

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: February 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-December through mid-January 2023 in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the CDC's, State's, and County's COVID-related guidelines.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- 1. Annual Audit and Financial Statements:** Staff continued to work with MPRPD's auditors on the annual audit and financial statement preparations. Approval of the 'Certified Public Accountant's Report and Financial Statements for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022' will be presented as a Consent Item at the February 2023 MPRPD Board Meeting.
- 2. Atmospheric River Responses by MPRPD:** MPRPD's divisions have been engaged in our agency's individual, multi-agency, and private party coordinated responses to the string of winter storms that brought several feet of rain to parts of the Central Coast.

On Sunday, January 22, 2023, several local and state officials, agency heads and personnel, residents, and other attendees, toured storm-damaged sites on the Central Coast. One of the sites visited was DeDampierre Regional Park. The entourage witness the damage that had taken place, the measures that had been taken place to reduce storm damage, and discussed potential next steps to hopefully reduce future storm's damage within the region.

County and MPRPD met in late January and shall continue to meet to develop options and hopefully take advantage of federal funds that may help underwrite costs for the recovery, mitigation, and future capital improvements of storm-impacted and storm-prone areas.

- 3. California Employer's Pension Prefunding Trust (CEPPT) Update:** Staff met with CalPERS CEPPT staff to discuss timing of the contribution of the funds to the CEPPT account that were withdrawn from the California Employer's Retirement Benefit Trust

(CERBT) account. Performance of the CEPPT investments have been volatile, therefore staff has been holding off on depositing those funds into the CEPPT. Currently they remain in the Districts Money Market Account which is currently earning a 2.75% interest rate.

4. **California Red-legged Frogs (CRLFs):** Staff continued working closely and coordinating with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and MPRPD Project-B's consultants and contractors re: CRLFs at the Rancho Canada Unit's entrance pond, adjacent to the construction site. As of the writing of this report, all parties were satisfied with the care MPRPD's consultants, contractors, and staff have undertaken. Following the rain/storm event on December 10 & 11, a CRLF was found just inside the fence in the northeast corner of the project site. The consulting biologist worked with the contractor to set up new exclusionary fencing inside the project site and subsequently removed the previously installed fencing on that exterior corner, allowing the CRLF to move freely away on its own, which it did shortly thereafter.
5. **Classification & Compensation Study (Study):** Staff had an initial meeting with MPRPD's Personnel Committee (Committee) to discuss the Study's results and potential next steps. The Committee plans another meeting in the coming weeks.
6. **Concept Plan Designs for the Rancho Canada Unit:** Staff developed several concept designs in-house. These included revised concept designs for the Rancho Canada Unit's dog park; landscape plan for the extant Carmel River sculpture; and several Discovery Center's exhibits.
7. **"F.I.D.O." (Fenced In Dog "O-rena") at Palo Corona Regional Park:** Staff continued to meet with the "Dog Park 4" and the park's Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project engineer to discuss and coordinate the FIDO's future construction in a manner that does not compromise the Floodplain and Restoration Project's development or function. The facility's plan has been revised in-house and may be used to guide installation of F.I.D.O.'s configuration and installation. It is presently projected that this facility may be installed in the very near future. The Board will be informed regarding the project's progress.
8. **50th Year Anniversary Celebration:** Admin staff hosted a table at MPRPD's 50th Anniversary Celebration. The table featured two participatory budgeting exercises.

OPTION #1: The first option was a chart allowing the public to select (by adhering a dot) what opinion they saw/see as their priority item(s) at four different District parks. Each participant was given four (4) dots which they could adhere on any project they felt should be a priority for the District on future budgets.

Each park offered three to four scope items from which they could select:

- A. **Monterey Dunes Preserve:** Habitat Restoration, Endangered Species Protection or Trail Improvements

- B. Garland Ranch Regional Park:** Outdoor Classroom, Interpretive Signage, Native Plants along the Carmel River
- C. Palo Corona Regional Park:** Fenced in Dog Off-leash Area, Benches, Signage
- D. Cachagua Community Park:** Protecting Historic Sites, Improved Access to River, Picnic Area, Restroom

OPTION #2: The second budget exercise offered participants the opportunity to spend money (\$20 in the form of “play money”) in the MPRPD Division they felt was a priority for them. Each participant was given four \$5-dollar “MPRPD bills” to drop in one of four boxes: Administration, Environmental Education & Outreach, Operations & Maintenance, or Land Conservation & Resource Management.

These two budget exercises yielded important information that will help guide future budget development and shall be reported to the Board during budget discussions.

- 9. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget:** Staff has begun preparations for the FY2023-24 budget’s planning and development, and will meet with the Finance Committee to review the draft document before the final draft is presented to the Board for review and approval by June.
- 10. FORTAG:** This initiative’s creators, and MPRPD’s staff, continued discussions the visionary FORTAG project. This team will meet onsite in February to continue FORTAG’s planning, especially in the City of Del Rey oak’s proximity. Details will be provided to the Board at future meetings as this project advances.
- 11. Joint Powers Authority at Laguna Grande Regional Park:** The cities of Monterey and Seaside’s personnel and MPRPD discussed the park’s continued enhancement, challenges, and opportunities. These meetings will continue as we seek means to implement health-safety, environmental, educational, and recreation opportunities. The Board will be provided a joint presentation in the near future to describe the team’s thoughts in response to the public’s recommendations.
- 12. LGO! Fund:** Staff continued working with the Community Foundation for Monterey County in the development of this fund which will facilitate donors’ ability to assist with MPRPD’s acquisitions, projects, and programs. A detailed report will be presented to the Board as early as spring 2023.
- 13. Martin Luther King Celebration and Groundbreaking:** Staff participated in the City of Marina’s celebration of the late, great Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King alongside numerous spokes people. Presentations Dr. King’s legacy that continues to inspire humanity decades after his untimely demise. The groundbreaking of the Dr. King bust sculpture’s location, which will be located in proximity to the Marina Library at Locke-Paddon Regional Park, was also celebrated.
- 14. On-call Services:** Staff has been working to obtain services for several on-call needs for the District. Work with the County of Monterey began in July 2022 on cooperative

purchasing efforts. The County initiated the competitive RFP process for on-call plumbing repair and maintenance services, along with HVAC services. Staff has successfully negotiated with the awarded vendors to piggyback onto those County contracts and obtain services for the District. These District's Agreements will be presented to the Board for its consideration in February 2023 and thereafter. For services that were not competitively pursued by the County, staff will issue its own District RFPs through the District's OpenGov Procurement site.

15. Palo Corona's Project-B Construction: Construction activities progressed throughout the month of January, bringing final details to completion. Punch list items are presently being addressed and finalized. The restroom building's epoxy floors have been installed. The passenger drop-off's steel structures have been installed as well as their wooden shade elements. Irrigation, landscape, and mulched hydroseed have been installed. Recent rains helped start the hydroseed's germination. Temporary construction fencing has been removed and symbolic fencing has been installed to protect freshly hydroseeded areas. PG&E's trenching and conduit installation are currently underway.

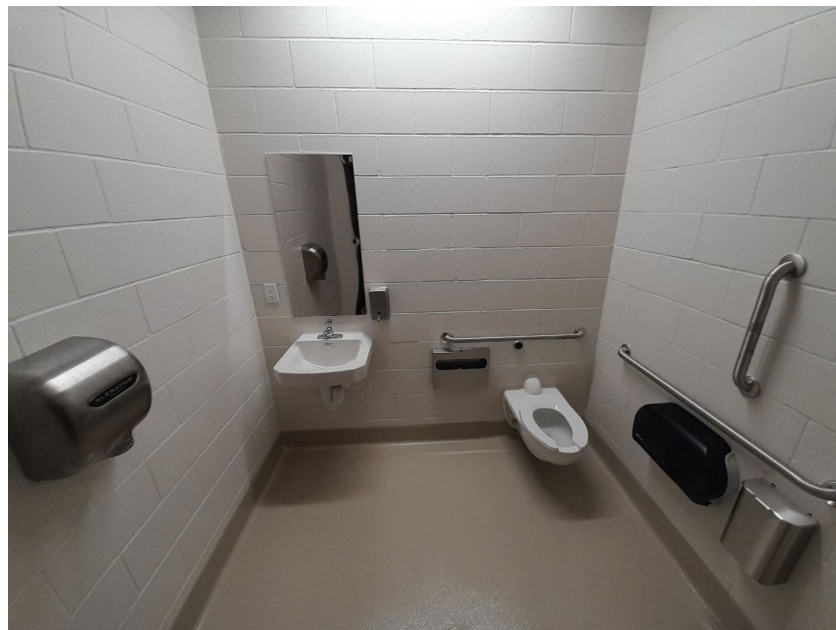
Project-B's progress reports have been jointly prepared by MPRPD's Project Manager, Rangers, and the Ausonio construction management team. Ausonio's team continues to coordinate closely with Wedgewood to ensure no negative impacts affect the concessionaire's events. Tribal Monitors remain on-call to identify and avoid any potential negative impacts to cultural sites when trenching occurs. No cultural artifacts were encountered in the past month. The Ranger and Ausonio team have also been working closely with SWCA's biologist to monitor the site for, and to protect, the federally listed California Red Legged Frog.



Passenger drop-off and shaded seating area



Restroom facility, landscape, and concrete pathway



Restroom facility fixtures and interior finishes

16. ParkIT! Initiative: The initiative's Steering Committee, which includes MPRPD, visited Big Basin State Park to analyze that park's reservation and shuttlebus systems, and their potential application for the ParkIT! initiative. The Steering Committee determined that a reservation system must first be developed and be ready for implementation prior to launching a pilot project. As previously reported, a portion of

the existing Rancho Canada Unit's parking area may be designated for use by the ParkIT! initiative. This Unit's infrastructure and facilities may offer support for this initiative. The Board will be provided a post-field trip coupled with the initiative's status and other related updates during a future meeting.

17. Recruitment: Recruitment efforts for the Operations & Maintenance and the Environmental Education & Community Outreach divisions' vacant positions were launched. Interviews were conducted in December 2022. We hope to have new staff on board soon.

18. Training: Staff attended training on Prevailing Wage, Risk Management, and Employment Law and Brown Act updates for 2023.

19. Wedgwood Tenant Improvement at the Rancho Canada Unit: MPRPD's concessionaire, Wedgwood Weddings and Banquets, continued implementation of several substantial improvements for the event venue. These improvements' substantial costs are being underwritten by the concessionaire. The updated and upgraded facilities shall continue to be available for MPRPD's functions as well.

A. Painting: The building's exterior's painting began and will likely be completed by early February 2023, if not sooner. The color palette reflects that used at the recently constructed Project-B restroom, and the nearby Community Church.



New paint application matching the new restroom building

B. Roof and HVAC Replacement: Roofing replacement of the Merienda Room, Pub, and Discovery Center gabled roofing was completed in early December. Other sections of the complex's re-roofing project will likely be completed by early February 2023, if not sooner.

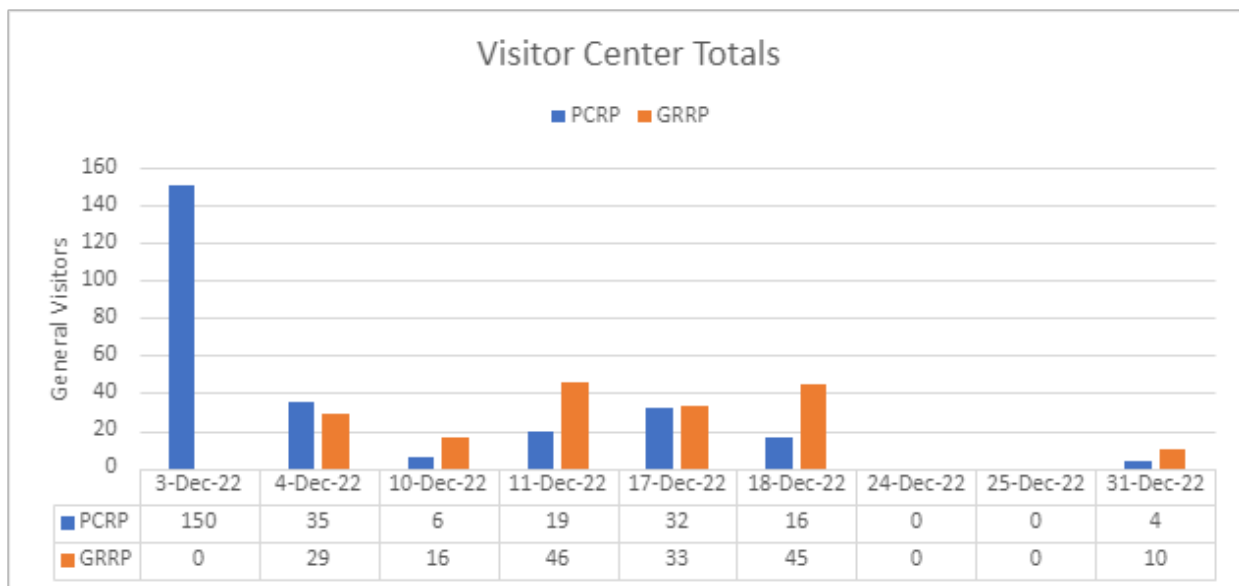
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO) DIVISION

1. Blue Zones Project Monterey County: Staff completed the steps for MPRPD to become a Blue Zones Organization. Blue Zones organizations encourage staff and visitors to make healthy choices easier by making permanent and semi-permanent changes to the organization’s surroundings and practices in the following categories: Moving Naturally, Eating Wisely, Having the Right Outlook, and Making Connections. A celebration ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, March 26 during MPRPD’s California Wildlife Day event. A Blue Zones Monterey County representative may provide a presentation at the MPRPD Board’s March meeting.

2. Community Outreach:

A. Closures and Storm Communications: Amid the December-January winter storms, staff communicated with the public through social media, online emails, and posting of on-site signs to update announcements regarding visitor and discovery center closures, program cancellations, and park closures in response to flood and road conditions. Staff also spoke with local press.

B. Visitor Center Totals: Staff have been monitoring and collecting visitation data during weekends, 10am-4pm, at both the PCRPD Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers in December 2022. Dates with 0 visitation recorded indicate that the centers were closed (12/3/22; 12/24/22; 12/25/22).



PCRPD DC visitation was impacted by area construction, storms, and weather conditions, decreasing park visitation in general. MPRPD’s 50th Anniversary Celebration took place at PCRPD on 12/3/2022; that date’s unusually high total is a rough estimate of event participants also visiting the DC.

- 3. Social Media Posts:** For this reporting period, posts consisted of district news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming, park closure news, and educational content about the flora, fauna, and center exhibits of MPRPD parks.

The following MPRPD social media accounts grew in December-January:

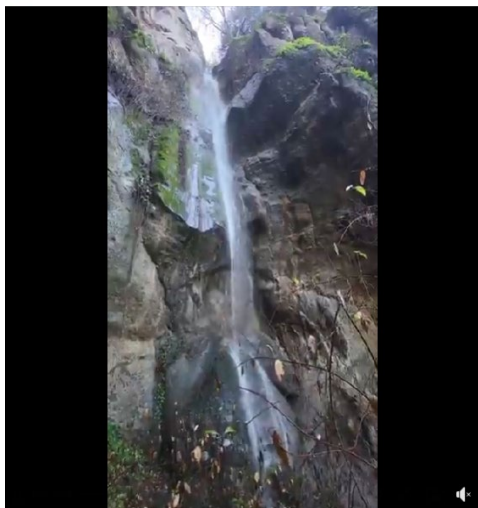
A. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict: (1) Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) | Carmel CA | Facebook

1. Jan. 18 Follower Count: 2,075 (+37)
2. Facebook Page Reach: 5,997 (↓ 69.3 %)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: Dec. 14 – Jan. 15
4. Jan. 7: Garland Ranch Seasonal Waterfall video (2,811 views) (239 likes/reactions)
5. Dec. 18: Garland Ranch Carmel River (2,110 views) (54 likes/reactions)
6. Dec. 17: Palo Corona Carmel River (556 views) (47 likes/reactions)

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

1. Jan. 18 Follower Count: 1,092 (+55)
2. Instagram Page Reach: 2,993 (↑ 144.7%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: Dec. 14 – Jan. 15
4. Jan. 7: Garland Seasonal Waterfall video (664 views) (106 likes/reactions)
5. Jan. 15: LPWP flora, fauna, open park option (585 views) (65 likes/reactions)
6. Jan. 8: Carmel River at Garland video (534 views) (59 likes/reactions)

Water returns to the seasonal waterfall at Garland Ranch for the first time in a long time thanks to the rains this week! 🌧️
 While a segment of Maple Canyon trail between Buckeye, Live Oak, and Sage trail junctions remains closed due to storm damage until approximately late next week, [Garland Ranch Regional Park](#) is open to enjoy for hiking, giving the doggos a much needed outing in the break from the rain, and checking out the waterfall!
 Remember to exercise extra caution ... See more



Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)
 December 17, 2022
 Water is flowing in the Carmel River through [Palo Corona Regional Park](#) once again, thanks to the rains last week! 🌧️
 Check out these pictures taken on 12/15/2022 for views of the Carmel River flowing under a bridge in Palo Corona Park (Rancho Cañada Unit).
 #mprpdandme #letsgetoutdoors #carmelriver #montereycounty #paloconaregionalpark #PaloCorona #hiking #nature #wildlife #nativeplants



Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) 3d · 🌐

⚠️ **CLOSURE REMINDER:** Garland Ranch and Palo Corona Regional Parks continue to be FULLY CLOSED this week through at least this Sunday, January 15th. 💧

📸 Photo of a downed tree at Palo Corona Regional Park, taken this week.

⚠️ This is why the parks are closed, for your safety! Thank you for minding all park closures and doing your part to keep yourself and first responders safe. 🙏

👉 Ga... See more



Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) December 28, 2022 at 5:39 PM · 🌐

👉 Attention knowledgeable nature enthusiasts, this is your chance to get creative and make a positive impact in the community! 🌱

👉 MPRPD is seeking outdoor educators to lead Let's Go Outdoors! activities. With a new Spring/Summer season coming up, we hope to bring back the oldies and start new programs as well.

📅 Proposals are due by Thursday, January 12th for inclusion in the Spring/Summer 2023 Let's Go Outdoors! catalog.

👉 Nature-themed and outdoor-related activities can include themed hikes, workshops, events celebrating unique environmental features of the Monterey Peninsula, and more!

👉 For information on how to apply and the Instructor Proposal Form visit: <https://www.mprpd.org/let-s-go-outdoors> (link in bio)

👉 Community members have expressed their gratitude and HIGH demand for nature-based programs. Thank you for connecting your community to nature and the outdoors!

📸 Pictures of LGO! programs in action.

#letsgooutdoors #mprpdandme #wildlife #nature #conservation #education #outdoorseducation #outdoors #communityeducation #hiking #monterey #sustainability #freecommunityevent



[mprpd_igo](#) 🌈 Looking for somewhere safe to get outside during all the park closures?

🌿 Take a stroll in the City of Marina and MPRPD Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park if your commute is safe to get there amongst the flooding. 🌧️

👂 Even on a drizzly day it's a great place to get out and smell the bright green California sagebrush (📷 1), listen to the Red-winged Blackbirds and frogs, and see Ruddy Ducks, Mallards, and more in the pond (📷 2)! 🐸🐸

📷 Swipe for images of a quirky Cypress tree and various paths in the park.

#mprpdandme #letsgooutdoors #lockepaddon #marinalibrary #cityofmarina #CityOfMarina #rain #rainyday #rainwalk #sagebrush #redwingedblackbird #frogs #ruddyduck #mallards #birds #birdwatching #pond #wetlands

3d

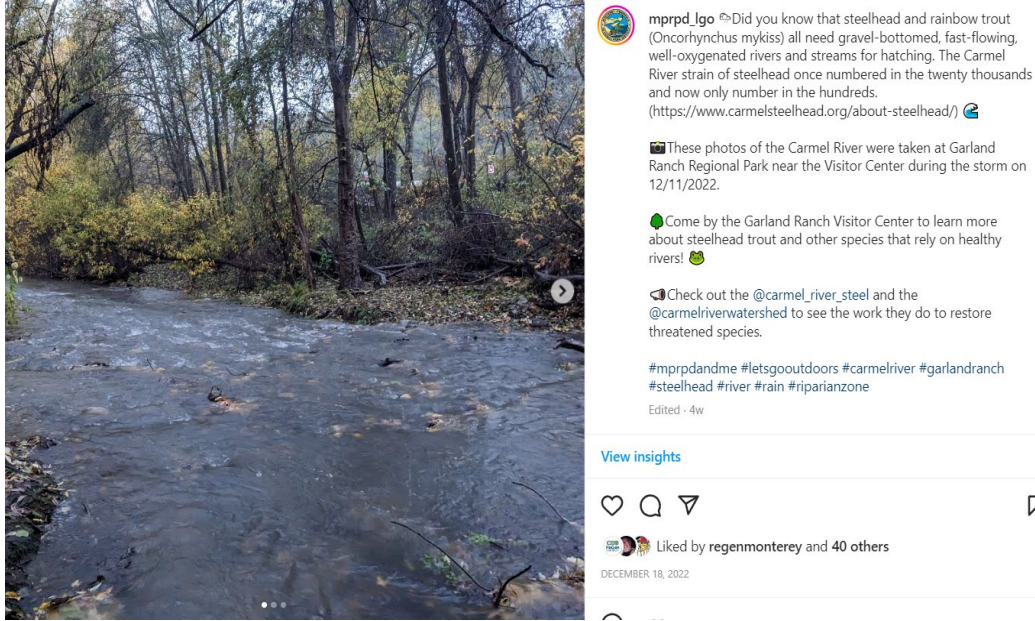
[ac_hikes](#) Marina is a great town! ❤️

View insights

👍 🗨️ 📌

👥 Liked by [birdschoolproject](#) and 64 others

3 DAYS AGO



4. Education:

A. Transportation Grant: A final draft agreement for the **LGO! Transportation Grant** between MPRPD and Community Foundation for Monterey County is being presented at the February Board meeting for review and approval. This grant will provide funding to bring organized groups from the surrounding tri-county area to MPRPD properties, thus helping to overcome one of the biggest barriers for underserved communities to enjoy the outdoors, lack of transportation. This aligns with Legal Counsel’s review and recommendation.

B. K-12 Education Programs:

1. Staff are piloting two MPRPD education programs for grade 5-9 students at Palo Corona Regional Park: (a) *Healthy Habitats*, a hands-on learning and exploratory program focused on riparian ecosystems, and (b) *Pollinator Garden*, an outdoor experience focused on connecting students to floodplain restoration.

Healthy Habitats is being presented to a local homeschooled group of children, ages 10-15, and *Pollinator Garden* is being conducted with The Village Project members, an after-school organization from Seaside. Both groups have limited access to environmental and outdoor education, and these MPRPD programs reach students living specifically in Monterey and Seaside. There are approximately 7 students enrolled in each program, for a total of 14 students.

One of the primary goals for these small pilot groups is to perform research that will inform and provide the foundation for subsequently

working with larger schools and/or school districts on similar programming at Palo Corona Regional Park, and perhaps other District properties. Details include:

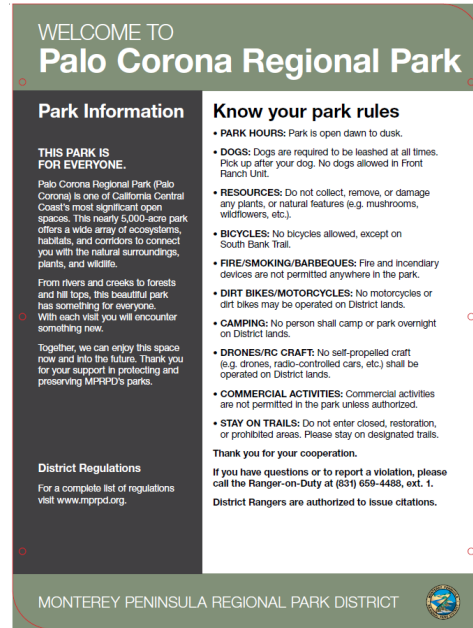
- i. Discussions with Bay View Academy (BVA), a public charter school in Monterey, have resulted in a partnership designed to encourage 5th grade students to get outdoors and experience local habitats in a way that complements BVA's interdisciplinary curriculum. The goal is to create an enriched, robust, and comprehensive *Heathy Habitats* program by collaborating with BVA's faculty. Two field trips focused on measuring ecosystems' health, and multiple local case studies, will be developed with this school this year. Once piloted and refined, field trip materials will be made available online as a teaching resource for the public and other public and private schools.
- ii. Via the "Outdoor Learning Collaborative," MPRPD staff are working in partnership with Salinas Unified High School District, Bird School Project, Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, and other environmental educators through a Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant to provide teacher workshops at Palo Corona Regional Park during winter and spring 2023.



Members of the Outdoor Learning Collaborative participate in a teacher workshop at PCRP's Discovery Center

5. Exhibits and Interpretation:

A. PCPR's Entrance Plaza Panels. These are ready for installation as part of the new Grand PCPR Entrance Project. Staff designed and fabricated three panels using colors and style from the previously approved PCPR Wayfinding and Signage Plan. The panels include a park map with universal symbols, rules, and regulations, and an MPRPD District map. Staff is researching other sites in the park to install similar signs. Similar panels will subsequently be developed for, and installed at, other MPRPD properties.



- B. PCRPD Discovery Center’s (DC) “Palo Corona by Season”:** Staff designed and installed a set of new panels for the large glass display case just outside the DC entry vestibule. These panels shall emphasize seasonal changes in weather patterns and notable flora and fauna to look for in PCRPD specifically.

The main panel on display will rotate quarterly. Autumn and Winter panels are now complete, while Spring and Summer panels are currently in development. Similar panels will subsequently be developed for, and installed at, other MPRPD properties.



6. *Let’s Go Outdoors!* (LGO!) Guide and Programs:

- A. Program Updates:** Severe weather impacted programming and programs resulting in cancellations and lowered attendance for those programs that were not cancelled. The exception was the well-attended, highly popular, “Mushroom Mania” programs. Staff expects attendance to return to normal as the winter storms dissipate and weather conditions improve.
- B. Call for Instructors and Community Happenings:** The Spring/Summer 2023 call for LGO! instructors and other community offerings has concluded for the next LGO! guide period, which will run from March 25th through September 24th. Any interested educators and organizations are encouraged to submit their proposals and descriptions to Savannah Peña at pena@mprpd.org for the following Fall/Winter 2023/2024 season, thereby allowing prospective instructors to get an early start, showing their interest.

Any MPRPD-related public events taking place from March through September 2023 may be advertised in this next publication and should also be submitted prior to publication in early March 2023.

C. Service Learners: Staff sent out a recruitment notice, soliciting four CSUMB Service Learners to help create an interactive menu and app software for the digital kiosk in the PCRPD Discovery Center during the 2023 Spring semester.

D. Volunteers: MPRPD staff are working with the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) and CA State Parks (CSP) to monitor the San Jose Creek Trail systems which is now open to the public on a permit basis. EECO staff are working with Jenny Jacox, engagement lead for the Big Sur Land Trust, to develop duty statements and protocol for the BSLT San Jose Creek Trail Ambassador Program. The program is designed to assist MPRPD and CSP rangers in monitoring trails. MPRPD volunteers are an integral part of this program.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. January 2023 Storm Damage Report:** A “bomb cyclone” and a series of atmospheric river events pummeled the Central Coast during the month of January, significantly impacting District properties and infrastructure. Below is a preliminary report with photos of damages sustained as a result of these weather events and a subsequent flood event on January 9, 2023, which closed Garland Ranch and Palo Corona regional parks to public access due to potential injury.

As of the writing of this report, Rangers continue to assess and discover damage, while also working hard to reopen Palo Corona Regional Park to public access, which remained closed as of January 23. Coincidentally, MPRPD was on the Gabilan Camp’s schedule for the week of January 16, which would have been perfect timing. Unfortunately, a Covid-19 outbreak forced the entire camp to quarantine, which delayed MPRPD’s reopening of the District’s parks.

Because an evacuation order was issued for portions of the Carmel River watershed, including portions of neighborhoods and public lands, out of an abundance of caution, all staff, including Rangers, were sent home on January 12 & 13 but remained on stand-by. The evacuation orders temporarily also set us back.

Rangers were optimistic that Palo Corona Regional Park could be reopened to public access by Friday, January 27, if not sooner.

The District is tracking time, materials, and equipment used in response to this natural disaster in hopes of securing FEMA funds to assist with recovery costs.

The following provides details and photographs for some flood-impacted areas.

- A. Garland:** Flood water inundated low-lying areas along the Carmel River, including the Lupine Loop, Cottonwood Trail, Sycamore Trail, Cooper Road, Saddle Trail, and multiple segments of the River Trail. In these areas, flood water scoured trail tread and displaced large amounts of soil, as noted in the attached photos, below. As a result, Garland was closed to public access until Rangers could complete an assessment of damages and effect repairs. Garland reopened to public access on January 20, 2023. However, there are several areas that require additional work. Many fallen trees that were minimally removed in the interest of reopening the park will require follow-up.
- B. DeDampierre Ballfields:** The Monterey County Regional Fire District, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, Cal Fire, Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency agreed to construct a temporary sandbag retaining wall along the Carmel River, as the Carmel River was forecast to peak above flood stage in the coming days. The wall was completed on January 4, and unfortunately failed to prevent flood waters from entering DeDampierre Ballfields and the Paso Hondo neighborhood.
- C. Palo Corona:** Flood water inundated areas of the Rancho Canada Unit on the north and south sides of the Carmel River, including runoff-based puddling of the Southbank and the Multi-benefit Community trails, and the River Field (located in the PCRFP Front Ranch). At its peak, the river was within a few feet from the former golf cart bridges, as noted in the attached photos, below. Large trees fell across trails, including a large Cottonwood tree that crushed the trailhead kiosk at the junction of the Southbank Trail and the PCRFP Front Ranch.

GARLAND RANCH REGIONAL PARK



Lupine Loop



Lupine Loop (continued)



River Trail, T&S Club, Laureles Trail, Maple Canyon Trail



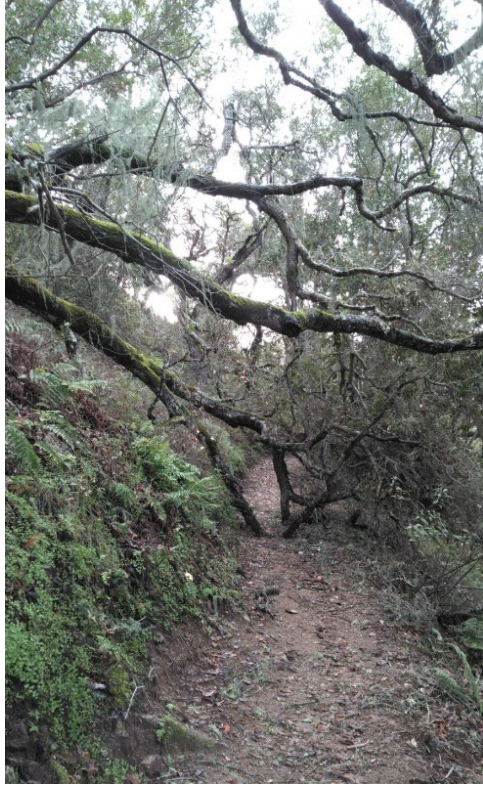
Sycamore Trail, Cottonwood Trail, Snively's Ridge, VC to Footbridge



Hitchcock and Manzanita Trails



Terrace and Cliff Trails



**Maple Canyon Trail, Lupine Loop, Randazzo Residence
(Eucalyptus tree, top photo, came from GRRP)**



Rangers repairing Cooper Road post-inundation

DeDAMPIERRE BALLFIELDS



MCRFD, MPWMD, Cal Fire, MPRPD, and MCWRA partnered to construct a sandbag retaining wall along the southern levy of the Carmel River to protect the Dampierre Ballfields and the homes along Paso Hondo



THEN THE RAIN CAME...



THEN THE RAIN CAME... (continued)



THEN THE RAIN CAME... (continued)



Clean-up and Restoration Begins

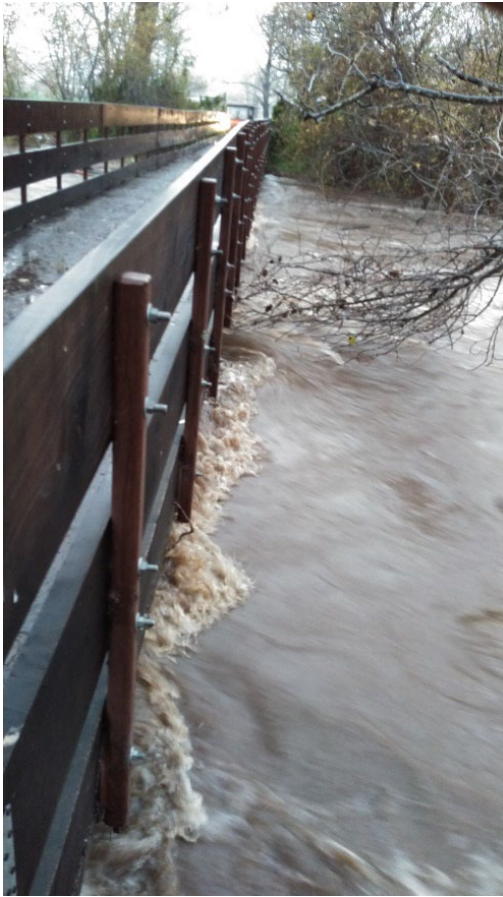


Clean-up and Restoration Begins (continued)

PALO CORONA REGIONAL PARK



Flood waters inundated low-lying areas of the Rancho Canada Unit including the Southbank Trail, nearly overtopping former golf cart bridges



Flood Waters at Rancho Canada Unit (continued)



Flood waters and Wind Storm Damage at Rancho Canada Unit



Southbank Trail, PCRP Barn Road, Wind Fallen Tree Across Trail



Kiosk crushed by wind-fallen Cottonwood tree and Monterey Pine across Palo Corona Trail

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

- 1. Atmospheric River and Ensuing Winter Storm Response:** MPRPD properties received extreme amounts of rainfall during the atmospheric river and bomb cyclone events that occurred December and January. The prolonged and intense rain and wind events saturated soils, toppled trees, and caused large amounts of runoff and flooding.

Staff collectively worked to assess, catalog, and address storm impacts to MPRPD properties, focusing on addressing risks to public safety and barriers to safely reopening MPRPD lands to the public. As of the writing of this report, staff were still working to evaluate damage from the storm and estimate that it could potentially take years to address all of the impacts from this storm event.

Staff will provide a summary during February's Board meeting, followed by a more detailed report in the ensuing months. It is expected that addressing storm impacts will require a midyear 22/23 fiscal year budget and workplan adjustment and will also be a major component of the 23/24 fiscal year workplan and budget.



Carmel River flooding on the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park—photograph taken on January 9, 2023

- 2. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects:** Staff executed a grant funding agreement with the California Coastal Conservancy and are in the process of executing an agreement with the Monterey County Resource Conservation District (RCD) that combined will bring approximately \$900,000 in funding for fuel reduction work at Garland Ranch Regional Park.

The RCD is now in the process of securing an environmental consultant to assist with fuel project environmental review and permitting so projects can begin.

implementation as early as the May/June 2023 timeframe.

3. GIS:

A. MPRPD's Drone/Remote Sensing Program: Staff are working to develop in-house capabilities to collect imagery and videos of MPRPD lands via drone to assist with property mapping and planning, resource inventories, surveys, and monitoring. Planning & Conservation staff are currently working on securing necessary licensing and training and will begin applying drones for post-storm inventories and response.

B. Outerspatial iOS and Android Application: Staff are working with the team at *Outerspatial* to begin including MPRPD parks in its free trail map/wayfinding application for iOS and android mobile devices. Staff will be working over the next couple of months to refine GIS data so that MPRPD parks can be added to the mobile application as early as late spring or early summer 2023. Staff expect to provide a presentation to the Board prior to the project's launch.

C. High-accuracy field data collection: Staff are expanding the use of GIS in the field and are training the Ranger team on how to collect and update park-related GIS data. Current efforts are focused on winter storm inventories and technical GPS training.

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 still working with Cal Fire to confirm that all required permits and approvals are in hand before mechanical thinning occurs, which is slated for early 2023.

5. Multi-Benefit Community Trail: Staff continued to work with resource agencies and grant funders to develop a plan for realignment of sections of the Multi-Benefit Community Trail.

6. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project: MPRPD has agreed to provide critically needed funding to support native seed and cutting collection and plant propagation efforts, ensuring that a rich mosaic of native grasses, forbs, shrubs, and trees have enough quantities and time to grow prior to the restoration project's anticipated construction start which is projected to begin as soon as summer 2024.

Outside funding sources for the seed and cutting collection and plant propagation phase were explored. Unfortunately, a viable funding source(s) was not available, including funds from grant sources. MPRPD's funding for this critical phase will help the restoration project's construction start stay on schedule.

MPPRPD staff are working to identify and secure a plant propagation consultant in February to help oversee this work.

MPPRPD's project Design Team is also reviewing comments on the 65% Basis of Design Report from its Technical Advisory Committee and will be refining the project design to the 90% level over the next few months. Separately, the Design Team also met with the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society to review and refine the Project's plant palette and design. The project's team is also beginning to finalize and submit project permit applications to state and federal agencies.

- **END OF REPORT** -