

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: March 02, 2022

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) Staff undertook from mid-January 2022 through mid-February 2022 in addition to performing the District's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the CDC's recommendations and the State's and County's COVID-related guidelines.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Class & Compensation/Benefits Survey:

A. Phase I (Classification Analysis): As previously reported, the project's consultant interviewed all MPRPD personnel to obtain each job-holder's perspective regarding their respective current position requirements and responsibilities. The consultant is developing the draft classification descriptions and will have them back for MPRPD's General Manager's review as early as March 2022.

The consultant has informed MPRPD that the next step would then be for MPRPD's administration to review and submit comment for the classification descriptions. Once administration's feedback is incorporated, the consultant's analysis and recommendations may be sent to staff.

B. Phase II (Compensation and Benefits Analysis): This phase will begin shortly hereafter. Phase II shall facilitate comparison between MPRPD's job classifications with those found in this region. It is understood that comparisons may include identical or reasonably similar job classifications. This analysis will help determine if compensation and benefits align with those found in the region.

We hope to complete Phase II this current Fiscal Year, and shall present the consultant's analysis, findings, and recommendations to the Board for review and action shortly thereafter.

2. **COVID-19:** Staff continued to participate in weekly meetings with the County OES and local jurisdictions. Health departments across the nation attribute the vast majority of diagnosed infections to the omicron variant.
3. **COVID-19 Prevention Plan (CPP):** Staff continued to research local, state, and national trends and recommendations. The CPP has been updated, accordingly, and will likely need future updates as the pandemic continues.
4. **COVID Relief Funds:** As previously reported, MPRPD was notified on December 17, 2021, by the California Special District's Association, that MPRPD will receive \$1,059,975 in COVID relief funds. These funds have been transferred to MPRPD.
5. **Donations:** Staff is working with the Community Foundation for Monterey County, MPRPD's Legal Counsel, and others to explore the best means for MPRPD to receive donations to enhance the District's sites, facilities, and programs, and supplement MPRPD's limited finances. Staff will provide the Board more information at future Board meetings.
6. **Interpretive Exhibits:** Staff, in consultation with subject matter experts, continued to refine existing or construct new exhibits that will be displayed at the Palo Corona Regional Park Discovery Center. It is anticipated that the Discovery Center will reopen as early as this spring. Staff has utilized Covid-based shutdown to redesign and improve the Discovery Center's interpretive exhibits.



California Condor Redwood Nest Exhibit (at 80%)



Rumsen Tule Boat and Fishing Tools Exhibit (concept model)

7. **Intersection Concepts Review:** Legal Counsel and staff met with Rancho Canada Village Development (RCVD) to discuss two concept plans for the proposed Carmel

Valley Road and [East] Rio Road intersection improvements project. These concepts are summarized as follows:

- A. Acceleration Lane in westbound Carmel Valley Road median:** This concept calls for construction an acceleration lane within the existing Carmel Valley Road center median. Drivers would exit northbound [East] Rio Road and onto westbound Carmel Valley Road, entering the intersection, similar to what is presently required. The driver would then enter and queue in the new acceleration lane, then merge into westbound traffic.
- B. Signalized Intersection:** This concept calls for a signalized (traffic lights) intersection along with other minor improvements to the existing acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Staff has requested RCVD provide MPRPD's Board a presentation at the April 2022 meeting. RCVD will present an update on the subdivision's development including projected start and completion dates, public use of Bridge #5 to gain access to the Palo Corona Regional Park's Front Ranch Unit, and the Carmel Valley and Rio roads intersection.

- 8. Laguna Grande Regional Park (LGRP):** The LGRP Joint Powers Authority (JPA) consisting of the cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD, shall meet on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 6pm. The meeting will be held remotely, and the invite shall soon be made available to the public.

The consultants developing the Trails Maintenance and Environmental Strategy shall present the plan to the JPA for their review and comment.

- 9. Personnel Recruitment:** The recruitment and selection processes continued for the Planning & Conservation Supervisor, Ranger, and Environmental Education Specialist positions. Recruitment continues for the Ranger and Environmental Education Specialist positions, and applicants continue to trickle in.
- 10. Redistricting Analysis and Project:** As previously reported, in response to the 2021 Census, MPRPD must assess and, where necessary, adjust the District's Ward boundaries to ensure proper representation. MPRPD's Legal Counsel and the consultant will provide updates to the Board during March Board meeting, including discussion regarding the legally required public hearing process.
- 11. Training:** Staff participated in Public Agency Risk Management Association, Field Trip Immunity sessions; LCW's sessions re: Managing Employee Rights, and Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (SPSL) Obligations; and, HRCI's session on Employee Engagement.

EECO DIVISION

1. Community Outreach:

- A. Website Coalition:** Staff met Monterey County Community Builders (CBMC) to discuss using their website to promote opportunities when our volunteer programming restarts. CBMC's mission is to build a culture of volunteer and community engagement that drives a thriving, healthy, and inclusive Monterey County.
- B. California Wildlife Day (CWD):** Event planning continues with a new format. CWD is now a hybrid event with a live, virtual opening ceremony and panel discussions in the morning, and in-person interpretive walks and guide hikes in the afternoon. Registration for the hike will be through the MPRPD website.



California Wildlife Day

February 1 at 11:06 AM · 🌐

California Wildlife Day 2022 is moving to a HYBRID event!

We will begin the program on March 19th with zoom sessions related to wildlife, wildfires, and the future of our water on the Monterey Peninsula.

Join us in the afternoon at Garland Ranch Regional Park for guided nature walks! Learn from experts about the wildlife with the park and in our greater community. Registrations for these walks will open on February 18th. We hope to see you there ✨

[#CWD](#) [#californiawildlifeday](#) [#lgo](#) [#letsgooutdoors](#) [#mprpd](#)
[#californiawildlife](#) [#california](#)

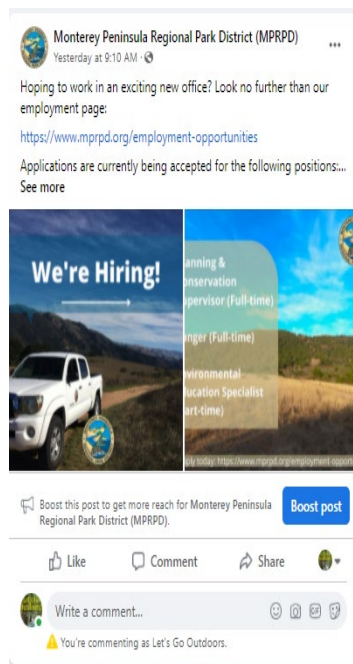
C. Social Media Posts: For this reporting period posts consisted of highlighting park happenings and educational content related to animal identification, redwoods, hiking recommendations, and wetland habitats. MPRPD used social media to update the public on the status of MPRPD property adjacent to the January 21 Colorado Fire.

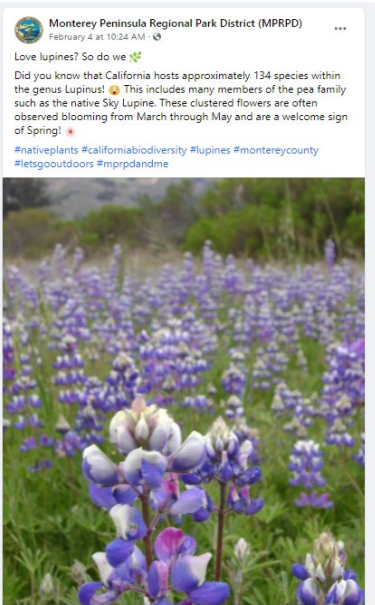
i. Facebook stats @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

1. February 12 follower count: 1.7K
2. Facebook Page Reach: 15,440 (↑ 829.6%)
3. Top 3 most popular posts: January 14 – February 15
 - a. 2/4 Lovely Lupines (12.2k views)
 - b. 1/24 Bobcats and Mountain Lions (2.7k views)
 - c. 1/22 Good morning Garzas Canyon (817 views)

ii. Instagram stats @mprpd_igo:

1. February 12 follower count: 660
2. Facebook Page Reach: 419 (↑ 33.3%)
3. Top 3 most popular posts: November 24 – December 22
 - a. 1/24 Bobcats and Mountain Lions (227 views)
 - b. 1/28 Park Update: Mill Creek Redwoods and Colorado Fire (204 views)
 - c. 1/18 Park Spotlight: Frog Pond (181 views)





2. Education:

A. K-12 Education Programs:

- i. **Middle Schools:** Contact made with Monterey Peninsula Unified School District's Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator to discuss options of science and hands-on conservation work for their middle schools at nearby parks.

- ii. **High School:** Tentative field trip for Marina High Sustainable Societies students exploring Palo Corona's biodiversity and habitats scheduled for early spring.

B. Service Learning – CSU Monterey Bay:

- i. **Garland Ranch:** MPRPD staff has begun working with CSUMB Service Learners in restoring the native plant garden and arboretum at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Staff and two (2) Service Learners have begun the process of planning and sustaining long-term management of native plant site through invasive species removal, native species planting, and watering.
- ii. **Wildflower Show:** A service Learner is also assisting staff with updating the Virtual Annual Wildflower Show Website and adding more accessible features.

3. Exhibits:

- A. Condor Exhibit at Palo Corona Regional Park:** Debbie Wyatt is leading the planning of the condor exhibit. Staff continues to meet to design, layout, and develop messaging and story lines for the exhibit.
- B. Anthropocene Exhibit:** Staff met with Donna Zahn and Ed Clifton to develop an Anthropocene exhibit as an extension to the geology exhibit installed in 2018. The geology exhibit is being renovated with an anticipated completion date of May 2022.
- C. Carmel River Watershed 3-D Map:** Staff, working with the Carmel River Watershed Conservancy, contracted with White Clouds Inc., to fabricate a 6' x 7' 3-D Carmel River Watershed topographic map that will feature the area's terrain and drainage. Installation of the exhibit is scheduled for April 2022.
- D. CSUMB Scientific Illustration:** Staff from MPRPD and Burleson Consulting, Inc. launched the CSUMB Scientific Illustration application process in a virtual meeting with the. The student selected will be an MPRPD paid intern, hired to create the graphics and illustrations for three interpretive signs installed along the public access trail at the Marina Dunes Preserve. The 16-week internship will commence after July 1, 2022.

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

- A. Programs:** MPRPD's programs are filling up at record pace for the guided San Jose Creek Trail hike, night hikes, birding programs, mushroom workshops, and other led tours on District properties. The highest demand

program is the Volunteer and Staff led San Jose Creek Trail hike, with the offering for March filling to capacity in less than a minute at mid-night when it was advertised.

High demand for programs on MPRPD properties elicits need for volunteer instructors and facilitators to keep up with demand.

- B.** Call for instructors and community partner offerings have been sent out for the next season of LGO! that will run from May 2022–September 2022. Planned release for the next guide is April 2022.
- 5. The California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL):** SERCAL is hosting its annual conference themed, “Think Big, Start Small, Restore Now,” at Palo Corona Regional Park the week of May 10-13, 2022. The organizers have requested that MPRPD staff present on the Marina Dunes Preserve restoration and Smith’s Blue Butterfly mitigation projects and lead a guided San Jose Creek trail hike.
- 6. Special Use Permits:** The following special use permits were issued during this reporting period:
 - A. Montage Health – Walk for Health** for February 7, 2022, at Marina Dunes Preserve
 - B. Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History – Watershed Guardians** for various February dates, at Garland Ranch Regional Park
- 7. Volunteers:** Essa Vanderspek -- Instructor for the Ventana Wildlife Society gave an informative presentation to MPRPD’s Volunteers about the Ventana Wildlife Society’s work with the California condor, as well as an update on the condors after the Dolan Fire.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. Carmel Area Wastewater District Sewer Main Replacement Project:** CAWD and Graniterock Construction Company have completed the sewer main replacement project at PCRPs Rancho Canada Unit. Crews patched asphalt, replaced former golf cart paths now used as pedestrian trails, damaged during construction, and hydroseeded disturbed areas as the final punch list items. CAWD engineers anticipate this new sewer line will serve the community for the next 50+ years.



Graniterock Construction Company patching asphalt trails



Disturbed areas being hydroseeded

- 2. Country Fair at Cachagua Community Park:** The Cachagua Community Park Board (CCPB) has announced July 9th as the date for the 2022 Cachagua Country Fair. The fair will run from 11am thru 6pm and include a horseshoe tournament, pony rides, silent auction, bands, Cachagua Volunteer Fire BBQ, vendors, booths, etc. The CCPB will work with MPRPD's EECO Division to advertise the event in the next LGO catalog and on MPRPD's website.
- 3. GRRP Fire Management Plan:** Following MPRPD's Board approval of the Request for Proposals at February's meeting, staff issued the Garland Ranch Regional Park's Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan for advertisement in Procure Now. Staff and RGS Consultants are responding to questions from proposers and will be interviewing qualified firms as part of the consultant selection process.

4. **Palo Corona Backcountry Perimeter Fence Project:** Rangers met with Bayview Construction on February 11, 2022, to kick-off the PCRCP backcountry perimeter fence project. Rangers will be overseeing installation of the fence and its components, performing quality control, and lead the project's final inspection. This project is expected to be completed within 60-days, assuming no significant delays due to weather, equipment malfunctions, or other scenarios occur.
5. **Palo Corona Regional Park Grazing Report:** Each year, Rangers coordinate the collection of data pertaining to cattle grazing at Palo Corona Regional Park. This annual study measures the Residual Dry Matter (RDM) remaining on the ground following each cyclical grazing season. The data is then provided to a certified rangeland manager whom in turn produces a subsequent report reflecting this information, prescribing several analysis-driven recommendations. The recent report (for year 2021) states there were "no problems [or evidence of] excessive use".
6. **Project B:** Staff continues to support and assist with progress leading towards Project B's completion. Most recently, Rangers participated in the Project B mandatory pre-bid meeting, and will be assisting with logistics and on-site administration throughout the project.



Prospective bidders at the mandatory Project B pre-bid meeting

7. **Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration:** Rangers continues to participate and provide guidance and on-the-ground intel to the Technical Advisory Committee and the project's consulting firm (McBain Associates). A virtual workshop is being scheduled for March 9, 2022, to inform stakeholders and the community at large of MPRPD's floodplain restoration efforts and plans for the former golf course.

- 8. San Clemente-Blue Rock Perimeter Fencing:** MPRPD's fencing contractor (Cardoza Construction) is very close to completing installation of 6,000+ linear feet of barbed and smooth wire fencing at MPRPD's San Clemente-Block Rock Open Space property. Lost during the Carmel Fire, this new fence design incorporates steel posts to withstand the impacts of the next wildfire.



New sections of fence erected at San Clemente – Blue Rock Property

- 9. Trail Work at Garland Ranch Regional Park:** Rangers completed reconstruction of a significant segment of the East Ridge Trail that suffers from a highly erosive soil composition. This soil condition makes the trail highly susceptible to becoming rutted during significant rainfall. Rangers utilized MPRPD's SWECO trail dozer and mini-excavator to pull berms, out-slope trail tread, install drain dips, and finish the trail's surface by dragging, thereby producing a more uniform finished trail tread. Next, Rangers will address issues on the park's Spring, Saddle, and Waterfall trails. January's unseasonal heat wave and continued drought caused trail surfaces to become dry and powdery, which is not ideal conditions for trail reconstruction.



East Ridge Trail – Before



East Ridge Trail – After