

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: February 02, 2022

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: 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-December 2021 through mid-January 2022 in addition to performing the District's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the CDC's recommendations and the State's and County's COVID-related guidelines.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Class & Comp Survey:

A. Phase I (Classification Analysis): Consultant interviewed all MPRPD personnel to obtain each job-holder's perspective regarding their respective current position requirements and responsibilities. The Consultant subsequently provided the General Manager their initial findings and stated they anticipate submitting the initial Draft Phase I Report, for the General Manager's review and comment, within the next six to eight weeks.

B. Phase II (Compensation Analysis): Phase II will begin shortly after completion of Phase I. A timeframe for completion of Phase II has not yet been identified. The Board will be provided updates as this project advances.

2. COVID-19: Staff continued to participate in weekly meetings with the County OES and local jurisdictions. Health department reports increased COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, the majority attributed to the omicron variant.

3. COVID-19 Prevention Plan (CPP): Staff is working on updating the CCP based on new State guidance. The revised document will be submitted for Board review. MPRPD's Legal Counsel and Staff continue to work together to decipher and implement the latest CDC and CDPH guidance and recommendations.

4. **COVID Relief Funds:** MPRPD was notified on December 17, 2021, by the California Special District's Association, that MPRPD will receive \$1,059,975 in COVID relief funds. The State Controller's Office made allocations to County-Auditor Controllers December 15, 2021. Counties have 30-days to disperse funds to the special district recipients. As of writing of this report the funds have yet to be received. Included in the notification were templates for thank you letters to our legislators.

COVID-19 US Supreme Court Ruling: On January 13, 2022, the Supreme Court issued their ruling on the OSHA Vax mandate, holding 6-3 to overturn it. Staff was correct in its assertion that this is not directly applicable to MPRPD. The reasoning of the Court, though, may be roughly analogous to our situation.

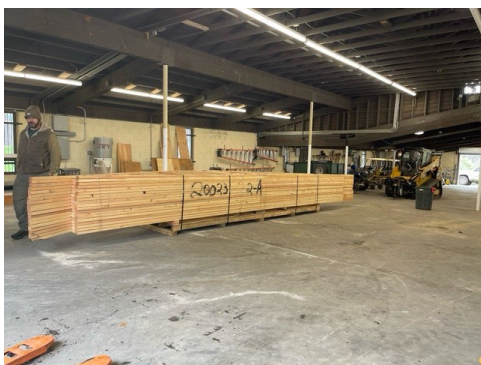
SUMMARY: The Court did not address whether it was permissible for the government to order millions of people to be vaccinated. Rather, the Court based its decision on what government entity would have that authority — holding that OSHA, created to address occupational hazards, did NOT have authority to tackle larger society-wide issues of public health — such as Covid. Congress and/or the States would have the authority to address these larger issues.

5. **Intersection Concepts Review:** Rancho Canada Village Development provided MPRPD's Staff and Legal Counsel two concept plans for the proposed Carmel Valley Road and Rio Road intersection improvements project. These concepts are summarized below. Staff will provide the Board more information as it becomes available.
 - A. One concept calls for construction an acceleration lane within the existing Carmel Valley Road center median. Drivers would exit northbound Rio Road and onto westbound Carmel Valley Road, entering the intersection in a manner similar to what is presently required. The driver would then enter and queue in the new acceleration lane, then merge into westbound traffic.
 - B. The other concept plan calls for a signalized (traffic lights) intersection along with other minor improvements to acceleration and deceleration lanes.
6. **Laguna Grande Regional Park:** Consultants are developing and refining concept plans for the park's Trail Maintenance Strategies and Environmental Enhancement Project. The cities of Monterey and Seaside, along with MPRPD, are in the process of scheduling a JPA meeting to discuss the project's progress and identify the best means for the JPA to consult with an attorney who may provide the JPA valuable information on regulations, contracts, and other items.

7. **Locke-Paddon Wetland Preserve:** It is anticipated that MPRPD Staff will meet with City of Marina officials to discuss the updating of the Preserve's master plan. The Board will be provided additional information as it becomes available.
8. **Personnel Recruitment:** The recruitment and selection processes continued for the Planning & Conservation Supervisor, Ranger, and Environmental Education Specialist positions. As of the drafting of this report, it was anticipated that interviews would begin in late January. Staff will update the Board as these important hires take place. This is especially vital for MPRPD's coordination and implementation of conservation strategies, especially for the Marina Dunes Preserve and its critical habitat protection and restoration.
9. **Redistricting Analysis and Project:** In response to the 2021 Census, MPRPD must assess and, where necessary, adjust the District's Ward boundaries to ensure proper representation. As such, the project's consultant has been contacted and discussion regarding this matter is underway. MPRPD's Legal Counsel will provide updates to the Board during Board meetings.
10. **ROMTEC Prefabricated Restroom:** The District received shipment of the ROMTEC restroom building in early January. All components were delivered except those that had been identified as backordered components. The pandemic has disrupted supply chains globally, impacting delivery of some construction materials.

Equipment stored in the maintenance shop was rearranged to accommodate indoor storage, to maintain warranty requirements and safeguard the materials and components. On-site existing storage containers were consolidated to add additional indoor storage. The concrete block was stored on the gravel overflow parking area.

MPRPD has placed the installation of the building out to bid, while it continues to wait for the County to process the design plans. The architect submitted plans over 4-months ago. Bids are currently scheduled to be opened electronically, in the ProcureNow portal, on February 10, via Zoom, with a low bidder recommendation to follow at the March 2, 2022, Board Meeting.



11. Training: Staff participated in COVID-19, Brown Act, CAL/OSHA, and Public Employee Discipline training, which was offered by Liebert Cassidy Whitmore, one of California's premier labor, education, and employment law firms.

EECO DIVISION

- 1. Community Outreach -- Return of the Natives (RON):** MPRPD personnel met with RON staff, CSUMB service learners and volunteers in December to plant native coast buckwheat, deerweed, sea thrift, beach sage wort, and common aster at Marina Dunes Preserve. More than eight hundred (+800) native plants were planted during this event. These plants will help restore the Preserve's habitat and are vital for numerous common, threatened, and endangered fauna including the listed Smith's Blue Butterfly.
- 2. Conferences:** Staff attended the National Association for Interpretation's National Hybrid Conference. Sessions highlighted how interpreters are navigating the "shifting sands" of heritage interpretation for those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, and cultural sites.

Virtual sessions included strategies for working in today's challenging environment and adapting and adjusting programs, technology, venues, and educational and outreach approaches to effectively integrate with demographic shifts, the on-going pandemic, and climate change. Overarching topics covered Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Media & Technology, and Management and Operations.

- 3. COVID Protocols for EECO Programs:** As of this writing, the following were implemented by MPRPD but may be subject to change in alignment with Federal, State and County protocols that are also subject to change:

All LGO! programs are outdoors or virtual

- a. Masks are recommended, not required
- b. Registration is online or by phone
- c. Waivers are digitally signed at time of registration; a hard copy signed at the event
- d. Reminders with updates or critical information is sent to each registered participant 3-5 days before the program
- e. Walk-ups are not accepted
- f. Classes are limited in size (smaller than previous programs)
- g. Specific to the San Jose Creek hikes:
 - i. Participants cannot park at trailhead near California State Park's compound
 - ii. Staff is researching shuttle industry standards and practices
- h. CA Wildlife Day 2022 event is being revised with current considerations decreasing crowd size by:

- i. Live stream presentations and talks in the morning with no public gathering.
- ii. Walks in the afternoon with registration via the MPRPD online registration system
- iii. Afternoon may also include a limited number of activity tables hosted by partnering organizations

4. Education:

A. Social Media Posts:

Goal of social media is to use multiple platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) to reach existing and new audiences. For this reporting period, posts highlighted park events/happenings and educational content specifically related to caterpillar camouflage, decomposers, gopher snakes, and encouraging outdoor recreation. A job posting was also included. In summary:

i. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

1. December 14 follower count: 1.6K
2. Facebook Page Reach: 1,372 (↑ 17.2%)
3. Top 3 most popular posts: November 24 – December 22
 - a. 12/1 Gopher Snakes (333 views)
 - b. 12/8 December MPRPD Job Posting (838 views)
 - c. 12/17 Carmel River Flow at PCRCP (322 views)

ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd_lgo:

1. December 14 follower count: 593
2. Facebook Page Reach: 527 (↑ 37%)
3. Top 3 most popular posts: November 24 – December 22
 - a. 12/8 December MPRPD Job Posting (323 views)
 - b. 12/1 Gopher Snakes (233 views)
 - c. 12/17 Carmel River Flow at PCRCP (233 views)

- ##### iii. Coalition Building:
- Staff is working on and encouraging social media coalitions that increase post engagement/sharing. Potential coalition members being reached include the Santa Lucia Conservancy, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, Carmel River Watershed Conservancy, Central Coast Wetlands Group, and others.

NOTE: Sample content is included on following page:

MPRPD
@MPRParkDistrict

The freshwater lake of Laguna Grande Community Park borders the towns of @CityofMonterey and @City_of_Seaside, providing unique opportunities for recreational activities from bird watching, fishing, hiking, and much more!

:Mary D

#knowyourparksMPRPD #letsgooutdoors

10:03 AM · Nov 22, 2021 · Twitter Web App

View Tweet activity

2 Retweets 2 Likes

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)
Published by Let's Go Outdoors · December 8 at 10:37 AM

Enjoy our parks? Apply to work with us!
Check out our newest MPRPD job openings:
Ranger
Planning & Conservation Supervisor... See more

See Insights Boost post

9 Shares

mprpd_igo

mprpd_igo Had a great time this morning planting some #nativeplants with @returnofthenatives at Marina Dunes Preserve!! 🌱🌿

While MPRPD has yet to resume in person events, check out the RON event calendar for future events. Thank you to all volunteers and @countme service learners who made today possible! #letsgooutdoors #restoration #outdooreducation

foantofcuriosityjane Hurray! Excellent — thank you volunteers! ❤️

1 Like Reply

View Insights

Liked by returnofthenatives and 43 others

Add a comment...

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) is with **Let's Go Outdoors.**
Published by Let's Go Outdoors · December 3 at 12:47 PM

#Happyfriday everyone!! 🌞 Cool temps and cloudy days are starting to feel a lot like Winter here at Palo Corona Regional Park!
How will you get outdoors this weekend? 🌲🌲🌲
#winterhiking #exploremonterey #letsgooutdoors

See Insights Boost post

5 1 Comment

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) is with **Let's Go Outdoors.**
Published by Let's Go Outdoors · December 1 at 10:30 AM

#gophersnakes are one of the most commonly found snake species in California. By controlling rodent populations, snakes serve a very important ecological role in maintain a healthy predator-prey balance. 🌿 Although this species is considered non venomous, they still deserve their space!
See a snake on trail? Avoid startling them and be sure to give plenty of space for the snake to pass.
#snakes #habitat #cawildlife #letsgooutdoors

See Insights Boost post

10 2 Comments 1 Share

B. Exhibits: EECO Staff and the General Manager met with Ventana Wildlife Society personnel to outline ideas for Condor Exhibits at Palo Corona Regional Park. This multi-media exhibit area may incorporate digital and technology that invites visitor participation. The story of the California Condor from prehistory to the present, to its optimistic future will be told. This included the existing partnership between the Ventana Wildlife Society and MPRPD in the development and almost decade long operation of a feeding station at Palo Corona Regional Park.

The updated California Condor and the Tule Boat exhibits are presently under construction. Development of a 3-D map highlighting the Carmel River Watershed and some of the surrounding areas is also underway.

Other exhibits being advanced will include the construction a ruk (Rumsen House) and other exhibits featuring the Esellen, Ohlone, and Rumsen tribes and their ancestral lands -- which encompass the entirety of Monterey County and beyond, their cultures and languages, traditional uses of the region's natural resources, and the Kelp Highway which posits that a goodly portion of the America's may have first been settled using this nautical corridor.

The development of a San Andreas fault, and a freshwater aquarium featuring juvenile steelhead trout, continue to be explored. These exhibits will be showcased at the Palo Corona Regional Park Discovery Center. The continued closure of the Discovery Center has provided staff an opportunity to update several exhibits.

C. Interns:

- i. **CSUMB School of Scientific Illustration instructors:** EECO Staff, in partnership with Burleson Consulting personnel, met with CSUMB School of Scientific Illustration instructors to discuss recruiting interns recently graduated from their program to create artwork for wayside interpretive panels for the Marina Dunes Preserve.
- ii. **CSUMB and AmeriCorps:** MPRPD Staff met with CSUMB staff to discuss the university's various internship programs and explore potential collaboration with the AmeriCorps.

D. Let's Go Outdoors! Catalog and Programs:

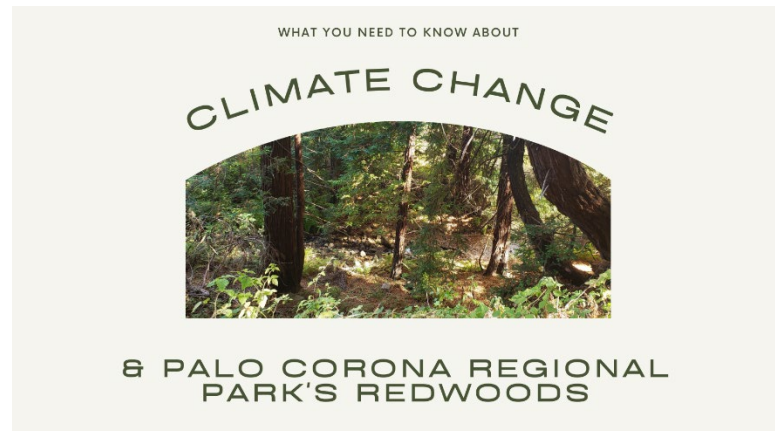
- i. **LGO! Issued:** Staff released the Winter 2022 Let's Go Outdoors Adventure Activities Guide for All Ages (LGO!). The winter season's first program was a meteorological star gazing event, held on January 3rd at the Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center in partnership with the MIRA Astronomy Club.

Other scheduled programs shall include an array of outdoor and virtual activities to accommodate all audiences and comfort levels. LGO! will also include local community activities and Blue Zones Project community participation opportunities that will be held on MPRPD properties and at other venues within Monterey County.

ii. **LGO! Partnerships:** Staff is working closely with many area organizations and agencies to partner in the provision of even more opportunities to the community. Some of our partners include Blue Zones Project Monterey County, Montage Health, California State Parks, and Friends of Seaside.

iii. **LGO! San Jose Creek Trail Hike:** In late January, MPRPD partnered with California State Parks to provide a hike on the San Jose Creek Trail. This is likely to be one of the most popular LGO! activities. The January 23 hike, which required reservations in advance, filled to capacity in less than 2-hours, with 48 people on the waitlist.

E. **Service Learning – CSU Monterey Bay:** Service Learners from CSUMB’s School of Computing presented their final projects on data management for MPRPD’s calendars and contacts, the San Andreas Fault exhibit, social media posts, student activities, and teacher informational handouts on redwood forests, the Carmel River floodplain, and climate change.



5. **Interpretive Planning -- VEG app:** MPRPD and Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Staff met with Green Infrastructure Design to finalize integration of the timeline dropdown data to complete Phase A of the Visitor Education Guide app.
6. **PG&E Grant:** PG&E has awarded MPRPD a \$624,346 grant for the Marina Dunes Preserve, with the target goal of re-establishing habitat for the listed Smith's Blue Butterfly (SBB). Two of the key components that influenced the award of this grant to MPRPD were the presence of SBB and the established three-year Restoration Action Plan (RAP) presented to the MPRPD Board of Directors in April 2021.

The proposed mitigation project provides funds equate an investment of approximately \$15,117 per acre to enhance 41.5 acres of the 62-acre coastal dune Preserve. It is proposed to take eight to ten years to implement the initial restoration activities, with monitoring anticipated to extend past ten years. Utilizing contracted staff, the project is anticipated to be managed by MPRPD's soon to be hired Planning and Conservation Supervisor.

Additional information shall be provided during MPRPD's February Board meeting.

7. **Special Use Permits:** Montage Health's *Walk for Health* was held in early December. The event was an "out-and-back" hike beginning and ending at the Rancho Canada Unit after summiting Inspiration Point.
8. **Volunteers:** Staff continued having check-in meetings with each MPRPD volunteer via zoom or phone, during the months of December and January, to touch base and connect while cessation of "in-person" activity due to COVID-19 continues.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION – December 2021/January 2022

1. **Big Sur International Marathon (BSIM) Cross-Country Course:** O&M staff met with BSIM Team members in December to discuss material and labor costs for improvements associated with the proposed Rancho Canada Cross-Country Course. BSIM is actively seeking donations to fund these improvements.
2. **Board-approved Bid Items on Procure Now:** MPRPD's Board recently approved bid packages for the Palo Corona Regional Park backcountry perimeter fencing project and the Palo Corona barn roof stabilization project. These projects are currently being advertised on ProcureNow. Mandatory pre-bid site visits were hosted by O&M staff in mid-January. Pre-bid meetings were well attended, with four (4) interested contractors attending each of the projects' respective meeting. Staff will be bringing these items back to the Board at the February meeting to recommend awarding a contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidders.

- 3. Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) Sewer Main Replacement Project:** Staff continues to work with Graniterock (CAWD's general contractor), Psomas Construction (CAWD'S construction manager), and others toward completion of the sewer main replacement project at PCRPs Rancho Canada Unit. Excavation is complete, and all underground 16" sewer pipe has been installed and is now functioning. Remaining items include backfilling around manholes and hydroseeding all disturbed areas. December's rains stalled the project's completion until February.



Graniterock finishing pipe installation on RCU east course

- 4. Carmel Youth Baseball Season:** Carmel Youth Baseball has announced plans for their 2022 season, which included or includes utilization of Dedampierre ballfields as their primary playing fields, a volunteer clean-up day in mid-January and opening day on March 12. MPRPD will schedule ballfield parking lot improvements in preparation of opening day and offer assistance during the season, as needed.
- 5. Culvert Improvements on Mesa Trail:** Rangers recently armored the inlet and outflow of multiple culverts underneath Mesa Trail at GRRP. This included placement of gabion rock to serve as a flow velocity dissipator, as well as stacking of concrete sacks to protect fill soil around the inlet.



Armored inlet



Dissipated Outflow

6. **Gabilan Conservation Crews at GRRP, PCRP, and RCU:** Gabilan inmate crews recently spent another week at various MPRPD properties addressing multiple projects including downed trees at the Rancho Canada Unit, dead standing trees at Palo Corona Regional Park, eucalyptus removal at Garland Ranch Regional Park, and arboretum garden planting at the Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center.
7. **Gate/Alarm Code Updates:** O&M and Admin. staff recently coordinated an update to all gate locks and facility alarm codes throughout the District. Rangers updated and replaced locks, while Admin. staff printed and laminated updated wallet size code cards that were distributed solely to staff.
8. **GRRP Fire Management Plan:** Staff and RGS Consultants are finalizing the request for proposals (RFP) for the Garland Ranch Regional Park Fire Management Plan. Pending MPRPD's Board approval, the RFP will be advertised on ProcureNow for solicitation of proposals in February 2022, followed by approval of a contract in March 2022. Staff is also requesting funding for this RFP as part of the California Coastal Conservancy grant pre-application (see item 18).
9. **GRRP Ranger Station Stairs:** O&M staff recently replaced the dilapidated staircase outside the Ranger Station kitchen. The same design was used, however, pressure treated lumber was utilized for longevity, thereby reducing impacts caused by insect and dry rot.



Rangers Hatton and Nico at work

10. Irrigation Master Plan: O&M staff contracted and coordinated with BFS Landscape Architects on the recently completed Irrigation Master Plan for PCRP's Rancho Canada Unit. This new plan will guide development and improvement of the existing irrigation system that will service Project B and the landscaped area around the RCU entrance pond. It is anticipated that the future new irrigation system will address potential irrigation water leaks that may exist.



Rancho Canada Unit Irrigation Master Plan

11. Project A: MPRPD's consulting architectural firm, Ten Over Studio, has concluded the approved scope of work for Project A. Currently, the plan-set is at 90% complete, allowing Ten Over Studio or a subsequent firm to continue the project once construction phase funding is identified. The next step in the process would be permitting, followed by construction. MPRPD was very fortunate to have the services of RGS Consultants to assist with this project.

12. Project B: O&M staff continues to support progress toward Project B completion. Most recently, Rangers contracted with a licensed arborist to study the RCU parking lot pine trees and provide an assessment of each tree's health and life expectancy. Rangers also offered a portion of the RCU maintenance shop for short-term storage of the Project B restroom building components, which required some shuffling around and moving of equipment to other locations.

13. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration: In mid-December, Rangers participated in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to discuss the 30% design

plans presented by the project's consulting firm, McBain Associates. A robust discussion resulted in many questions that will be answered by McBain Associates prior to the next TAC meeting. Comments were also solicited by McBain Associates before moving forward with the 30% plans and will be incorporated into the 60% plans.



RCU Floodplain Restoration Alternative 2

14. San Clemente-Blue Rock Perimeter Fencing: Rangers continue to oversee the reconstruction of the fence line lost during the Carmel Fire at the San Clemente-Blue Rock Open Space. MPRPD's awarded contractor (Cardoza Construction) is approximately 80% complete with the project and is expected to finish prior to FEMA's deadline of February 22, 2022.



Section of new galvanized t-stakes

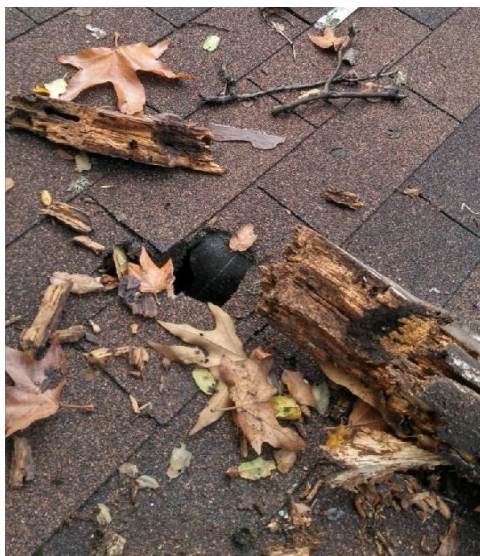
15. Storm Damage: Late December's rainfall was a welcome sight to the region, reducing drought severity throughout the state. However, each passing storm brings with it downed trees, potholes, and the possibility of clogged culverts and erosion. Rangers spent several days filling potholes and regrading parking lots at Garland Ranch Regional Park, as well as repairing the roof on the storage shed at the Kahn Ranch, damaged by a falling sycamore branch. Tope's Tree Service was contracted to remove several large horizontal sycamore branches overhanging River Trail.



Ranger Nico grading



Ranger Hatton rolling/compacting

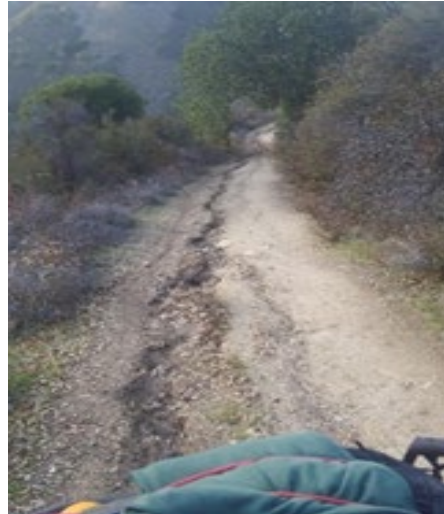


Kahn Ranch storage shed roof



Tope's removing sycamore branches

16. Trail Work @ GRRP: Rangers recently started a reconstruction project on East Ridge Trail at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Project includes berm removal, out-sloping, brushing, and modifications to remove water from the trail to prevent channeling.



East Ridge Trail – Before

17. Wildfire Preparedness Grant Funding Applications: O&M staff coordinated with RGS Consultants to apply for grant funding thru the California Coastal Conservancy Wildfire Resilience Program. On this application, MPRPD is seeking funding for the Garland Ranch Regional Park's Fire Management Plan, additional staffing, and costs associated with fuel mitigation projects (including eucalyptus removal).

Concurrently, MPRPD is partnering with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and other stakeholders on a grant funding opportunity thru Cal Fire to fund the Carmel Valley Strategic Fuel-break Project, which includes creating a shaded fuel-break along Vasquez Trail and eucalyptus removal along Rancho Loop at Garland Ranch Regional Park.