

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: September 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Administration Update

PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: **Cachagua Community Park (Park):**

1. **Sport Fields** - Construction of the multi-use sports field has been completed and will soon provide opportunities for visitors to play soccer, softball and Little League baseball, in addition to the multi-use sports field complex also serving as a public event/community gathering site.
2. **Site Improvements** – The Park’s perimeter security fence is being designed to blend in with the area’s rural aesthetic. Installation of the Park’s entry gate and security fencing, which will help secure the Park after-hours, is underway and should be completed within the next few weeks. Signage is also being installed.
3. **Potable Water System** – MPRPD Staff and the Carmel Unified School District continue to work towards the installation of an improved potable water system that will serve the Park, and the extant community center and on-site residence. It is anticipated that the project’s construction will begin and be completed this fall.
4. **Conceptual Graphic Site Plan (Draft Plan)** - Staff is scheduling meetings with several stakeholders, including community residents, the school district, the Esselen Nation, and others to obtain their input. The stakeholders’ ideas will help formulate the Draft Plan’s development. The Draft Plan will be presented to MPRPD’s Board this fall or early winter.
5. **Lease or Management Agreement** – Staff is researching the feasibility of having the Park be managed under contract by a non-MPRPD site/park manager. The Park’s remote distance from other MPRPD sites may justify this measure. This concept is at its inception thus, details are not presently available. Staff will provide its findings and recommendation to the MPRPD Board for its review and consideration at a future Board meeting.

Park It! Initiative – Phase I Planning and Implementation:

The *Lobos-Corona Parkland Project*, whose membership includes California State Parks, Big Sur Land Trust, Point Lobos Foundation and MPRPD (LCPP) recently met to continue discussions for this initiative's Phase I planning and implementation. Phase I will primarily focus on reducing negative impacts caused by traffic congestion along Highway 1 and park over-use at and around Point Lobos State Natural Reserve (Reserve).

Several steps are underway or are being explored. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Multi-jurisdictional Coordination – State Parks**
continues to work with State and County organizations to ensure all parties are aligned and support the project's proposals. It is especially imperative that CalTrans, the California Coastal Commission, and the State Historic Preservation Office are involved in this projects' planning and implementation.
- 2. Environmental and Cultural Impact and Vehicular Traffic Studies –** These studies will soon be initiated to ensure compliance with federal, tribal, state and local regulations. The LCPP is in the process of identifying and securing funding for these analyses. Ideally, the LCPP's members will contribute towards these costs. MPRPD's Staff will provide our Board a funding proposal, representing MPRPD's financial contribution to this important project, as early as October 2019. These studies will very likely be initiated this fall.
- 3. Costs Estimates –** Costs associated with the planning, development and operation of a reservation system, public parking facility, shuttle bus service, and other expenditures are being formulated. These estimates shall be presented to MPRPD's Board at a future meeting.
- 4. Fee Structure –** Cost recovery will significantly dictate the feasibility of launching and sustaining this initiative. A fee analysis is being formulated and shall be presented to MPRPD's Board at a future meeting.
- 5. Reservation System -** The proposed reservation system is under analysis. A reservation system that appears to be working well was recently launched by the National

Park Service at Muir Woods National Monument (Monument). Like the Reserve, the Monument suffered negative impacts caused by heavy vehicular traffic congestion and too many visitors. These negative impacts affected the natural resource's health and greatly diminished visitor experience. The Monument's reservation system reinforces that park's sustainable carrying-capacity. Staff will provide MPRPD's Board updates as the proposed reservation system is vetted and refined by State Parks and its regulatory organizations.

- 6. Shuttle Bus Staging Area** - A public parking and shuttle bus staging area will be constructed at Marathon Flats. This California State Parks-owned site is immediately east of Highway 1, in proximity to the Crossroads Shopping Center's Safeway store. This site has previously been used for community events, including the Big Sur International Marathon, and Christmas Tree and Halloween Pumpkin sales. Careful planning will allow the proposed parking and shuttle bus staging areas to coexist with these functions.
- 7. Shuttle Bus Service** – California State Parks has contacted several potential shuttle bus service providers and is in consultation to determine costs, cost recovery options, user fees, and the frequency of shuttle bus service to and from Marathon Flats and the Reserve, and other potential parkland and recreation sites.
- 8. Target Date for Public Use** – The public may begin using the Reserve's reservation and shuttle bus systems as early as Spring 2021. Staff will update MPRPD's Board as this date is refined.

San Jose Creek Trail to Open Winter 2020:

The LCPP also recently met to discuss the San Jose Creek Trail and its proposed opening for public use.

Several steps are underway or are being explored. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Grant Funds** - The California Department of Natural Resources River Parkways Grant, used to fund construction of the three San Jose Creek Trail pedestrian bridges has been extended to March 31, 2020, and has been augmented by \$101,000. These augmented funds

will be used for fencing materials, signage and State Parks labor to install the new fence and signs.

2. **MPRPD Financial Grant** - MPRPD has committed up to \$50,000 towards the completion of the trail. These funds will also be used for fencing materials and/or the implementation of the creek's revegetation and monitoring plan. Fence materials were recently delivered to the project site and crews have begun construction.
3. **Signage** – State Parks and MPRPD Staff are coordinating interpretive, directional, and regulatory sign installation at the Palo Corona Regional Park-California State Park trail network jurisdictional transition area.
4. **Vegetation** - State Parks is coordinating seed collection and propagation of mitigation plants and will work with BSLT to schedule planting in late fall (probably with volunteers). State Parks will also provide specifications for Cape ivy treatment, and BSLT will contract with Cal Restoration for that work. BSLT may provide a copy of the invoice to MPRPD for reimbursement, per the Grant Funding Agreement.
5. **Target Date for Public Opening** – The target opening of the San Jose Creek Trail network (on MPRPD and State Parks properties) is as early as January 2020.

BSLT will work with the LCPP on drafting joint messaging and the issuance of a joint press release.

MPRPD is coordinating meetings with Mrs. Diana Fish and the Carmelite Monastery's Mother Teresita to provide site and trail tours for these parties and their representatives, and to discuss this trail's opening for public use.

6. **Trail's Public Access Point(s)** – BSLT will reach out to the California Department of Natural Resources grant manager to inquire whether the intent of the grant will be satisfied with public access (with no permit requirements) from Palo Corona and limited access from Highway 1, at this time. BSLT will also ask the California Department of Natural Resources grant manager whether potential future day-use fees will conflict with the intent of the grant award. This may determine whether shuttle bus service will be provided to the San Jose Creek Trailhead.

If the California Department of Natural Resources grant manager does not object, the following conditions may then be implemented:

- A.** The San Jose Creek Trails may be accessed for day-use, permit-free, from Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit to Animas Pond, and then onto the San Jose Creek/ Whisler-Wilson trail network, terminating just east of State Parks' "San Jose Creek Staff Residence and Maintenance Complex", approximately ½ mile east of that complex's Highway 1 Entrance.
- B.** Public access to the San Jose Creek/Whisler-Wilson trail network via Highway 1 will not be authorized - at this time - to discourage traffic and parking congestion and pedestrians crossing said highway, as has been the case at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve.
- C.** This prohibition may be subject to change if, (a) improvements are made along Highway 1 that will adequately support access from Highway 1. State Parks will reach out to CalTrans for input on options for access and parking on or along Highway 1; and/or, (b) with the addition of a shuttle bus stop on the east side of Highway 1. Ultimately, a shuttle bus system developed via the *Park It!* initiative may be the best option for access to this trail network via Highway 1.

7. BETA-Tests - BSLT and MPRPD will run several beta-tests this late summer and early fall, for this trial network's use, in advance of providing access to the general public. MPRPD's volunteers recently led an *LGO!* sponsored hike. On September 6 and September 14, BSLT will provide its donors hikes from the Rancho Canada Unit to State Parks' San Jose Creek residential and Maintenance compound. A shuttle bus or vans will return BSLT's hikers to the Rancho Canada Unit.

FISCAL IMPACT:	Not Applicable.
FUNDING SOURCE:	Not Applicable.
FUNDING BALANCE:	Not Applicable.
RECOMMENDATION:	Informational Only.