

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: March 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Environmental Education and Community Outreach Update

PRESENTER: Jackie Nelson, Environmental Education Supervisor

REPORT: **Education**
Volunteer Naturalist hosted residents from the Cottages of Carmel as they explored the Palo Corona Regional Park (PCRP) Discovery Center. The center has become a favorite place to visit; next the Cottage residents want to go “on safari” to Inspiration Point and Animas Pond.

Ventana Wildlife Society and MPRPD staff met and discussed collaborative ventures and renewal of the partnership agreement to enhance educational opportunities on MPRPD lands.

Staff met with members of the Odello family to work together on an oral history project documenting their life on the “Ranch” and its surrounding landscape.

Staff, working on a draft MPRPD three-year education plan, has reached out to approximately 30 formal and informal educators, administrators and representatives from schools and likeminded organizations as part of the needs assessment looking at education outcomes of schools and demographics of students in the District. In addition to drafting lesson plans that align with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and CA Environmental Literacy, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Scopes standards.

Outreach
Staff is preparing the Spring/Summer 2020 Let’s Go Outdoors! guide to be released the first week of April. With new activities and the return of some favorites this is expected to be the best season ever.

CA Wildlife Day is less than a month away. The banner has been erected at the entrance of PCRP, fliers distributed, ads placed in local papers and volunteers recruited. Please plan to join in this day celebrating California’s diverse animals.

CA Wildlife Day is recognized on the spring equinox annually. The Carmel River Watershed Conservancy, MPRPD and partners will be hosting an event on Saturday, March 21 from 10 am-3 pm at Palo Corona Regional Park.

Special Use Permits (SUP)

A SUP was issued to a CSU-Monterey Bay senior to access the Carmel River in Garland Ranch Regional Park to film a post-apocalyptic, mock rescue as part of her Cinematic Arts and Technology Capstone film project (CART 491). The two-day shoot occurred west of the steel vehicle bridge and was well signed. Ranger staff was instrumental in ensuring public access to the river during the filming.

Access to Palo Corona Regional Park (PCRP) from the Santa Lucia Preserve was granted to CSU-Monterey Bay's Professor Smith and his students. Their project entailed performing a topographic survey of San Jose Creek downstream of Seneca Creek.

The State funded research, administered by the University of CA-Davis, combines geomorphic data with hydrologic and biological data to make a predictive model for stream flows. The GIS map layer will allow resource managers to "click on" a stream and get information on the ecosystem that should be present.

San Jose Creek was used as a "model creek." This survey is part of two-year Central CA stream inventory and will help establish a benchmark by which other small streams may be analyzed. The study will help monitor potential impacts that the burgeoning cannabis industry may have on the State's waters. The CSU-Monterey Bay team will ultimately survey 150 rivers and creeks from the San Francisco Bay to the Santa Marie River.

Captain Harness, representing the Civil Air Patrol and U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, held the first Search and Rescue (SAR) Drone training program for Civil Air Patrol (CAP) FAA certified operators. The two-day training was conducted on the east portion of the Rancho Canada Unit and in the Discovery Center at PCRP. This pilot program will be used to assist sheriffs and first responders in emergency situations including finding downed planes and lost hikers. Ranger staff were instrumental in identifying, selecting and providing access to the training site.

Volunteers

Fish and Wildlife biologist Jeff Cann shared techniques about mammal identification and wildlife behavior with the MPRPD volunteer naturalists during the February 2020 enrichment.

Since January 2020, six new volunteers have joined the team. Each volunteer brings skills and a wealth of knowledge enhancing our outreach to a diverse audience.

- FISCAL IMPACT:** Not Applicable
- FUNDING SOURCE:** Not Applicable
- FUNDING BALANCE:** Not Applicable
- RECOMMENDATION:** Informational Only