

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
STAFF REPORT

**BOARD MEETING:** December 07, 2022

**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-October through mid-November 2022 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 continue to work with MPRPD's auditors on the annual audit and financial statement preparations. The Draft Annual Audit and Financial Statements Report is expected to be presented at the 07 December 2022 Board Meeting. The Final Report may be presented as early as the January 2023 MPRPD Board Meeting.
- 2. Asian Garden at Locke-Paddon Park:** Several private parties, including Mr. Saito who is an acclaimed and reknown designer, met with City of Marina and MPRPD officials met on-site to vision and discuss the proposed Asian Garden addition at this park. The proposed Asian Garden will celebrate Asian cultures via a beautiful and sustainable garden and trail network, art, history, and influence on American culture, education and recreation.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Classification & Compensation Study (Study):** Staff met with MPRPD's Personnel Committee (Committee) to discuss the Study's results and potential next steps. Staff will provide the Committee with additional information and schedule another meeting, likely as early as January 2023.
- 5. Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement (ESCA) Multi-Jurisdiction Joint Management Meeting:** The Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense – US Army, cities of Monterey and Seaside, CSUMB, MPC, and MPRPD continued to participate in this multi-jurisdictional update meeting. Coordination of maps for portions of the former Fort

Ord Army Base and each jurisdiction's updates were discussed.

**6. Exhibit Designs and Construction for the PCRCP Rancho Canada Unit's Discovery Center:** Staff continue to design and coordinate the future inhouse construction of several exhibits at this park.

As previously reported, several exhibits are progressing including the design and construction of a:

- A. Ruk Replica:** MPRPD continues to work in close partnership and advisement with Rumsen Ohlone Tribe re: the provision of a willow/cottonwood structural framework and tule-clad residential dwelling. A dwelling may be constructed within the Discovery Center and at one of the park's meadows to serve as an educational tool and reminder that this continent's residents have been here for tens of thousands of years – and are still here today;
- B. Appliance Wall Exhibit:** This educational tool shall highlight traditional indigenous appliances and tools, and juxtapose them against modern appliances and tools, such as a mussel shell and a silver spoon;
- C. 3-D Carmel River Watershed Model:** Staff continue to work closely with the Carmel River Watershed Conservancy on this project.
- D. Partners' Exhibits:** MPRPD will continue to invite, encourage, and coordinate our partners to highlight their respective environmental conservation and education exhibits at the PCRCP RCU Discovery Center. Thus, the public will learn about the MANY environment/cultural-based projects being undertaken in the region.

Our partner's projects may include detailed information on, and credit for: VWS's monumental CA Condor 'reintroduction" and habitat enhancement/expansion program; Elkhorn Slough's estuary protection and sea otter reintroduction programs; the Big Sur Land Trust's Carmel River FREE project; the Big Sur Marathon Foundation's, ParkIT!, and CAWD's trails and public access initiatives in support of MPRPD creating a more inclusive and environmentally literate society, and other partners' significant contributions to the protection of the region's natural and cultural resources, education, and access. These additional exhibits may include UC Davis's Sudden Oak Death research, NOAA's climate change analysis, and other vital research being undertaken by our many partners.

**7. "F.I.D.O." (Fenced In Dog "O-rena") at Palo Corona Regional Park:** Staff continued and shall continue to meet with the "Dog Park 4", state officials, and the park's Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project to coordinate the FIDO project's final design, fund source identification, and subsequent construction.

- 8. Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project at PCRPs Rancho Canada Unit:** All MPRPD divisions continue to work closely with the project’s consultants and state agencies. Design is at the 65% stage. A project update will be presented to MPRPD’s Board at the 07 December 2022 meeting.
- 9. Laguna Grande Regional Park Meeting with JPA Members and Others:** Staff continued to meet and coordinate with the cities of Monterey and Seaside to advance the park’s continued planning and future enhancement. A 01 December 2002 meeting that included the cities of Monterey and seaside, and the MPRPD, was convened to discuss concerns voiced by the public, with the goal to improvement public participation and advance the park’s enhancement. An update will be presented to the publica and MPRPD’s Board at a future meeting.
- 10. Meeting Room Improvements:** Barring any COVID-based restrictions or technical issues, Staff is preparing for MPRPD to resume in-person meetings as early as January 2023. It appears that infrastructure-related improvements may not pose a challenge or are not needed at this time. MPRPD now has equipment for “hybrid” meetings, should the need arise.
- 11. Multi-benefit Community [East] Trail:** Per the PCRPs Rancho Canada Unit’s original concept, a public pedestrian trail that may be used for environmental education, wildlife viewing, and recreation is an integral part of the park’s use. The Board will be provided updates as the Project advances.
- 12. New Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) Walking Trail:** CAWD and MPRPD are coordinating the planning and subsequent development of the CAWD Walking Trail. This trail has the potential of expanding and connecting the PCRPs Rancho Canada Unit’s trail network to the Carmel River FREE project site, CA State Park’s Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, the Pacific Ocean, the City of Carmel, Carmel Middle School, and immediate communities as part of a region-based trail configuration.
- 13. Palo Corona’s Project-B Construction:** Construction activities steadily progressed throughout the month of November. The restroom building’s plumbing systems have been installed and the restroom interiors have been painted. The building’s exterior stucco scratch and brown coats were completed in preparation for the final integrally colored finish coat, which has been applied. Site work is under way. Curb and gutter concrete have been poured, and concrete flatwork is to soon follow. The steel trellises have been fabricated and are soon to be installed onsite. The Multi-purpose Pad’s permit has been issued through Monterey County and inspections are being scheduled.

Progress reports are 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. This includes monitoring site deliveries and ensuring continued public access

is maintained to the clubhouse and modified trail entrances. 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.

Barring any weather-related or other unforeseen conditions and impacts, Project-B is scheduled to be completed by the third week in December 2022.



**Shaded seating area retaining wall and bus/vehicle drop-off**



**Integrally colored stucco finish coat has been applied**

**14. ParkIT! Initiative:** The initiative's Steering Committee, which includes MPRPD, continued to advance this very important project's analysis, planning, and future

implementation. The initiatives' goal, generally, is to reduce traffic congestion at the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve's Highway 1 entrance while exploring options that may yield in enhanced public access to this Reserve and other public lands in the immediate region, while protecting the natural and cultural integrity of these public lands.

The initiative's Steering Committee is planning a site visit to Big Basin State Park, on 14 December 2022, to analyze that park's shuttle system and see what measures may be applied to the ParkIT! initiative. The Board will be provided a post-field trip update as early as January 2023.

**15. Recruitment:** Recruitment efforts continue for the Operations & Maintenance, and the Environmental Education & Community Outreach divisions' vacant positions were launched, with interviews planned for December 2022.

**16. San Jose Creek Trail Opening Steering Committee:** MPRPD's divisions convened, developed, and implemented plans that allowed the trail's permit system to successfully be launch on 05 November 2022. Since then, many of the region's residents and visitors have been able to enjoy access to this trail and the varied habitats the trail traverses.

**17. Santa Lucia Conservancy (SLC) Environmental Education Programs:** SLC and MPRPD staff continue productive conversations, planning, and coordination of forthcoming programs.

**18. Training:** Staff attended the California Public Employers Labor Relations Association annual conference.

**19. Wedgewood Tenant Improvements:**

**A. Event Venue Facility Improvements at the Rancho Canada Unit:** MPRPD's concessionaire, Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets, has exciting plans that include various substantial improvements for the Rancho Canada Unit's event venue facilities. These improvements' substantial costs are being underwritten by the concessionaire. These updated and upgraded facilities shall continue to be available for MPRPD's functions, as well. The securing of all applicable building permits is in process.

**B. Roof and HVAC Replacement:** Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets continues to underwrite, coordinate, and execute numerous construction-focused tenant improvements at MPRPD's Rancho Canada Unit. Roofing replacement of the Merienda Room, Pub, and Discovery Center gabled roofing is complete. As of the writing of this report, the concessionaire continues working on the gabled roof over MPRPD's/Wedgewood's administrative offices.



**Tile roofing replacement in progress over MPRPD’s administrative offices**

**20. Wildlife Cameras:** Wildlife cameras have been and shall continue to be installed at several park sites to track wildlife activity, thereby helping MPRPD identify extant or potential wildlife corridors, and to track and enforce activities – such as unauthorized access – to sensitive areas and areas that require permits or may currently restrict/prohibit access.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION**

**1. Arboretum at Garland Ranch Regional Park:** In preparation for this upcoming seasonal winter/spring rains, volunteers and staff installed dozens of native plants at the Garland Ranch Regional Park arboretum and demonstration garden. In addition to these seedlings and “starter” plants, seeds are scheduled to be sown just prior to the next forecasted rains. Planting now, during the wet months, provides rain water that help these plants become better established without the need to use our limited water supply.

These young plants enhance the arboretum’s beauty and habitat, provide greater interpretive educational opportunities, and will look great for the annual wildflower show in June 2023.

## 2. Community Outreach:

- A. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:** At the time of this report's writing, over 70-people had signed up for the "50kfor50years" social media campaign, with registered participant's commitment to walk 50 kilometers in recognition of MPRPD's 50th anniversary.

In addition to getting outdoors and staying healthy, participants who complete the challenge will receive a commemorative t-shirt sponsored by Blue Zones Project of Monterey County. To keep the activity fun and engaging, participants earn a sticker by walking at specific locations, including Marina Dunes, Locke-Paddon Community Wetland Park, Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, Monterey Bay Coastal Trail, Garland Ranch Regional Park, and Palo Corona Regional Park.

The 50kfor50years campaign culminates with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on December 3 at Palo Corona Regional Park from 10am to 3 pm. The festivities will include 20 exhibitors, presentations, live animals, food, and public-engaging activities all centered around the theme of "valuing parks and open space."

For more information about the event, visit <https://www.mprpd.org/celebrate-50-years-with-mprpd> or contact Savannah Peña: [pena@mprpd.org](mailto:pena@mprpd.org) or 831-242-0240.

- B. Social Media Posts:** For this reporting period, posts consisted of district event news and educational content about the plants, wildlife, history, and trails of MPRPD parks and preserves.

Posts promoted upcoming LGO! programming, Garland Ranch eucalyptus removal volunteer day, San Jose Creek Trail's opening, the November #50kfor50years campaign, and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in-person celebration event. Posts also highlighted International Bat Week, Halloween, and Veteran's Day.

The following of MPRPD social media accounts grew in October-November:

- i. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:** [\(1\) Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District \(MPRPD\) | Carmel CA | Facebook](#)

- 1. Nov. 15 Follower Count: 2,018 (+28)**
- 2. Facebook Page Reach: 10,190 (↑ 590.4 %)**
- 3. Top 3 posts for reach (number of people who saw post at least once):**  
Oct 16 – Nov 15
  - a. Nov. 8 Paid ad promoting 50kfor50years and Run Sign-Up link (7,354 views) (93 link clicks)**
  - b. Nov. 2 San Jose Creek Trail opening announcement Ba(909 views)**
  - c. Oct. 16 Rattlesnake LGO! Program (847 views)**

ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd\_lgo: [Monterey Peninsula Parks \(@mprpd\\_lgo\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)

1. Nov. 15 Follower Count: 1,001 (+61)
2. Instagram Page Reach: 1,076 (↑ 48.6 %)
3. Top 3 posts for reach (number of people who saw post at least once): Oct 16 – Nov 15

- a. Nov. 11 San Jose Creek Trail opening reminder (312 views)
- b. Oct. 30 History of Monterey Bay Coastal Trail (492 views)
- c. Oct. 26 Garland Ranch Volunteer Eucalyptus Removal Thank You post (390 views)





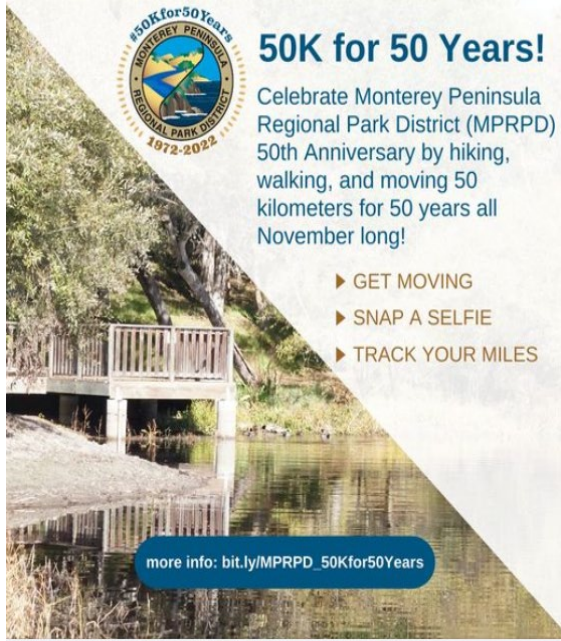
**Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)**  
 November 2 at 4:21 PM · 🌐

📢 Have you heard? Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD) is celebrating 50 years of conservation and recreation with a #50kfor50Years over the course of November!

👣 Track your miles, earn limited-edition stickers, and get outdoors with us for 50 years of #MPPRD.

📖 Learn more and sign up today: [bit.ly/MPPRD\\_50kfor50Years](https://bit.ly/MPPRD_50kfor50Years) #MPPRDat50 #50kfor50Years

#... See more



Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD) Carroll MacCanna

👉 Everyone likes free T-shirts! Track and complete your 50 kilometers by Wednesday, November 30th and receive a special Blue Zones Project - Monterey County sponsored #MPPRD 50th Anniversary T-shirt to celebrate your success!

🏆 The first 200 people can collect their T-shirts on Saturday, December 3 from 10:00am to 2:00pm at Palo Corona Regional Park during our in-person and FREE celebration for all. <https://www.mpprd.org/celebrate-50-years-with-mpprd>

You can also collect your shirt at the Palo Corona Discovery Center the following weekend, December 10-11.

📖 Learn more at the link in bio and sign up to track your miles here: [bit.ly/MPPRD\\_50kfor50Years](https://bit.ly/MPPRD_50kfor50Years)

#OpenAccessibleSpaces #LetsGoOutdoors #MPPRDat50 #mpprdandme #bluezonesproject



**Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPPRD)**  
 November 2 at 9:00 PM · 🌐

📢 Trail opening announcement 📢 Access by PERMIT ONLY!

📍 The San Jose Creek trail in Palo Corona Regional Park will open by permit only starting on Saturday, November 5th!

🌲 This out and back scenic hike takes you past the gates at Animas Pond to experience fantastic views, rich pine and chaparral habitats, and lush redwood groves. The sounds of the trickling creeks and birds chirping will be your companion along your journey.

👣 This 9.0 mile hike is for the experienced day hiker.

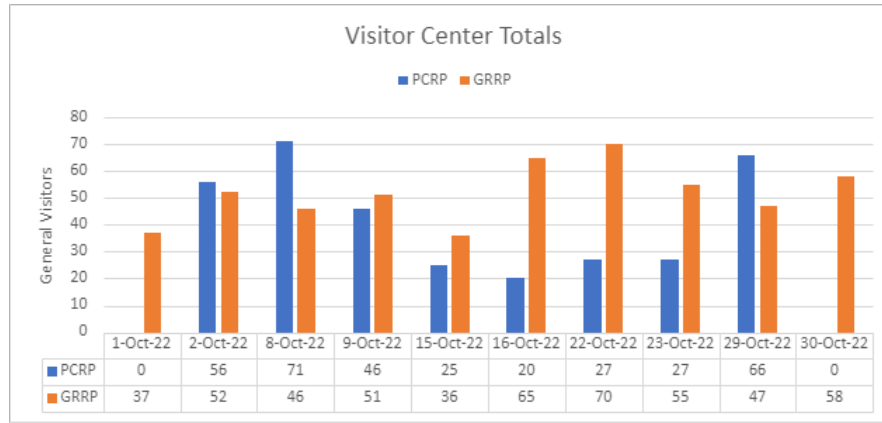
📄 MPPRD will issue up to 15 permits per day (up to 4 people per permit). Permit reservations start Thursday, November 3rd.

📖 Reserve your spot at our website (link in bio) here: <https://www.mpprd.org/access-permit-application-san-jose...>

#mpprdandme #letsgooutdoors #hiking #nature #wildlifeconservation #wildlife #conservation #redwoods #MPPRDat50



**C. Visitor Center Totals:** Staff has been monitoring and collecting visitation data at both the PCRPP Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). The chart below summarizes the weekend visitor contacts in October 2022. Note that the DC was closed on 10/1 and 10/30.



**PCRPP visitation is negatively impacted by area construction. Statistics for PCRPP may also include visitor contacts by “park greeter” volunteers stationed at the temporary trailhead. Unusually high totals for PCRPP can be attributed to cross country meets hosted on those Saturdays, providing opportunities to reach new MPRPD patrons – especially youth that might not otherwise have had the opportunity to visit this park and its open space.**

**3. Education: K-12 Education Programs:** Staff are piloting MPRPD’s education programs for grades 5-9 at Palo Corona Regional Park. The two programs currently being conducted are: (1) “**Healthy Habitats**” – a riparian-ecosystem-focused, hands-on learning and exploratory program, and (2) “**Pollinator Garden**” – focusing on connecting students to floodplain restoration.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** **Healthy Habitats** is being presented to a homeschooled group of children, ages 10-15, and **Pollinator Garden** is being tested with The Village Project, an after-school group from Seaside. Both groups have limited access to environmental and outdoor education, and the MPRPD program reaches students living specifically in Monterey and Seaside. There are approximately 7-students for each program, for a total of 14 students. One goal of these small pilot groups is to provide a foundation for working with larger schools or school districts on similar programming in the future, at Palo Corona Regional Park.

**A.** Discussions with Bay View Academy (BVA), a public charter school in Monterey, are developing into a partnership designed to engage 5<sup>th</sup> 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 **Healthy Habitats** program by collaborating with the curriculum writers and teachers from BVA.

**B.** Staff will very soon be collaborating with Salinas Unified High School District, Bird School Project, Pacific Grove Museum, and other environmental educators through a Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant to provide teacher workshops and student experiences on high school campuses and at Palo Corona Regional Park during spring 2023.

**4. Interns (CSUMB Scientific Illustrator Intern):** This program finished its inaugural season on 01 December 2022. Staff are looking forward to presenting the completed wayside interpretive panels in an upcoming MPRPD Board report.

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

**A. Guide Updates:** The current season has a few updates. The 01 December 2022 and 05 January 2023 San Jose Creek Hikes have been cancelled due to concerns about the weather causing adverse road conditions. Mushroom Mania for 17 December 2022 has been rescheduled to 21 February 2023. The Medicinal Plant Tour had an additional session added and was fully booked for 19 November 2022.

**B. Other Programs:** Some program highlights are photographically featured below: **Farm Discovery at Live Earth** and **Rattlesnakes**. Both sessions were held on 05 November 2022.

**C. Medicinal Plants:** The new Medicinal Plant Tour at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve was so popular that a second date on 19 November 2022 was added. In addition to being well attended, and engaging, it was well received by the public. One participant shared the following in an email:

*"I just finished the medicinal plant tour at the DRO (Del Rey Oaks) frog pond - it was really interesting!*

*Lianne and Rick B. had so much information and knowledge to share. They made the class so interesting - I completely lost track of time and it was over before I knew it, but I still wanted to walk around more, and learn more. They were both very pleasant and open to questions. Lianne engaged the class participants by asking questions, rather than just telling facts. And it was okay to have the wrong answer!*

*They both did such a quality job, and the Frog Pond Park (sic) is so peaceful and beautiful. It made for a wonderful morning hike and learning opportunity. Thank you for offering this class to the public."*



**Family members pet and feed cows during the Family Discovery at Live Earth tour**



**Bruce Farm engages participants during the rattlesnake discussion**



**People of all ages enjoy harvesting and eating green beans at Family Discovery**

**6. Service Learners:** CSUMB Service Learning (SL) activities are designed to engage students in developing strong core values with an emphasis on social justice, social responsibility, and community-building. SL participants, Tatiana Cabrera Rojo, and

Everett Lomath, assisted in the **#50kfor50years** campaign and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration by creating park-inspired award and coloring stickers.



**Award Stickers recognizing several MRPPD Parks**



**“Coloring Stickers” for Outreach Activities**

## 7. Special Use Permits:

The following Special Use Permits (SUP) were issued for October and November 2022:

- A. Big Sur Land Trust:** As part of BSLT's annual SUP activities, staff will submit quarterly inquiry applications for upcoming events. This increases successful communication and minimizes potential for the over-scheduling of activities and park overuse.
- B. CalAm Encroachment Permit:** An encroachment permit was issued to conduct borehole drilling and take samples of the aquifer beneath Palo Corona Regional Park. The test bore will help identify a suitable potable water source for the new Rancho Cañada Village development, located immediately adjacent to Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit. Similar efforts were conducted in August. Those test results indicated that additional test bores were necessary to identify the best location for a potable well, thus, resulting in testing at this potential new well site.
- C. Carmel Valley Athletic Club and Refuge - Turkey Trot:** The Carmel Valley Athletic Club (CVAC) and Refuge hosted their 9<sup>th</sup> annual fun run. 100% of the proceeds for this family-friendly activity went to the Monterey Food Bank. The running/walking event was held on Thanksgiving Day at 9 am along the Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's South Bank Trail.
- D. CSUMB Graduate Class ENVS 660:** In coordination with and under the guidance of the Planning and Conservation Program Manager, the CSUMB Graduate Class ENVS 660 - Professional Environmental Science is conducting an MPRPD land inventory, history, and characterization - working toward a system for evaluating potential future land acquisitions. Activities include visiting multiple MPRPD properties to photo-document and characterize vegetation type, accessibility, etc.
- E. Geo Consultants Encroachment Permit:** As part of the Rancho Canada Unit's Floodplain and Upland Restoration Projects, the permit authorized borehole drilling to take soil and geologic samples along the Carmel River to assist with the design and engineering of a replacement bridge at this park. The park's Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project includes the replacement of Bridge #1 (the park's upstream-most bridge along the Carmel River) with a new free-span bridge that is far less susceptible to debris getting caught on the bridge and less likely to potentially cause river flows to back-up and cause flooding upstream.
- F. Robert Lewis Stevenson School:** The SUP was issued to student athletes and coaches to utilize the Multi-Benefit Community Trail for cross-country practice in preparation for the Pacific Coast Athletic League (PCAL) High School Cross-Country Championships.

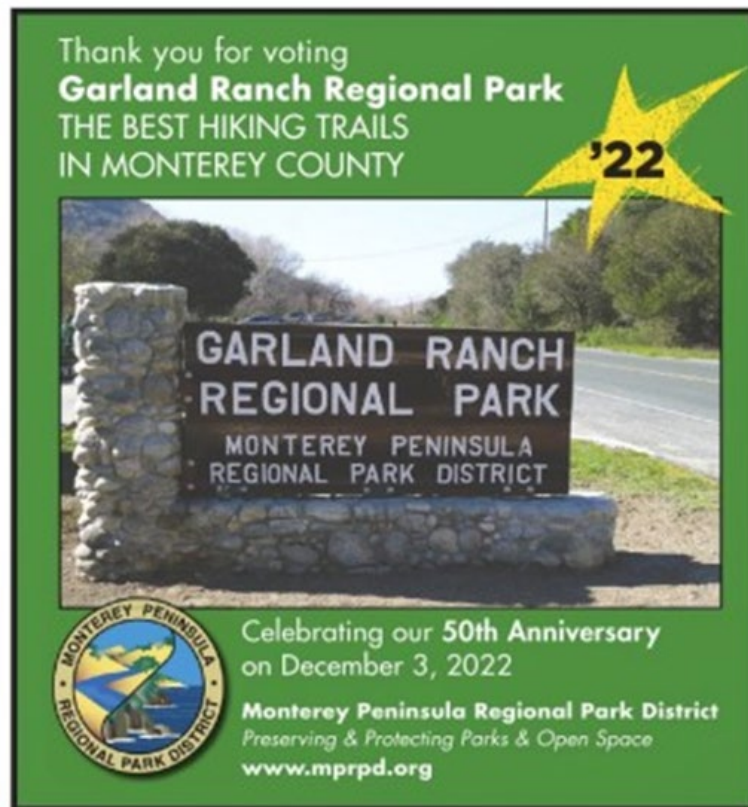
**G. Scher Professional Photography:** MPRPD is currently reviewing requirements for issuing Special Use Permits, including Ordinance No. 3, Section 406 (adopted by Amendment on January 2, 2000) and Section 406.2.b, which require a SUP when an assembly requires a fee or payment to participate.

**H. Yadir Films – PCAL Conference:** This was a partnership filming project between the Big Sur Marathon Foundation and MPRPD on the Multi-benefit Community Trail. Yadir Films operated a drone to film the course topography during the PCAL High School Cross-Country Championships on 29 October 2022.

## **OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION**

### **1. Award-winning Parks & Trails:**

**A. Monterey County Weekly:** For another consecutive year, Garland Ranch Regional Park was voted as “Best Hiking Trails” amongst Monterey County Weekly readers.



**Monterey County Weekly**

**B. Carmel Pine Cone:** MPRPD also received the Golden Pine Cone Award for both “Best Hiking Trail” at Palo Corona Regional Park and “Favorite Park” at

## Garland Ranch Regional Park.

### Best Hiking Trail

**Inspiration Point Trail** — Palo Corona Regional Park, 4860 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley – mprpd.org

A moderate hike of 2 miles each way (starting in the parking lot), this steadily climbing trail gains about 850 feet of elevation before arriving at a view-blessed bench. Along the way, you will pass through an oak forest and maybe see some cows. You can catch your breath while taking in birds-eye views of Carmel Point, Carmel River Beach, Point Lobos and Carmel Valley along the way.

The bench, meanwhile, makes for the perfect picnic spot. Just be sure to bring a pair of sturdy shoes and some water.

### My Favorite Park

**Garland Ranch Regional Park** — 700 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley – dawn to dusk daily – mprpd.org

In what its manager, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, calls the granddaddy of the public agency's properties, Garland Ranch Regional Park was bought in 1975 from William Garland II, who the district said "generously gifted a portion of the cost by reducing the purchase price to below fair market value." From the willow-covered banks of the Carmel River, through the cottonwood-sycamore stands of the old floodplain, Garland is home to a variety of landscapes that occur at elevations from 200 to 2,000 feet. The trails include open oak savannas and vistas well worth photographing. "Along the way, you will travel through maple-filled canyons, dense oak woodlands, and thick stands of chaparral. Garzas Creek gently bisects the park and provides a peaceful, shaded trail that reaches a secluded side canyon of redwoods," the park district says.

## Carmel Pine Cone

- 2. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Channel Clearing:** Rangers coordinated the annual brushing/clearing of the drainage channel along Highway 218 at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, with assistance from a Gabilan Inmate Crew.



**Gabilan Inmate Crew clearing Highway 218 drainage**



- 3. GRRP Fuel Reduction Volunteer Event:** Saturday, 22 October 2022 marked the first-ever Fuel Reduction Volunteer Event at Garland Ranch Regional Park. EECO, P&C, and OPS Divisions teamed up to coordinate and facilitate this event, which focused on removal of eucalyptus stems sprouting from stumps where previously felled eucalyptus trees once stood. The event was a huge success and resulted in a significant amount of eucalyptus sprouts being lopped and piled in preparation of an inmate chipping project the following week.



**Ranger Hatton providing a tool safety orientation**



**Volunteers hard at work (including MPRPD Board President Potter)**



**Gabilan Inmate Crew chipping piles generated by volunteer event**

- 4. GRRP Ranger Station Septic Tank Repairs:** Rangers contracted with Peninsula Septic Tank Service (PSTS) to replace a collapsed drain line at the Garland Ranch Regional Park Ranger Station. PSTS excavated, removed, and replaced approximately 65' of drain line between the septic tank and the leach field. Maintenance of the leach field/septic tank inlet/outlet was also performed.



**PSTS repairing GRRP Ranger Station septic drain line**

- 5. GRRP Seasonal Footbridges Removed:** The 3-seasonal footbridges spanning the Carmel River have been removed for the winter season. Rangers coordinate the installation and removal of these footbridges every year with the assistance of a Gabilan inmate crew.



**Inmate Crew and Rangers removing seasonal footbridge near GRRP Visitor Center**

6. **Marina Dunes Snowy Plover Fencing:** The symbolic fence identifying the snowy plover nesting areas at Marina Dunes Preserve has been relocated for the winter season. Each year, MPRPD's Rangers, in conjunction with Point Blue Conservancy personnel, relocate the symbolic fence to prevent damage or loss caused by high tides.



**Ranger Jeff relocating symbolic fence**

7. **Monastery Road Work:** Ops staff coordinated with Carmel Monastery personnel to repair and improve the access road leading to the Monastery Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park. Rangers and the grazing lessee utilize this road often to access the Monastery well pump. Graniterock was hired by the Monastery to affect the repairs, which were completed on 27 October 2022.



**Graniterock roller and paving machine**

8. **Palo Corona-White Rock Fuel Break/Bridge Project:** Ops staff recently attended a kick-off meeting for the San Jose Creek Crossing Project, which includes construction a heavy-equipment-rated free span bridge across San Jose Creek, Hank's Spur road improvements, and Van Winkley's ridge fuel treatments. This project is being funded by a grant through Cal Fire and managed by Santa Lucia Conservancy staff. When complete, this project will significantly benefit MPRPD by providing year-round access into the Palo Corona backcountry.



**San Jose Creek Crossing repair after Soberanes Fire on August 22, 2016 (Photo by: Christy Wyckoff)**

9. **P-Cal Cross-Country Championships:** The final event of the 2022 cross-country season at the Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit was a huge success, with schools coming from as far as Humboldt County to compete.

As with previous events, Rangers assisted with prepping for the event, enforcing District rules and regulations during the event, and ensuring spectators remained in designated viewing areas. A meeting has been scheduled for 08 December 2022 between MPRPD and the Big Sur Marathon Foundation to discuss what we learned from this inaugural season and what improvements can be made in preparation for next year's season.

Unfortunately, following the last event, damage to the Multi-benefit Community Trail occurred as a result of the season's first significant rainfall. MPRPD and BSMF staff continue to discuss options for long-term maintenance of the trail and its maintenance. The trail's realignment is being proposed as part of the Rancho Canada Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project.



**Damage caused by recent rainfall**

**10. Project-B Construction Project:** Rangers continue to be engaged with Avila Construction and provide support to Project-B, including addressing on-site previously unforeseen issues, updating construction signage, enforcing construction closures, and participating in weekly check-in meetings. Recently, Rangers participated in the coordination of the landscaping irrigation design and determining walkway widths.

**11. RCU Floodplain Restoration Project Bridge Testing:** Rangers coordinated with Geo-Con, a geological consulting firm from Sacramento to perform boring and CPT (cone-penetration testing) in the vicinity of Bridge #1 at the Rancho Canada Unit. The results will help facilitate the planning and design of the replacement for Bridge #1. The extant bridge has piles within the river channel, making them susceptible to debris accumulation. Because of the size of necessary equipment, Rangers escorted and provided Geo-Con with access into the Rancho Canada Unit, south of the Carmel River, via the PCRFP Front Ranch.



**Geo-Con Drill Rig performing core sampling**

**12. Surveillance Field Cameras at GRRP & PCRP's RCU:** Rangers recently purchased and deployed new technology to help monitor for trespass and illegal activity in MPRPD parks & preserves. Typically used for monitoring wild game activity, cellular-linked game cameras are a tremendous asset to enforcement agencies tracking illegal activity or conducting investigations. These cameras link to cell phones and provide real-time footage, which has already assisted with issuance of citations for illegal mountain bike activity along Snively's Ridge Trail.



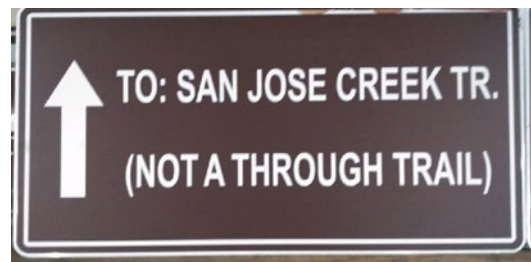
**Ranger Joseph addressing illegal mountain biking activity**

**13. Vehicle Incident at Rancho Canada:** On Sunday, 13 November 2022, a car was discovered abandoned on the lawn area in front of the Palo Corona Regional Park entrance sign. Apparently, a wedding guest traveling at a high rate of speed misjudged the turn onto Rio Road, clipped the billboard sign, causing minimal damage to nearby juniper trees. Rangers responded and reported the incident to California Highway Patrol, who investigated and contacted a tow truck. No injuries were reported.



**Abandoned vehicle near PCRP monument sign**

- 14. Whisler-Wilson/San Jose Creek Trail Opening Preparations:** Ops staff completed the final checklist items for opening of the San Jose Creek Trail, including trail mowing, additional signage installation, and consolidation of gate access locks. Rangers will continue to monitor for illegal trespass and errant activities, including unauthorized access into the PCRP backcountry.



**Recently installed San Jose Creek Trail signage**

## **PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION**

- 1. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation and Management Plan:** The first Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan (FMFMP) community meeting was held on October 18, 2022. The project team is now working to refine draft wildfire risk models and developing a palette of fuels and vegetation treatment measures that will be used as the basis for the 15-year FMFMP. Staff expect to have a Draft FMFMP that may be ready to present to MPRPD's Board as early March 2023.
- 2. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects:** Staff are working to finalize scopes of work and agreements with the Monterey County Resource Conservation District and California Coastal Conservancy that will provide funding to begin implementing early priority vegetation management and fuels reduction work within the park starting in 2023. Staff expect to have a draft project scope and initial project schedule to share with MPRPD's Board as early as January 2023, including updates on expected permitting requirements and their respective timeframes.
- 3. Laidlaw-Apte Vegetation Management:** Staff are working with the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District and Cal Fire to reduce unnaturally high volumes of native and invasive vegetation and fuel loads in the Laidlaw-Apte Preserve. Planning and funding for this work have been years in the making and Cal Fire has secured funding to follow recent goat grazing on the preserve with additional mechanical fuel reduction treatments.

Staff have coordinated with Cal Fire's consultant to ensure proposed treatments are compatible with the property's deed restrictions and MPRPD management goals for the property, and are presently working with Cal FIRE to confirm all necessary

permits and approvals are in hand before mechanical thinning occurs in December 2022 or January 2023. Staff will provide an update to MPRPD's Board at a future meeting in early 2023.

- 4. Palo Corona Regional Park General Development Plan Coastal Development Permit:** Staff are working with Monterey County Planning staff to secure a Coastal Development Permit for the PCRP's General Development Plan. MPRPD staff are working on providing the County with additional information so that the County deems the application complete and can begin detailed review and approval processes.
  
- 5. Rancho Canada Unit Floodplain Restoration Project (RCUFRP):** The RCUFRP Project Team has finalized the 65% Basis of Design Report (sometimes referenced as the "BOD" in other reports). An update presentation shall be provided during the 07 December 2022 MPRPD Board meeting.
  
- 6. San Jose Creek Trail:** MPRPD began offering 15-permits per day (with a maximum of 4 people per permit) for self-guided hikes to the recently opened San Jose Creek Trail. Since the permit system's launch on 05 November 2022, and as of this report's writing in late November of this year, over 213 permits had been issued, providing access for nearly 600 hikers. Public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff will provide a more detailed update re: the San Jose Creek Trail's usage statistic and lessons learned, in early 2023.



**Big Sur Land Trust interpreter led hike on San Jose Creek Trail  
(Photo by: Bradley Dunbaugh)**