

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: May 03, 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-March through mid-April 2023 in addition to performing MRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Appreciation Dinner for MRPD's Wonderfully Talented Volunteers

Staff participated in the Volunteer Appreciation dinner, where volunteer Antonio Balestreri, Master Falconer, treated attendees to a brief Raptor experience at the end of the meal and "social time."



Master Falconer, Anthony Balesteri with his Great horned owl, and falcon

2. Asian-American Garden at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park

The City of Marina’s personnel and residents, and MPRPD Staff visited the Shinzen Friendship Garden in Fresno, CA. The entourage met with representatives including City of Fresno personnel and volunteers. The purpose of this site visit was to further our research of and planning for the proposed Asian-American Garden.

This garden will celebrate the United States’ ethnic and racial diversity, commemorate the many contributions made by this nation’s Asian citizens, and memorialize the many struggles people of Asian ancestry have suffered and overcome, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Executive Order 9066’s internment of approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals from 1942 to 1944/45, etc. The garden will also make this park a regional destination and tourism/cultural education-based economic driver for the City of Marina and surrounds.



Shinzen Friendship Garden, Fresno, CA

3. Cachagua Community Park Capital Improvements

Staff previously developed a draft master plan for the park, identifying numerous site improvements that will greatly enhance this park. Among the most needed capital improvements is the construction of a restroom facility. Several technologies have been vetted, including composting, incendiary, and water-based flush-type technologies. Flush-type facilities will require a septic tank and leach field but may be the most favorable option and provide the public greater health and safety benefits.

Funding for construction of the restroom facility and other site improvements at this park are being explored and will be sought.

4. Del Rey Oaks, MPRPD, and the FORTAG Project Team

The Team continues to discuss the joint planning of proposed improvements that will enhance public pedestrian access via and expanded trail network, construction of an underpass to facilitate the City of Del Rey Oak's residents and visitors to safely traverse between Frog Pond's East and West Units, re-establish a wildlife corridor that may help to regionally help connect Jacks Peak to the Salinas River, and enhanced parking by possibly relocating the staging area to South Boundary Road, replacing the extant parking strip on Highway 2018.

5. Dr. Martin Luther King Statue Plaza at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park

Vandals repeatedly attacked the park's sculpture of the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. Relocation from its original location to another site within the park was necessary. The City of Marina and MPRPD personnel worked closely in the planning and development of the new Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Plaza and showcases this sculpture. The plaza is in a highly visible part of the park near the public library.

6. FEMA – Winter 2023 Storm Damage Compilation

Administration staff have been working with Operations staff to compile all winter 2023 storm damage information. Administration Division staff manage the District's FEMA Online Portal Account and enter all data obtained for damage suffered on MPRPD properties and all costs associated with those damages. May 5, 2023 is the deadline for identifying and submitting all damages related to the winter rain season's first declared disaster.

Operations staff have reported no damage to MPRPD properties related to the second declared winter rain season disaster, or thereafter.

7. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget

Staff continue with budget development, and will convene the Finance Committee in May to review and revise the draft. Staff plan to present the draft document for the Board's review and consideration during the 07 June 2023 meeting.

8. Laguna Grande Regional Park JPA

The cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD comprise the park's Joint Power Authority (JPA). The team continues to meet to discuss opportunities to enhance the park. Potential improvements include the park's re-master planning, extensive trail system, community/visitor safety, creation of an environmental education center, and fire and law enforcement enhancements such as improving access routes for police and fire fighters, and development of an incident command center and staging area similar to that being proposed at Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit.

9. Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park Master Plan

The City of Marina and MPRPD's personnel will meet in June with prospective design consultants to discuss re-master planning of the park. The new master plan will incorporate public input. MPRPD's Board will be provided a presentation at a future meeting.

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

Construction activities progressed throughout the month of March. PG&E's trenching, transformer, and conduit installation are awaiting dry weather. This delay is due to the super-saturated soil, making it difficult for equipment to trench.

A permanent grantor sign was prominently installed at the entrance to the Project-B site. This highly visible sign memorializes Proposition 68's contribution to this project. Project-B's progress reports have been jointly prepared by MPRPD's Project Manager, rangers, and the Ausonio construction management team. Ausonio's team continues to coordinate closely with Wedgewood to ensure no negative impacts affect the concessionaire's events. Tribal Monitors remain on-call to identify and avoid any potential negative impacts to cultural sites when excavation or other disturbance of soil occurs. No cultural artifacts were encountered in the past month. The team has also been working closely with SWCA's biologist to monitor the site for, and to protect, the federally listed California Red Legged Frog.



**Grantor acknowledgement sign installed at Project B entrance
(parking lot view)**

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**Grantor acknowledgement sign installed at Project B entrance
(pedestrian view)**

11. Recruitment

MPPRPD Ranger, Ira Comello started April 17. Staff continues recruitment for another seasonal Ranger and for Environmental Education Specialist positions.

12. Training

Staff participated in various training, including:

- Rebecca Smith, Accounting Technician obtained her Fundamental Payroll Certification (FPC) through the American Payroll Association. A rigorous training course followed by a proctored exam.
- California JPIA Human Resources academy training
- Prevailing Wage Basics & Beyond
- CalPERS Pension vs. CalPERS 457 Plan
- California Local Budgeting
- FLSA Webinar by LCW
- FEMA Winter Storm Webinar
- Changes to Your PEPRA Employees' Contribution Rates that go into effect on July 1, 2023
- Leaves, Leaves and More Leaves by LCW

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO)

1. Community Outreach

A. California Wildlife Day

In partnership with the Carmel River Watershed Conservancy, MPRPD hosted the 2023 California Wildlife Day (CWD) celebration at PCRP. Via press releases and a cooperative social media campaign, the public was invited to attend from 10am to 3pm on Sunday, March 26. The event theme, “We are a part of nature, not apart from nature,” was taken from the draft PCPR Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan. The CWD venue showcased the newly constructed outdoor multipurpose pad (fully tented), restroom building, and entry plaza, and included spaces inside the Discovery Center and one of Wedgewood’s large banquet rooms.

More than 25 partner organizations, exhibitors, and vendors operated outreach booths and tables, both indoors and out. The festivities also included guided hikes, tours, presentations, demonstrations, art and science displays, children’s activities, food vendors, and live music for most of the duration.

The Entrance Plaza’s official grand opening and ribbon cutting dedication was held in conjunction with CWD. The ceremony included remarks from General Manager Rafael Payan, President Kathleen Lee, Congressperson Jimmy Panetta, Assemblyperson Dawn Addis, and Supervisor Mary Adams. It is estimated that over 1,000 people were attendance.



Welcome Booth at the Entrance Plaza



Rumsen Representatives and MPRPD Volunteers and Staff Showcased Exhibits



Carmel River Watershed Conservancy's Welcome included Speakers and Panelists



Project-B Ribbon Cutting



Interactive Booths



Wildlife Cam Footage



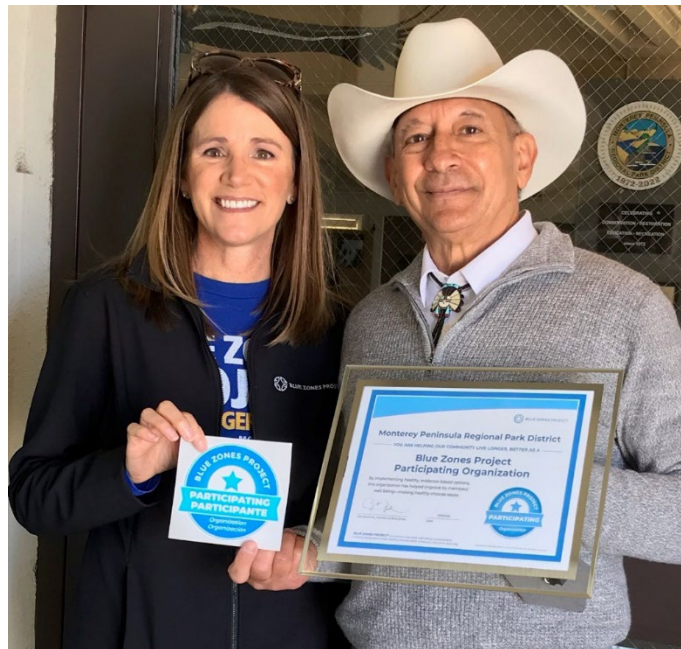
Music and Food

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Master Falconer Wows the Audience with Conservation Messages and His Raptors

Tiffany DiTullio, Blue Zones Project Monterey County's Executive Director of Blue Zones Project (BZP) Monterey County, presented a participating organization certificate to MPRPD Staff and Board at their recognition ceremony during the California Wildlife Day Event. MPRPD is participating in making healthy choices easier for staff and visitors alike.



MPRPD's General Manager, Rafael Payan Accepts the BZP Participating Organization Certificate

B. Earth Day Events

MPRPD received several invitations to participate in other organizations' events associated with Earth Day (April 22) this year. Given staff limitations and previously scheduled programs at GRRP, EECO staff committed to participating in the following events:

i. Locke-Paddon Earth Day Celebration (April 15, 9am-1pm)

Started 17 years ago by MPRPD and the City of Marina, this annual event is organized by Citizens for Sustainable Marina and promotes environmental stewardship and community volunteerism through a focus on volunteer service projects. MPRPD supports the event through advertisement, staffing the welcome/registration booth, and assisting in the permitting process.

Advertisement this year included a front-page article in the *Monterey Herald* ([Marina Earth Day festival to bring community together at Locke-Paddon park – Monterey Herald](#)), press releases, social media posts, and paid printed ads.

More than 200 people interacted with the 18 exhibitors; with 95 visiting participants volunteering for service projects. The service projects were designed for all ages, interests, and abilities, and included art in the park, enhancement of the oak woodland and community garden, ice plant removal, trash pick-up and more. Volunteers were treated to a free vegan zero waste lunch with reusable dishware and entertained with music.

Service projects included mural painting, transplanting seedlings, litter pickup, trenching new water lines, applying decomposed granite to paths, planting dune habitat natives, planting food seedlings in raised beds, and French broom, blackberry, and ice plant removal. The projects ran from 9 am to 11:30 am and the vegan free lunch for volunteers was served at noon alongside live music. Reusable dishware and a dishwashing station were used to make this large celebration zero waste. The event also included 18 local exhibitor booths (including MPRPD), face painting, a fairy house workshop, rock painting, games, activities, and toys given to kids 12 and under.

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Volunteers Trench Water Lines, Construct Decomposed Granite Paths and Raised Vegetable Garden Beds



Volunteers Plant Seedlings in Oak Woodland, Native Plant Garden, and Dune Habitats

ii. MEarth Earth Day (April 29, 10am-4pm)

MPRPD Staff and Volunteers ran an outreach booth at this festival-style event at the Hilton Bialek Habitat (next to Carmel Middle School), focusing on living sustainably and becoming better environmental stewards.

iii. Del Rey Oaks Earth Day (April 29, 10 am-1 pm)

The City of Del Rey Oaks and Sustainable Del Rey Oaks hosted an Earth Day celebration at the Butterfly Garden. In support of MPRPD and its staff, the MPRPD booth was staffed by Director Dr. Raskoff.



C. Social Media Posts: (March 15 – April 14)

For this reporting period, posts consisted of MPRPD news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming and new programs, California Wildlife Day, Marina Earth Day, and educational content about the flora and fauna of MPRPD parks.

The following of MPRPD social media accounts grew in March-April.

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

1. April 14 Follower Count: 2,172 (+46)
2. Facebook Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 7,619 (↓ 30.9 %)
 - a. This is compared to the last reporting period that included a paid ad.
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: March 15–April 14
 - a. March 20: Upcoming Star Party Program (4,173 reach) (110 likes/reactions)
 - b. March 19: CA Wildlife Day one more week (2,213 reach) (44 likes/reactions)
 - c. April 9: Upcoming LGO! programs this week (1,380 reach) (28 likes/reactions)

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

1. April 14 Follower Count: 1,194 (+65)
2. Instagram Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 1,709 (↑ 21.2%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: March 15 – April 14
 - a. March 22: San Jose Creek Video (795 reach) (75 likes/reactions)
 - b. March 20: Upcoming Star Party Program (683 reach) (61 likes/reactions)
 - c. April 9: Upcoming LGO! programs this week (502 reach) (55 likes/reactions)

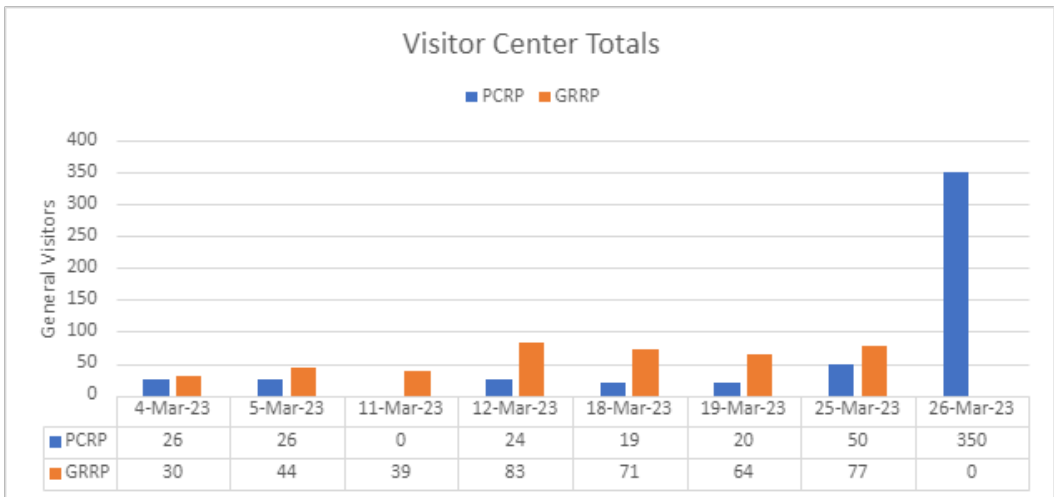




D. Visitor Center Totals

Staff continue to monitor and collect visitation data during weekends, 10am-4pm, at both the PCRP Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers in March 2023. Visitation was relatively lower at both centers during this month.

Dates with zero (0) contacts recorded (11-Mar-23; 26-Mar-23) indicate a closed center. The exceptionally high total for the PCRP DC on March 26 represents only a rough estimate of visitors to the center during broader California Wildlife Day festivities, which had a total of well over 1,000 participants.



E. Education

i. *Healthy Habitats* Pilot Program – Phase 2: Scaling Up

MPPRD staff and volunteers, along with Bay View Academy (BVA) teachers were trained on the newest pilot program in preparation for a two-day fieldtrip series that focuses on the land, plants, animals, and humans within the riparian and upland habitats at Palo Corona Regional Park. This training and its subsequent field trips (April 27 and May 11) represent the second phase of program materials that were previously piloted with small homeschool and afterschool groups (Phase 1).

This enriched, robust, and comprehensive *Healthy Habitats* program will be delivered by staff, volunteers, and collaborating BVA faculty. Once the program has been refined, Phase 3 will make field trip materials and related content available online as teaching resources for the public, followed by outreach to other schools for their use and participation in future field trips.

ii. Monterey Bay Charter School

Monterey Bay Charter School (MBCS) students, grades 1, 7, and 8, were delighted by an impromptu visit to the PCRPD Discovery Center (DC). The older students completed a bingo-style scavenger hunt connected with the DC exhibits, while the first graders learned about the local mammals of the area by exploring MPPRD's skin and pelt collection. As a result of this enriching visit, staff were able to forge a new educational connection with this local school's faculty.



MBCS students share information, reviewing answers to scavenger hunt questions highlighting each of the Discovery Center exhibits

F. Exhibits and Interpretation

i. Anthropocene and Climate Change

Staff and Volunteer Donna Zahn have engaged a graphic designer to “put on paper” the lengthy discussion and extensive brainstorming already underway for creation of an interpretive panel about our current geological epoch, the “Anthropocene.” Installation is anticipated to be completed in summer 2023.

ii. PCPR Entrance Plaza Panels

Permanent trailhead panels were installed in time for California Wildlife Day that orient visitors to PCRP, including a park map with universal symbols, a notice board, a list of rules and regulations, and the MPRPD’s map.

iii. PCRP Discover Center Exhibits

Staff met with several partnership organizations to discuss the content, design, and fabrication of several exhibits for Palo Corona Regional Park’s Discovery Center. Plans for the “Tools, Utensils, & Toys,” “Native Plants,” “Size Matters,” and the Jade exhibits include working with a CSUMB scientific illustration intern.

G. Facilities

i. GRRP Outdoor Classroom

As identified in the FY 2022-23 budget, Staff engaged an architectural firm to assess the site next to the GRRP Visitor Center for installation of a covered facility to be used by park visitors and education programs. Staff is working with Regional Government Services (RGS) to research the design options for a prefabricated structure by ROMTEC, Inc. Employing a multi-phased approach, MPRPD’s purchase and installation of the structure is anticipated to occur over the next two fiscal years.

This covered area will fulfill several pressing needs identified by staff, volunteers, and visitors. It will serve as an outdoor gathering place for scheduled groups and events, a shaded picnic zone during rain or hot weather, and an alternative to the often congested and noisy Visitor Center patio. It will also help to showcase the nearby plants and interpretive panels of the GRRP arboretum.

The structure is designed to serve MPRPD and partnership organizations such as The Pacific Grove of Natural History, Ventana Wildlife Society, Monterey Peninsula College, and Cal State University Monterey Bay; as well as a special events venue for trail runs, weddings, and more, and may serve as a model for a similar application at other MPRPD properties.

ii. PCPR DC Doors

As approved in the current FY 2022-2023 budget, staff is working with the Administration Division’s team and Project-B consultants to install new ADA-

compliant, electronic front entrance doors and new rear doors for the PCPR Discovery Center to ensure compliant, more equitable access.

H. **Let's Go Outdoors! (LGO!) Guide and Programs**

i. **Program Updates**

The Spring/Summer 2023 LGO! publication has been circulating for over a month, and programs have been popular, especially with the cooperative weather. A new program related to the safety of pets in the outdoors, led by a local veterinarian, has been added on May 27, 10am-12pm, at GRRP Visitor Center.

I. **Outreach**

i. **Press Releases**

Working in conjunction with Spoke Consulting, press releases for CA Wildlife Day, PCPR Entrance Plaza Dedication, and Earth Day at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park were released during this reporting period, as well as a media alert, and radio ads. The Monterey Herald ran the Locke-Paddon event on its front page.

Staff are overseeing the development of a branding campaign with support of Spoke Consultants. The long-term marketing strategy maintains MPRPD's positive record of transparency and public outreach, increase visibility, highlight District-wide undertakings, and provide a public relations forum.

ii. **MPRPD featured in the Monterey Herald's Norcal Travel & Tourism Guide for Spring 2023.** MPRPD's parks identified as "destination locations."

<https://www.pageturnpro.com/NORCAL-Community-Newspaper-Group/108168-Norcal-Travel-and-Tourism-2023/sdefault.html#page/2>



J. Special Use Permits

i. UC Davis Sudden Oak Death Blitz

The study of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is a long-term Citizen Science program lead by University of California Davis. Researchers are interested in documenting changes in the host plants through the comparison of samples taken during drought vs wet years, like 2023, comparing the findings of *Phytophthora ramorum* in host plants' leaves from dry/drought and wet years.

ii. Citizens for Sustainable Marina Oak Woodland Community Garden

Park improvements at Locke-Paddon Community Wetland Park included: four raised garden beds, 230 ft of DG pathway, and 3 sitting benches installed in the month of April as during the Earth Day celebration on April 15.

iii. CNPS Wildflower Show

Hosting its 63rd Spring Wildflower Show, the Monterey Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) members collected 17 species from Palo Corona Regional Park backcountry.

The event organizers allocate lists of plants to each team based on what they know is likely blooming in the team's collection area, the ease of obtaining the species in that area versus other areas, and identified the quantity of species that may realistically be collected by the team. The teams typically return to the same area annually and know their location well. Beth Benoit and Lynn Overtree have collected together, often with Cammy Chabre's assistance, on Palo Corona since at least 2014. Lynn started collecting in 1998.

iv. Xerces Bumble Bee Blitz

Access was provided to Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit, Front Ranch, and Backcountry on foot to survey bumble bees as part of a citizen science project for the 2023 CA Bumble Bee Atlas blitz sponsored by the Xerces Society. Sampling took place over several days, starting April 25.

K. Volunteers

- i.** Returning after three years of remote work and isolation has its challenges. The evening of April 1 marked the first Volunteer Recognition event held by MPRPD since 2019. Taking advantage of PCRPD's newly constructed restrooms and outdoor venue, the celebration took place on the park's multipurpose event pad within a temporary tent structure. A sustainability-oriented, catered dinner was served to honor our valued volunteers.

Nearly 50 people (volunteers, guests, and staff) attended the banquet, which included an awards ceremony, thank-you gifts, and a raptor falconry educational demonstration.

Photos of the event are available on request. For more information, please contact Debbie Wyatt at wyatt@mprpd.org.



Volunteer Recognition Ceremony

- ii. Big Sur Land Trust staff and MPRPD volunteers assisted Maintenance and Operations Division staff with scouting and reporting on MPRPD's parks and backcountry trails after this winter's storm and flooding events.
- iii. Naturalist instructor, Patrick Furtado conducted an amazing volunteer enrichment on "How to be a Naturalist." The Plant Identification Course at the Garland Visitor Center patio was delivered to a full class. Staff and volunteers are sharpening their plant identification skills for our 24th Annual Summer Wildflower Show at Garland Ranch Regional Park, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday June 10th and 11th at the Visitor Center's patio.



Patrick Furtado shares plant identification techniques with 11 Volunteers and Staff during the naturalist training course. This is the first in a series of volunteer naturalist training programs.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. BSLT Race for Open Space Preparations

Rangers are prepping the Palo Corona backcountry and Whisler-Wilson Unit for the Big Sur Land Trust's (BSLT) annual Race for Open Space. Given the amount of fallen trees, slides, and road damage, Rangers are teaming up with BSLT to affect the minimal repairs to accommodate race support staff and vehicles. The event, originally scheduled for early April, is now scheduled for May 27, 2023.



Slide along Whisler Trail



Slide on Wilson Ridge

2. Cal Fire Preparations for Fire Season

Recently, Cal Fire contacted MPRPD to inquire about flying a drone over Palo Corona Regional Park's backcountry to assess access points and roadways in preparation for fire season. Cal Fire is interested in partnering with MPRPD again this year to provide backcountry road brushing and grading free of charge.

3. CCC Apartment Roof

The contract for Cachagua Community Park's Apartment Roof Project is being finalized, after which Rangers will coordinate with Avila Construction to begin work. This project also includes the addition of gutters and downspouts to the building, which also houses the CCC restroom and storage room. Staff is interested in discovering if any additional repairs are needed to roof sheathing once the existing shingles and underlayment have been removed.

4. Dedampierre Ballfield Recovery Efforts

Rangers continue to implement repairs at Dedampierre Ballfields resulting from the January flood event that inundated the playing fields and the adjacent Paso Hondo neighborhood. More recently, Rangers utilized the assistance of a Gabilan Inmate Crew to replace critical sections of parking bollards. The Carmel Youth Baseball league is now in full swing. Staff also coordinated with Monterey County, who provided a dumpster free of charge, to address an issue of illegal dumping on MPRPD property.

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Gabilan Crew Moving Bollards



Parking Bollards in Place



Flood Debris on MPRPD Property



Dumpster Provided by County

5. FEMA Damage Inventory & Site Inspections

Members of Operations and Admin divisions continue to work with FEMA on damage inventory and cost recovery resulting from the storm and flood events of January 2023. FEMA staff was provided a tour on April 5th of the Multi-Benefit Community Trail and Dedampierre Ballfields to inspect damages and assess conditions. MPRPD and FEMA continue to hold weekly in-person meetings. Staff are also evaluating damage at Rocky Shores, a property owned by MPRPD.

6. GRRP Parking Lot Repairs

Rangers recently completed repairs to the upper parking lot at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Heavy equipment implemented for this project included MPRPD's tractor, compactor/roller, and water tender. Future improvements include repaving of the entrance ramp to the lower parking lot to prevent potholes from developing where the aggregate meets Carmel Valley Road.

7. Hatton Canyon Mowing

Rangers are collaborating with local residents, California Native Plant Society, and restoration experts to help eradicate invasive weeds at the MPRPD's Hatton Canyon

property. MPRPD agreed to mow the property at specific times to allow germination of native grasses, while also preventing the spread of seeds from noxious weeds. Rangers will be coordinating with a local mowing contractor to augment this newly adopted mowing schedule.

8. JPIA Insurance Adjuster Site Inspections

An adjuster from Sedgwick Insurance (an underwriter for the Joint Powers Insurance Authority) visited MPRPD on April 19 to inspect damage and assess losses suffered during the storm and flood events of January 2023. OPS staff facilitated this full day's site visits, which included the Palo Corona backcountry, Dedampierre Ballfields, and San Clemente Blue Rock Open Space. Sedgwick's findings will determine if MPRPD needs to move forward with a FEMA claim for damages & cost recovery.



Collapsed and Undermined culvert



Adjuster Inspecting Road Slide

9. Marina Dunes Education & Enforcement

Recent events have provided an opportunity for Rangers to increase their presence at Marina Dunes Preserve (MDP). From April 5th through 20th, Rangers were able to monitor activity at MDP for an additional 26 hours. During that time, Rangers contacted 33 visitors with dogs on leash, and 22 visitors with dogs off leash. Recently, Rangers issued a citation for repeated off-leash dog violations, which was contested in Superior Court and upheld by the presiding judge. Further, on April 7th the Snowy Plover symbolic fencing was relocated to the toe of the foredune, in cooperation with Point Blue Conservancy.

10. Memorial Bench on Veeder Trail

A new memorial bench has been fabricated and installed along Veeder Trail at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Rangers, along with the Sponsor and a group of his friends carried the bench and tools Veeder Trail to the project site, which itself was a significant accomplishment.



New Memorial Bench on Veeder Trail

11. Mill Creek Preserve Tree Work

Rangers were finally able to access Mill Creek Redwood Preserve (MCP) to address the myriad of trees downed across the driveway leading to the Davis House. Clearing these trees provides access for emergency vehicles to conduct structure protection in the event of a wildfire, as well as providing access for our MCP caretaker who monitors this site for illegal activity.



Several Trees Cleared at MCP's Davis House

12. RCU Temporary Ranger Station

Following Board approval at the May meeting, staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the temporary Ranger Station at Palo Corona Regional Park – Rancho Canada Unit. The deadline for submittals was April 20th. Staff received two proposals, and will be bringing this item back to the Board at the June meeting to request purchase of this item from the lowest responsive responsible bidder.

13. RCU Trespassing Incidents

Rangers are coordinating with Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Wedgwood staff, and Legal Counsel to address repeated incidents of trespass at Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit. Staff are researching property boundary records to determine if MPRPD has the authority to implement preventative measures to discourage overnight camping along Rio Road at RCU.

14. Seasonal Mowing & Brushing

Spring is upon us, and with it comes new growth of weeds and grasses along trails and roadways. Rangers have begun the process of coordinating temporary workers to assist with weed-whipping along single-track trails and around structures. The mowing of two-track trails will soon be undertaken by Rangers using MPRPD's equipment. Given the significant amount of precipitation that winter storms posed this year, there is a chance that a second round of mowing may be necessary.

15. Storm Damage Repairs

Rangers are getting caught up on addressing storm damage that (at the time) was not significantly impacting public safety and/or access during the winter months. Many of these items, such as erosion along Barn Trail at PCRP (see below), were documented and monitored but not addressed immediately, with the understanding we would revisit these items once weather was cooperative and soil conditions were favorable. Rangers will continue to address these items prior to fully transitioning into mowing and brushing of MPRPD's trails and roadways, as soil is presently in prime condition for trail work and reconstruction.



“Channeling” on Barn Trail



Slides on Palo Corona Trail

16. The Beauty of a Wet Winter

One of the greatest benefits to a wet winter is the subsequent spring. As you can see below, Mesa Pond is at capacity, which also happens to be the source of water for the “Waterfall” at Garland Park. It is a rare occurrence for the waterfall to be flowing weeks after the last significant rain event.

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Waterfall Still Running



Mesa Pond at Full Capacity

17. Trees Downed

Significant soil saturation on MPRPD property continues to contribute to an increase in fallen trees and erosion, such as this large fallen oak tree at Palo Corona Regional Park, and this fallen Willow tree on Lupine Loop at Garland Ranch Regional Park. The tree at PCRPD required use of MPRPD’s excavator to remove the downed tree and displaced soil.



Rangers Removing Fallen Tree at PCRPD



Downed Tree on Lupine Loop

18. Water System at GRRP Mesa

Dougherty Pump & Drilling recently pulled the aged, failing pump at Garland Ranch Regional Park’s Mesa Well. Dougherty also serviced the solar panel and controller that powers the well pump. This will allow MPRPD to resume the provision of

drinking water to visitors, canines, and equines at the Mesa, a major destination within GRRP.



Dougherty's Technicians Working on Mesa Well Pump

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

1. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects

The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) has begun site visits to identify fuel breaks at Garland Ranch Regional Park and San Clemente-Blue Rock Open Space Preserve as a part of the Cal Fire funded Carmel Valley Fuel Break Project. MPRPD staff are now meeting weekly with RCDMC and Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) to work on environmental review and permitting for additional 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. DDA is in the process of evaluating the project and CEQA timeline that staff expect to share in next month's Staff Report.

2. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project Plant Propagation

Staff and the Floodplain Restoration Project team are now working with Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) to coordinate initial seed collection and plant propagation activities that must begin this spring to provide sufficient plant stock for the Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project. DDA is now preparing basic project related information that will assist us in evaluating and selecting 1-3 local nurseries that can propagate collected plant seed and cuttings. Staff now expect to return to MPRPD's Board as early as 07 June 2023 to seek MPRPD Board's consideration and approval for fund agreements with the subject nurseries.

3. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project Permitting

MPPRPD's Board approved the Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project on 05 April 2023. Staff have filed the project's CEQA Notice of Determination with the County Clerk. The project team is continuing conversations with potential project funders and is in the process of preparing additional applications for grant funding. In the meantime, the project team continues to work on finalizing various state and federal permit applications.

4. Laidlaw-Apte Vegetation Management Project

Staff are working with the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District and Cal Fire to reduce unnaturally high vegetation levels and fuel loading in the Laidlaw-Apte Preserve. Staff are working with Cal Fire to schedule follow-up biological surveys that are required before the project can move forward. The Laidlaw-Apte Vegetation Management Project is expected to be completed by June 2023.

5. Marina Dune Preserve Restoration Project

MPPRPD Staff and Burleson Consulting conducted a site visit with the City of Marina's personnel to discuss the project scope and status of permitting. Burleson Consulting is presently conducting annual monitoring and is preparing an updated 23/24 FY workplan for restoration activities, including environmental review, permitting, and implementation.

6. Cachagua Community Park Water System Improvements

MPPRPD staff met with Carmel Unified School District and agreed that CUSD would oversee implementation of additional monitoring, reporting, and basic infrastructure improvements. This is in response to new regulations affecting the Cachagua water system. This matter is being addressed in consultation with MPPRPD.

7. The Multi-Benefit Community Trail

Staff continue to work with resource agencies and grant funders to develop a plan for realignment of sections of the Multi-Benefit Community trail.

(end of report)