

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: July 5, 2023

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Shuran Parker, Acting 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-May through mid-June 2023 in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Mowing

Mowing began 6/5/2023.



Mowing near Admin Headquarters (Photo courtesy of Volunteer Tempe Wennerholm)

2. FEMA – Winter 2023 Storm Damage Compilation

Administration staff & Operations staff continue working on FEMA damages reporting requirements. Staff generally meet weekly with FEMA staff to review progress and answer questions from FEMA.

Admin and Ops staff are currently developing Scope of Work items for bidding and proposal solicitations through the District’s online eprocurement platform on OpenGov.

3. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget

The Board adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget with an amendment at its June 7th meeting. Electronic copies of the document will be provided to the Board the week of July 3rd.

4. 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. JPA parties have each budgeted money in the FY2023-24 to begin working on trail maintenance and vegetation strategies.

5. Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park Master Plan

The City of Marina and MPRPD’s personnel were set to meet on June 2nd with prospective design consultants to discuss re-master planning of the park. That meeting was postponed to a future date. Staff will provide updates once available.

6. City of Marina MLK, Jr. Sculpture Garden Ribbon Cutting Celebration

The City of Marina will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park on September 9 (10am – 2pm) for the new MLK sculpture. They have invited the MPRPD General Manager to speak again this year. MPRPD Board and staff are welcome to attend; invitations will be forthcoming.

7. Year End Reporting

Staff are working on year-end reporting requirements for the CalPERS CERBT & CEPPT Trust programs. Audit work for FY22-23 has started with gathering data for the new GASB 96 reporting requirements for Subscription Based Information Technology Agreements (SBITA).

8. Palo Corona’s Project-B Construction in General

Trenching for the permanent PG&E line and transformer began on June 5 and is expected to be completed by the first week in July. A biologist from SWCA

Environmental Consultants, and a tribal monitor were on-site for the trenching project. No CRLF were found during the trenching project to date.



9. Recruitment

Funds for additional staffing in Operations and Maintenance; Environmental Education, and Planning and Conservation Management positions have been included in the adopted FY2023-24 budget, so recruitment activities will continue.

10. Bridge to Everywhere Project Concept Meeting

Staff participated in a meeting at Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) with CAWD staff and Board members, California State Parks, Former Congress member Farr, members of Friends of Mission Trail and California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) staff to discuss potential partnership and funding opportunities to connect trails from Carmel-By-The-Sea to State and Regional parks (PCRP), south of the Carmel River. Included in the proposal would be improvement or replacement of a pedestrian bridge on CAWD property to provide connectivity. All public landowners expressed interest in further exploring the project and it was noted that the City of Carmel-By-The-Sea would also need to be on board. SCC was invited to explore potential funding opportunities, to which they seemed amenable. CAWD staff will put together additional proposal information for SCC and public landowners to review. Staff will provide the Board with updates as available.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO)

1. Community Outreach

A. Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) SURF! Transit Fair and Family Funday

Staff tabled an outreach booth at the SURF! Transit Fair at the Marina Transit exchange station. The event was to share information and get public input on the upcoming SURF! Bus Rapid Transit service as well as MST's transit vision for Monterey County. More than 200 people were in attendance.

MPPRPD is working with MST to discuss potential effects to the Marina Dunes Preserve.



On display are the common animals found along the peninsula.



MST staff provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the SURF! project.

B. Race for Open Space

Sponsored by the Big Sur Land Trust, MPRPD issued a special use permit for this one-day fundraising event that offered participants access to the backcountry of

PCR. Four routes were offered, from an 8.5-mile, one-way course from Williams Canyon, a 9.5-mile to Ishxenta State Park and back, a 21-mile Adventure Course to Mitteldorf and back, and a 2-mile Fun Run. The BSLT was able to raise \$3,060 out of \$10,000 at the event.



Runners at the Fun Run prepare at the start line and finish the race with enthusiasm.

C. Social Media Posts: (May 15-June 14)

For this reporting period, posts consisted of district news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming, Wildflower Show, Race for Open Space, snowy plover education/MDP dogs on leash posts, and educational content about the flora and fauna of MPRPD parks.

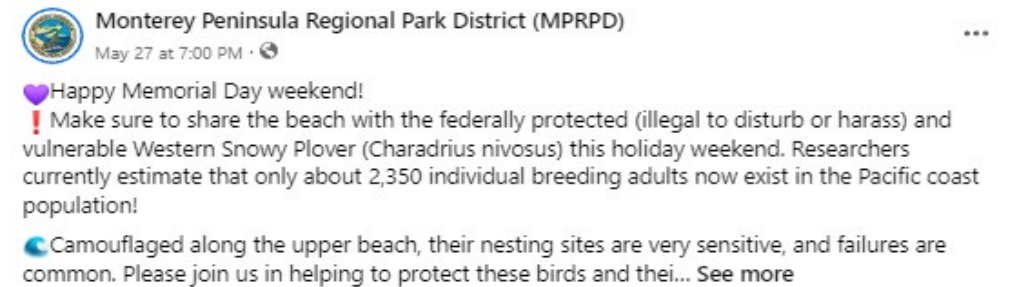
The following of MPRPD social media accounts grew in May-June.

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

- 1.** June 14 Follower Count: 2,242 (+45)
- 2.** Facebook Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 37,700 (↑ 399.4%)
- 3.** Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: May 15–June 14
 - a.** June 3: GRRP seasonal footbridges installed (26,352 reach) (238 likes/reactions)
 - b.** June 10: GRRP seasonal footbridges installed reminder/Redwood Canyon pictures (4,161 reach) (78 likes/reactions)
 - c.** June 4: Wildflower Show next weekend/previous event photos (3,630 reach) (103 likes/reactions)

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

1. June 14 Follower Count: 1,272 (+40)
2. **Instagram Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 1,591 (↑ 4.7%)**
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: May 15 – June 14
 - a. June 4: Wildflower Show next weekend/previous event photos (518 reach) (55 likes/reactions)
 - b. June 3: GRRP seasonal footbridges installed (440 reach) (52 likes/reactions)
 - c. June 10: GRRP seasonal footbridges installed reminder/Redwood Canyon pictures (372 reach) (53 likes/reactions)





Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)

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📍 Visit the **Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center** today (Sunday, June 11th) until 4 pm for the last day of the 24th annual Summer Wildflower Show!

🌻 Thank you so much to all the volunteers for their hard work and knowledge that made this event a success! If you'd like to volunteer with us and get involved in events like this one, click here: <https://www.mprpd.org/volunteer-community-alive> (link in bio.)

🌻 Did you know the Yellow Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus luteus*) is endemic to California and research shows that the *Calochortus* genus arose in the Coast Ranges of California! (<https://ebcnps.org/news/east-bay-calochortus-2020-06/>)

🖼️ Image 1: Yellow Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus luteus*). Image 2: table of various wildflowers. Image 3: plants from Marina Dunes Preserve. Image 4: plants from Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Image 5: Coulter's Matilija Poppy (*Romneya coulteri*). All images from the 2023 Wildflower Show with tables of wildflowers and signage on display at the Garland Ranch Visitor Center patio. Image 6: a flyer with the above event information and images of the Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) wildflower.

#mprpdandme #letsgetoutdoors #wildflowerseason #carmelbythesea #Monterey #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereyevents #garlandranch #douglasiris #carmelvalley #poppy #matilijapoppy #mariposalily



🌸 This Wildflower Wednesday we are appreciating the vibrant, yellow flowers of the native California flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum*) plant! Learn all about local wildflowers at our upcoming 24th annual Summer Wildflower Show at Garland Ranch Regional Park!

📅 This event will be held at the Garland Ranch Visitor Center on Saturday and Sunday, June 10th and June 11th from 10 am to 4 pm.

🌸 Local summer wildflowers will be on display at this free educational nature event for the whole family!

🌿 Did you know that California flannelbush is an evergreen shrub that can reach 20 feet tall with fuzzy, flannel-like leaves and bright yellow flowers that bloom in spring. Use caution as the hairs covering the leaves can irritate the skin and eyes. View this spectacular shrub blooming right now in the Garland Ranch arboretum or along the highway 1 median from Carmel through Monterey as you sit in traffic. 🚗

💬 Comment your favorite wildflower below!

🖼️ Images of California flannelbush leaves and flowers in the Garland Ranch Regional Park arboretum. Image 4: a flyer with the above event information and images of the douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) wildflower.

#mprpdandme #letsgooutdoors #wildflowerseason #carmelbythesea #Monterey #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereyevents #garlandranch #douglasiris #carmelvalley



Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)

June 7 at 2:17 PM · 🌐

🌸 Happy Wildflower Wednesday, the flowers of the endemic California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) are in bloom and this variable checkerspot (*Euphydryas chalcedona*) butterfly is enjoying the nectar! Learn all about local wildflowers at our upcoming 24th annual Summer Wildflower Show at [Garland Ranch Regional Park](#) this weekend!

📅 This event will be held at the Garland Ranch Visitor Center on Saturday and Sunday, June 10th and June 11th from 10 am to 4 pm.

🌸 Local summer wildflowers will be on display at this free educational nature event for the whole family!

For more information: <https://fb.me/e/6t4jkOgAf> (link in bio.)

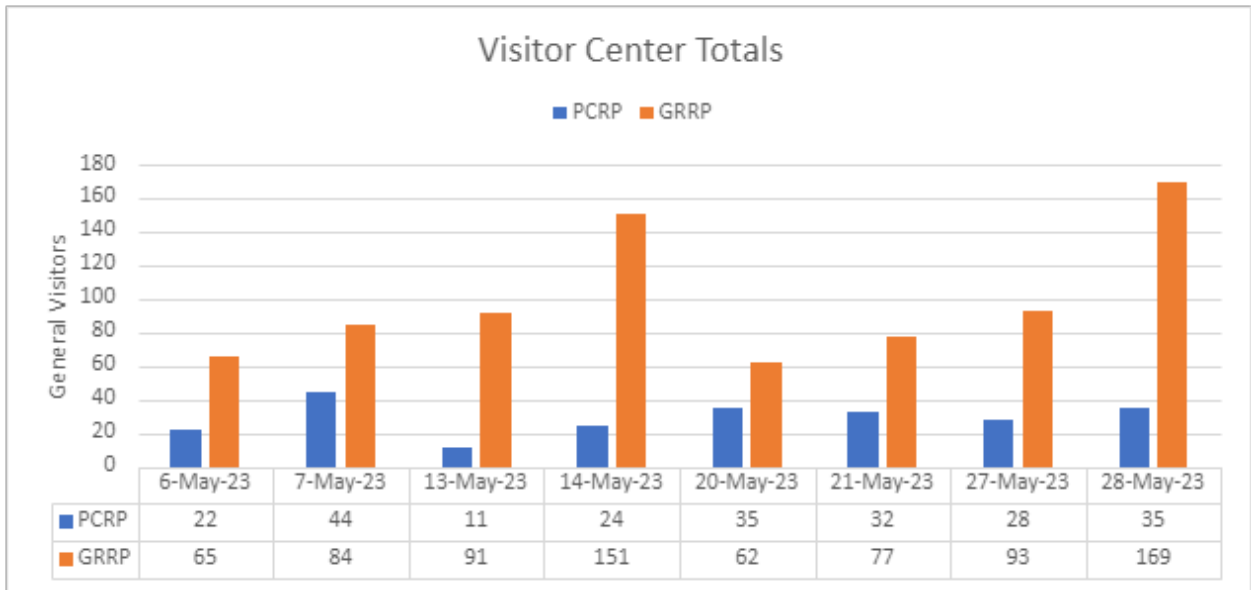
🖼️ Image 1 taken by Paulette Struckman, of California buckeye leaves and flowers with a variable checkerspot butterfly taken at Garland Ranch. Image 2: a flyer with the above event information and images of the Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) wildflower.

#mprpdandme #letsgooutdoors #wildflowerseason #carmelbythesea #Monterey #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereyevents #garlandranch #douglasiris #carmelvalley #buckeyetree #butterfly



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). Staff will also be opening both centers for public access on holidays* this summer, including Memorial Day (5/29), Juneteenth (6/19), Independence Day (7/3+4), and Labor Day (9/4). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers in May 2023.



*Statistics regarding holiday VC/DC visitation are maintained separately.

2. Education

A. Ventana Wildlife Society (VWS) Natural Science Discovery Camp

Working under a cooperative agreement (MOU), VWS staff and campers (ages 8-12) will visit PCRP and GRRP on multiple dates this summer as they explore the watershed and learn about nature. The day-long, onsite activities include hiking the trails, exploring the river, and using the facilities (multi-purpose pad and centers). At the PCRP DC, campers enjoy a bingo-style fact hunt for sticker rewards, followed by a hands-on demonstration of the new topographic relief map of the Carmel River watershed. At the GRRP VC, campers learn about many of the native plants and wildlife of the region via interactive games and discussions.

At the June 12th visit to the Garland Park Visitor Center VWS campers also learned about how native plants have interesting adaptations allowing them to thrive in differing habitats.

The camp programs will be visiting the parks again on 7/5, 7/10, 7/24, and 7/31.

3. Facilities

A. Photography Exhibit

Staff met with local photographer, Luciane Coletti, who is starting her journey to create a “Carmel River Watershed: What are the Impacts to Wildlife” storybook map that includes a photo exhibit at PCPR and a portfolio of images to be used by area conservation organizations. MPRPD supports her National Geographic Storytelling grant application.

4. Let’s Go Outdoors! Guide and Programs

A. Program Updates

The Spring/Summer 2023 LGO! publication was circulated in the Monterey County Weekly on May 4th, which added new participants to the programs. The majority of programming in this reporting period consisted of events during this new season, and the feedback from participants has been largely positive and grateful.



“Herps of Fort Ord” lead by BLM staff Bruce Delgado was filled to capacity on this Father’s Day.

B. Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Season

Staff have begun recruitment of instructors for the Fall 23/Winter 24 season. Proposals are being accepted.

7. Press Releases

A. Staff worked cross-divisionally in conjunction with partners and Spoke Consulting to release a “Managing Landscapes for Wildlife and Public Enjoyment” press release on the management and mowing of the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park.

6. Special Use Permits (SUP)

Staff are preparing several permits, from filming on MPRPD lands to car week events, and cross-country races. During this reporting period the following SUP’s were issued.

A. North America Butterfly Association (NABA): Chris Tenney

The weather was cool and overcast at PCPR which hampered species identification at PCRP. The volunteer team focused on warmer areas inland and south of the park.

B. Ventana Wildlife Society (WVS)

Research permit to film wildlife on MPRPD lands for educational and documentary shorts and films.

C. Xerces e California Bumble Bee Atlas-2023 SUP Extension

A common comment regarding survey insects is “the weather this spring and summer has been very cool, which has not been great for observing bumblebees flying.” This, in addition to the late blooms, has changed the insect pattern. As weather warms, the surveys will continue to locate and identify bumble bees.



Bumble bee surveyed at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park feeding on black sage (Salvia mellifera).

7. Wildflower Show

Kudos to all the Volunteers who helped create a very successful 24th Annual Summer Wildflower Show at Garland Ranch Regional Park. This year 23 MPRPD and 3 California Native Plant Society volunteers contributed over 220 hours of their time to help collect and identify the flowers, set up, staff, and clean up after the 2-day event. One hundred and sixty-four (164) species of wildflowers and ferns were collected along 60+ miles of trails at GRRP, PCR, Marina Dunes Preserve, and Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Over 1,388 Visitors came to view the flowers on display at the Garland Visitor Center patio. That's the highest visitation in recent years.



Wildflowers in Marina Dune Preserve as staff prepares to collect specimens for the annual wildflower show..



Wildflowers are on display at the Garland Visitor Center Patio during the second week of June.



Wildflower Show visitors experienced a diverse array of blooms and colors from MPRPD parklands.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. CCC Apartment Roof

The roof project at Cachagua Community Park has been completed. Ranger staff contracted with Avila Construction to replace the roof on the apartment/restroom building, which included the addition of gutters and downspouts on the building. No additional work was deemed necessary after removing the old shingles and exposing the plywood sheathing.



The new Cachagua Community Center Roof w/ gutters and downspouts

2. Frog Pond Fuel Reduction Project

MPPRPD will be implementing a fuel reduction project at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve in the coming weeks. Additional project details will be provided as part of next month's staff report.

3. Laidlaw-Apte Fuel Reduction Project

Planning & Conservation and Ranger Staff are working with Cal Fire to facilitate a fuel reduction project at the Laidlaw-Apte preserve in Carmel Highlands. This project will reduce the accumulated fuel load and the number of fallen tree logs by 50%. This project is being funded by Cal Fire in consultation with ecologist Rob Thompson and completed by contractor Mike Bleck.



Site inspection w/ Rob Thompson, Mike Bleck, and Jake Smith

4. Marina Dunes Education & Enforcement

Ranger staff participated in the production of a public service announcement intended to educate the public on the importance of keeping dogs on leash while visiting the Marina Dunes Preserve. Staff from Ventana Wildlife Society, students with Monterey Institute of International Studies, and volunteers with the Monterey Audubon Society were also in attendance and participated in the production, which will be streamed at the Palo Corona Regional Park Discovery Center and provided at the Marina Dunes Preserve Trailhead via QR code. Ranger staff also continues to increase their presence and visibility at Marina Dunes Preserve, as we are in the midst of Snowy Plover nesting season.

5. Monterey County Park Ranger Interview Panel

Ranger staff recently participated in the interview panel process to identify the most qualified candidate to fill Monterey County Park's Ranger II position, which will be assigned to north county parks including Jack's Peak and Toro Park. 5 candidates were interviewed, after which a ranking list was created and provided to County personnel staff.

6. Project B Utility Trenching

Ranger staff assumed Project Manager responsibilities during the trenching for the PG&E utility lines at Rancho Canada Unit Project B site. Multiple water and electrical lines were struck and needed to be repaired by the Contractor (Varni Electric) and Wedgewood's landscaper (GH Ramirez). Conduit has since been installed and the trench backfilled.



PG&E Trench at RCU Entrance

7. Rancho Canada Unit Mowing

Mowing of the Rancho Canada Unit has taken longer than in prior years due to the requirement to observe bird nesting season. AMMs (Avoidance and Minimization Measures) were developed and are being followed during the project. A licensed biologist is required to be onsite during much of this project to survey for bird nests and monitor for CRLF (California Red-legged Frogs).



Ventana Forestry mowing RCU

8. Rancho Canada Unit Pump Station Improvements

Ranger staff coordinated improvements to the Rancho Canada Unit irrigation pump station to bring the system into alignment with the water demand for Project B. This system was originally installed to accommodate the irrigation of 2 golf courses. These improvements will allow MPRPD to utilize the existing infrastructure to irrigate Project B landscaping (a significantly smaller area). The system can also now be programmed to run automatically, thus allowing the landscaper to water at night.



Maggiore Bros. completing pump improvements

9. Rancho Canada Unit Ranger Staff Offices

The new “temporary” portable office trailer to be used for Ranger staff offices at Palo Corona Regional Park has arrived. It was delivered on June 21st and will be located east of the Rancho Canada Unit Maintenance Shop. This unit will accommodate 4 additional work stations, copy machines, and a small meeting room.



New Ranger Station at Palo Corona Regional Park

10. Ranger Staff Training

Ranger Staff recently attended a partial-day training course addressing Bloodborne Pathogens, Biohazard, Hearing Conservation, and Heat Stress. This training was held at the Garland Ranch Regional Park Meeting Room, and provided free-of-charge by the District’s Insurer, JPIA.



Ranger staff attends training at GRRP

Members of the Ranger staff also attended a tailgate training provided by the District's contracted Biologist to aid personnel in recognizing special status resources that may occur in mowing areas. This training included identification of sensitive species and habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of construction and best management practices required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the Rancho Canada Unit.



Biologist Dawn Reis provides tailgate training

11. Seasonal Mowing & Brushing

Ranger staff continues to coordinate temporary workers to assist with weed-whipping along single-track trails and around buildings and structures, which required a second round of mowing this year due to the recent wet winter.



People Ready workers using weed-whip and DR mower

12. Southbank Trail Fencing

Ranger staff repaired a section of the Southbank Trail fence recently that began to lean due to multiple broken posts. The materials used originally to construct this fence were untreated, which leads to premature failure. Staff may need to replace this entire fence in the future, based on discussions regarding the trail's alignment.



Rangers Hatton and Ira repairing Southbank Trail fence

13. Storm-related FEMA damages

Ranger staff recently led FEMA site inspections into the Palo Corona Regional Park backcountry to assess road and culvert damages, and the San Clemente-Blue Rock Open Space to assess erosion and debris removal. Admin and Ops staff also continue to meet with FEMA to determine what damages would be reimbursable by

FEMA, once repairs have been completed. We are now on our 3rd FEMA Program Delivery Manager.

Ranger staff is also coordinating with Big Sur Marathon Foundation to determine funding and coordination for repairing the Multi-benefit Community Trail in advance of the cross-country race season. The first event is scheduled for September 9th.

14. Thomas Open Space Mowing

Ranger staff recently mowed Thomas Open Space in Carmel Valley. This project was completed using the District's tractor and rotary deck mower. Ranger staff will continue to monitor growth at this property to determine if it needs to be mowed a second time this season.



Ranger staff mowing Thomas Open Space

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

1. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects: MPRPD staff continue to work with The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) and Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) on environmental review and permitting for Cal Fire funded fuel breaks and Coastal Conservancy funded projects on Garland Ranch Regional Park, including thinning of the eucalyptus grove near the Rancho Loop trail and a shaded fuel break along East Garzas Road. Staff expect to bring a CEQA notice of determination for the eucalyptus removal and shaded fuel break projects to the Board during the August meeting. Staff are also consulting with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife, The Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Monterey Peninsula Water Management District regarding the project and any potentially required permits.

2. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project Permitting: The project team continues conversations with potential project funders and is in the process of preparing additional applications for grant funding while they continue to work on finalizing other state and federal permit applications. The State Coastal Conservancy

approved \$711,000 during their June Board meeting to provide additional funding to complete project design, permitting and grant seeking activities.

3. Laidlaw-Apte Vegetation Management Project: Vegetation and fuels reduction work at the Property began on June 14 and, as of writing this report, is expected to be completed by the end of June. Staff have been actively monitoring the work and coordinating with Cal Fire, and the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District, the consulting forester and equipment operator, and surrounding residents during the course of the project. The project is expected to restore the health of the forest on the property while also reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. (Figure 1 and 2)



Figure 1: Mastication equipment beginning fuels reduction work.



Figure 2: Chipping of downed logs and ladder fuels to restore more natural levels of downed wood and vegetation density.

4. 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.

5. Palo Corona Regional Park Pond Surveys: Staff conducted pond surveys with representatives of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate amphibian populations at the park and potential management activities to improve habitat for species like California Red-legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander. (Figures 3 and 4)



Figure 3: Seine netting surveys at Animas Pond.



Figure 4: California Red-Legged frog (left) and California Tiger Salamanders (right) found during pond surveys.

6. Staff training: Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association Training Exchange “TREX”: Update from June staff report. Due to scheduling conflicts, staff were not able to attend a weeklong training focused on fire and fuel management techniques that was hosted by the Santa Lucia Conservancy in early June.

(end of report)