30, volunteer Blake Bufford gave a presentation to the volunteers entitled “Flint Knapping: Making Stone Tools,” which included a demonstration of basic stone tool creation from the Paleolithic through Neolithic periods.



B. Service Learners (Fall 2023)

Students from CSUMB, who are engaged in 25-35 hours of community service for course credit are staffing the GRRP VC and PCRDP DC and helping staff with trail monitoring and interpretive sign inventory. These student learners interact with park visitors to help answer visitor questions while they learn about outreach efforts, conservation practices, and park management.

C. Facilitating Programs and Leading Hikes

During this reporting period, volunteers facilitated the following LGO! programs: Qi Gong, Awe Walk, Mindful Meditation, San Jose Creek and backcountry hikes, and Star Party at Garland Ranch Regional Park. On September 24, volunteer Bruce Merchant led a hike and a tour of the Garland Visitor Center for Cub Scout Pack 126, based in Pacific Grove.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION REPORT

1. FEMA-funded Storm Damage

Staff continued to coordinate with our FEMA Program Delivery Manager, addressing damages, affecting repairs, and recovering as many costs associated with winter storm events as possible. Staff released a Request for Proposals for the final repairs following Board approval of the RFP at the August Board meeting.

On August 31, Rangers facilitated a mandatory site visit for prospective contractors, followed by a September 15 proposal submittal due date. Ops staff received Board approval at the October 04 Board meeting to initiate agreements with the most responsive contractors. Once contracts are finalized and effectuated, work will begin, ideally before any significant rainfall is forecast.

2. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Trail Work

Rangers added some materials to the Frog Pond Loop Trail where the trail surface was deficient, specifically at locations of exposed culverts and the junction of Crossover Trail and Loop Trail.



Rangers adding and compacting material at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve

3. Memorial Bench at Cougar Ridge Trail

A new memorial bench was installed at Kahn Ranch's Cougar Ridge Trail, in memory of Eric McDonald.



Sophie and Coco inspecting the new bench

4. Mesa Trail Culvert Clearing

The culverts under Garland Ranch Regional Park's Mesa Trail were significantly clogged following last winter's storm events. Rangers cleared the culverts, inlets, and outflows in preparation for this coming winter, which is forecast to be significant.



Before



After

5. Race for Open Space Route Tour

Rangers recently provided a full-day tour of the Palo Corona backcountry for members of the Big Sur Land Trust and promoter for the Race for Open Space. The purpose of this tour was to identify, discuss, and assess potential race routes for next year's event. A follow-up tour will be provided to facilitate access into the PCRCP backcountry via Corona Road.



BSLT staff, MPRPD, and the ROS Promoter at Corona Peak

6. Winter Preparation

Preparation was made in anticipation of a wet winter. These include gutter and downspout cleaning, drain dip clearing, and culvert maintenance. The drainageway along Highway 218 is scheduled to be maintained the week of November 13, along with removal of the seasonal footbridges at Garland Ranch Regional Park.

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

1. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects

MPPRPD staff continued to work with The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) and Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) on environmental review and permitting for Cal Fire-funded fuel breaks and Coastal Conservancy-funded projects at Garland Ranch Regional Park, including thinning of the eucalyptus grove near the Rancho Loop Trail and a shaded fuel break along East Garzas Road.

2. The Multi-Benefit Community Trail

Staff continued to work with the Big Sur Marathon Foundation, resource agencies, and grant funders to develop a plan for realignment of sections of the Multi-Benefit Community Trail.

3. Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project

The Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project (Project) passed a major milestone in early October when it was awarded \$10 million in implementation funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) wrote and submitted the grant on MPPRPD's behalf. Funds will be transferred by the SCC to MPPRPD.

The Award marks the largest single grant award from this round of NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Fund, established in 2018 to invest in projects that restore or expand natural features such as coastal forests, rivers, and floodplains that minimize the impacts of storms and other hazards on nearby communities.

4. Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for PCRPs Rancho Cañada Unit

The project team is now in consultation with USFWS regarding the proposed project schedule and outline for a Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park. MPPRPD staff are working to compile a comprehensive lists of projects, operations, and programs that are expected to occur at the park over the next 20 years. This information will be the basis of what activities will be identified in the conservation plan.

5. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Fort Ord Regional Trails and Greenway Mitigation

Staff provided additional input to the Transportation Agency of Monterey County and its consultant team on proposed riparian planting activities at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, as mitigation for vegetation that would need to be cleared at the Preserve, as part of the Canyon Del Rey/Highway 218 segment of the FORTAG Trail. Staff are requesting that mitigation planting support fire-safe conditions and reduce invasive species at the Preserve.

6. Pre-qualified Consultant Request for Qualifications

Staff are releasing multiple RFQs to pre-qualify consultants for on-call or as needed project support. Pre-qualifying consultants allows staff to quickly secure consultants to support MPPRPD projects. Consultants will include securing support for environmental planning, forester/arborist, GIS, environmental remediation, strategic communications, landscape architecture and engineering, and land surveying services.