

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: November 03, 2021

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects MPRPD's Staff undertook from mid-September 2021 through mid-October 2021 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. Annual Enrollment:** MPRPD began preparations for annual open enrollment for medical and supplemental insurance plans for 2022. All MPRPD personnel have been informed and shall have the opportunity to participate.
- 2. Benefits and Compensation Study:** During MPRPD's October All Staff Meeting, all MPRPD personnel met with the study's consultant and had the opportunity to be oriented and discuss the project's goals and objectives in detail.

Initial analysis for every extant MPRPD job description has begun. All staff are assisting in this analysis by gathering data for the consultant. This first stage includes vetting the extant job description and identifying specific tasks each job is responsible for in addition to identification and listing tasks not included in the original job descriptions. This information will help determine if positions are correctly classified.

- 3. Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Projects at Locke-Paddon Wetland Preserve:** MPRPD has had the pleasure and honor of working with several candidate Eagle Scouts. Most recently, staff worked with Mr. David Roden -- Eagle Scout candidate, on his project which entailed the planning, design, materials list development, construction, and post construction coordination of a composting bin at this park.

Mr. Roden's project is in support of another recently completed project at this Preserve in which Mr. Antony Ortiz, also an Eagle Scout candidate, constructed several raised planter boxes in a section now designated as the park's community

garden (please see below). Community garden participants will partake in the planter boxes' maintenance and repairs.

Candidate Eagle Scout Roden provided MPRPD staff the following detail:

- A.** The size of the compost bin system is approximately: 10'x 3.5' x 3.5';
- B.** Materials List: 12ft 2x4s (4); 8ft 4x4s (6); 12ft 2x8s (15); 1/2 in. plywood 4x8ft (2 sheets); hinges (6); hasps (3); 48in roll hardware cloth (1); box of decking screws (1); tarp for lid liners (1); and, packs of composite charcoal roofing shingles for lids -- optional (2);
- C.** Image of the 3-bin compost system (please see: below);
- D.** Identification of proposed location behind the windscreen of the Coast Live Oak nearest the City of Marina Water Service supply box;
- E.** Identification how vermin, insects, and odors will be controlled includes hardware cloth base, hinged and latching lids, with ongoing care of the compost by frequently turning the contents. With time, sorting less finished materials from broken down compost; and,
- F.** Who will be responsible for what? Eagle Scout projects are one-time events to create something durable for the good of the community. In this case, the gardeners using the raised beds at the Oak Woodland will be the beneficiaries, therefore, Citizens for Sustainable Marina (C4SM) have agreed to take over the ongoing responsibilities.



Eagle Scout Candidate David Roden's Prototypical Compost Bins



Eagle Scout Candidate Antony Ortiz's Completed Raised Planter Boxes

4. COVID-19 Fiscal Relief for Special Districts: Staff submitted data during the initial 2-week window for COVID-19 Fiscal Relief for Special Districts. The application deadline was subsequently extended to Friday, October 29, 2021. The fund is available to provide fiscal relief to Independent Special Districts, such as MPRPD, that have suffered fiscal impacts due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Qualification criteria are as follows:

- A. Unanticipated Costs:** The district has encountered unanticipated costs due to the pandemic during the eligible period of March 4, 2020, to June 15, 2021; and/or,
- B. Revenue Loss:** The district has encountered a loss in revenue during the eligible period, which is calculated using revenue from all fund sources of fiscal year 2020-21 compared against revenue from all fund sources of fiscal year 2018-19; and,

C. The district has not yet received direct COVID-19 fiscal relief from the state or federal government.

Staff reported a **\$3,249,216 revenue loss** for the required comparative years of FY2018-19 to FY2020-21, and **unanticipated expenses of \$107,928** for the allowable period of March 4, 2020, through June 15, 2021.

Any Relief Funds made available to MPRPD are expected to be distributed within 30-days of December 23, 2021. The Board will be provided an update as more information is made available to staff.

As previously reported: The application period was a two-week window between October 1 and 15. There are \$100M available to independent Special Districts that have received no other reimbursement relief directly from the State or Federal Government. Each district's allocation is based on its proportionate share of the total unanticipated costs and revenue losses incurred by all districts during the eligible periods. (Example: A special district's revenue losses and unanticipated costs represent 10% of the total losses and costs incurred by all special districts. The special district is eligible to receive up to 10% of the total \$100 million allocation).

5. **COVID-19 Protocols Update:** Staff continued participating in weekly Monterey County OES meetings, gathering updates from the County Health Department. This information is shared with MPRPD staff.
6. **Habitat Restoration Plan:** Staff continues to work with the California Coastal Conservancy and McBain Associates (the Rancho Canada Unit's Habitat Restoration Project's consulting firm) to refine the project's concept plan. It is anticipated that the project will generate substantial amounts of fill material (soil). Much of this fill material was originally imported to construct the former golf course's links.

To restore the site's habitat, ideally into long-term self-sustaining restored natural riparian, transition, and upland habitats, the project will require the property's grading and recontouring. Rather than expending incurring costs to export excess fill, this excess soil may be utilized on site to "clad" the former golf course's turf areas. This may help to "cover" and smother non-native grasses and other non-native invasive flora, while enhance native plants' opportunity to proliferate and restore the site.

Some of this excess fill material may also be used to reconstruct the site's extant ponds or construct new ponds, replacing the extant water features to eradicate bullfrogs and other invasive flora and fauna that presently inhabit extant ponds, and to possibly eliminate water leaks that may presently exist.

7. **Laguna Grande Regional Park:** The cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD, continue to work with BFS to refine concepts for the park's proposed Trail Maintenance Strategies and Environmental Enhancement Plan. As reported, the project's goal is to enhance the park's recreational and wildlife-viewing accessibility, adjacent and the park's security and sightlines, and restore the site's native flora and fauna habitat. Construction of the proposed firebreaks within the park may help to advance these goals.
8. **Municipal Advisor:** Staff issued an RFP for Municipal Advisor services through the ProcureNow system. Three well-qualified and well-known firms responded with qualifications and a pricing proposal. The candidate firms included: KNN Public Finance, PFM Financial Advisors LLC, and Urban Futures, Inc., Financial Solutions. Staff interviewed all three firms and received presentations.

References and prior agency work are currently being vetted. Staff anticipates bringing a recommendation to MPRPD's Board at the December 1, 2021 Board meeting for the Board's consideration.

The independent Municipal Advisor will seek and advise MPRPD on the best options related to funding solutions for capital projects. The Municipal Advisor shall also review current, and help develop required, policies.

9. **Project B - Restroom Building & Bus Drop Off:** This project is in the permitting phase. Plans were submitted to the County of Monterey on September 29, 2021 and are pending review and approval. Once the plans are approved, the bid documents will be released through ProcureNow/OpenGov.
10. **Reroof and HVAC Replacement:** This project is still in the permitting phase. The County of Monterey's Planning Department is currently reviewing the electrical upgrades required to support the new Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling (HVAC) system. Once the plans are approved, the HVAC system's bid documents will be released through ProcureNow/OpenGov.
11. **Training:** Staff participated in several session including: COVID-19 Vaccinations & Medical Exemptions (Public Agency Risk Management Association [PARMA]); Procurement; Leadership for Women; Cloud Technology (OpenGov); and Racial Equity and Social Justice (Human Resource Certification Institute).

EECO DIVISION

1. Community Outreach:

A. MPRPD Celebrates 50-years with a Commemorative Logo: In March of 1970, the Sierra Club hosted a forum on the peninsula's critical water supply spurring the idea of creating a special district for parks and open space. Within a year the Committee for Open Space was formed by the Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, and Audubon Society.

In May 1971, a grassroots effort began to collect signatures to place consideration of a park and open space district on the November ballot. Measure A was included on the November 1971 ballot. With successful passage of the measure the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District was formed in 1972 and entrusted to acquire lands for the express purpose of preserving open space and providing recreational opportunities. Since then, MPRPD has successfully protected approximately 14,000 acres of open space and has acquired or helped to acquire a total of 24 parks and open spaces, most recent acquisitions were the Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve and the Rancho Canada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park.

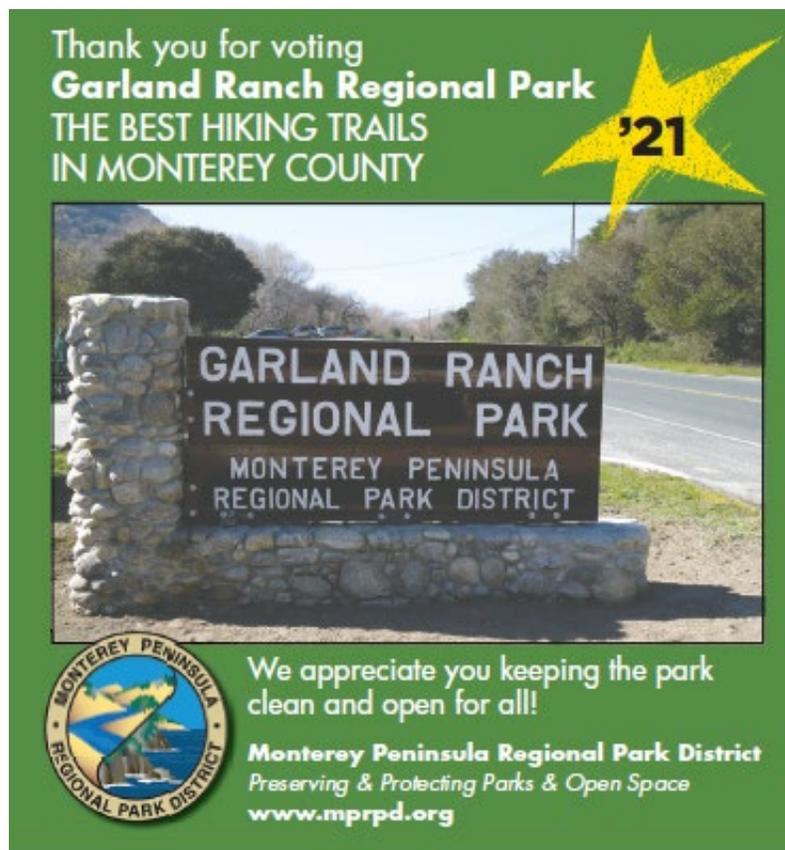
In acknowledgement and celebration of MPRPD's 50th anniversary the commemorative logo will be incorporated from January 1 to December 31, 2022, on MPRPD letterhead, the Let's Go Outdoors! catalog, social media, special event announcements, and other documents as deemed by lead staff.



B. Voted Best Hiking Trails in Monterey County!: Every year, the Monterey County Weekly's readers vote for the "region's favorite hotspots." Once again, Garland Ranch Regional Park and its plus 50-miles of hiking trails has been recognized as the region's top hiking destination.

Garland Ranch Regional Park's hikers experience a range of habitats and elevation changes in this park's diverse landscapes. From the Carmel River basin to the San Lucia Mountain's crests, visitors can travel from willow, cottonwood and sycamore covered banks, to dense oak woodlands, through maple-filled and shaded redwood canyons, onto sweeping grasslands that provide broad vistas. Garland Ranch Regional Park's vast trail network is maintained by MPRPD's Rangers, while volunteers and community members monitor and provide reports on trail conditions.

Staff thanks our community for recognizing MPRPD's Rangers' and Volunteers' hard work, consistently keeping Garland Ranch Regional Park one of the best places to hike in Monterey County.



C. California Wildlife Day: Carmel River Watershed Conservancy and MPRPD staff met at Garland Ranch Regional Park's visitor center for a site visit and planning meeting for the 2022 California Wildlife Day even, scheduled to be held at this park on Saturday, March 19, 2022.

2. Education:

- A. Digital Education/Social Media Communications Collaborations:** Staff met with the recently formed Community Collaboration, a consortium of mission-related organizations including the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, Carmel River Watershed Conservancy, Central Coast Wetlands Group, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, and Moss Landing Marine Labs. The goal is to enhance each agency's social media presence by boosting communications outreach efforts. Keeping the public engaged with limited staffing is a challenge. Communicating content, strategies, and best management practices will improve the quality of the posts and public engagement.
- B. Social Media Posts:** Posts consisting of PSAs and educational content related to Garland Ranch Regional Park's fire fuel reduction program, Frog Pond Wetland Preserve's habitat restoration and maintenance, autumn's changing leaves, and king snakes were issued.





Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)

October 2 at 10:15 AM · 🌐



Beautiful fall colors! Beware this 3-leaved plant is poison oak. It starts off green and shiny, turns to red and the leaves will fall off, leaving just limbs behind. Let's leaf these be.



- C. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee of Monterey Bay Environmental Educators (MBEE):** Staff attended first DEI Committee meeting to identify the Committee goals and purpose as it relates to creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive programming within the environmental education community. Committee meetings will be conducted every two months to provide resources and working examples of programming that increases DEI through outreach, programming, and other education platforms.
- D. Let's Go Outdoors! Catalog and Programs:** Staff is coordinating and scheduling the release of the Winter 2022 LGO! guide, which will offer a variety of return and new instructors. Programs are scheduled to include in person, virtual, and hybrid activities to accommodate all audiences and comfort levels. The guide is scheduled to be released in January 2022.
- E. Service Learning – CSU Monterey Bay:** Staff is working with CSUMB's School of Computing to work on data management for calendars and contacts, the San Andreas Fault exhibit, and the website for the annual wildflower show in June 2022. Two students from other courses are assisting with the Education Program by creating lesson resources related to redwood forest, pine forest, Carmel River floodplain and aquatic habitats, and climate change.

3. Interpretive Planning:

- A. Anthropocene Exhibit:** Staff met with Donna Zahn – Geologist/MPRPD volunteer and designer of the Palo Corona Regional Park geology exhibit to design an Anthropocene exhibit focusing on human-accelerated climate change.
- B. Marina Dunes Preserve:** Working with Burleson Consulting, staff met at Marina Dunes Preserve to review existing signage, perform a natural resource inventory, and identify potential habitat protection, restoration, and conservation projects, and determine themes for interpretive signage content. The collaborative effort will produce three (3) interpretive wayside signs along the site's trail with the topics ranging from Western snowy plover, Smith's blue butterfly, the site's restoration efforts and invasive species' impacts on natural native landscapes, and welcoming respectful visitor access.
- C. Working with Indigenous Peoples:** Staff met with Naomi Torres, National Park Service (NPS) Superintendent--Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, to discuss opportunities to integrate connections between NPS' and MPRPD's cultural interpretive projects and programs focusing on Central Coast Tribes.
- D. Visitor Experience Guide (VEG):** MPRPD and National Park Service staff met with Green Infrastructure Design to create a Visitor Experience Guide (VEG) app which will allow staff to upload and tag images and documents using a defined schema (theme, sub-theme, story), along with associated locations, and where users will be able to search to find additional educational material. This state-of-the-art interactive, interpretive tool will archive and access specific parks' resource inventories and offer place-based cultural stories. The public and staff will be able to access this information.

- 4. Smith's Blue Butterfly Mitigation at Marina Dunes Preserve:** MPRPD staff is in discussion with the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Mitigation Program representative to provide conservation planning and recovery efforts, or habitat enhancement and restoration for Smith's blue butterfly, Monterey spine flower, and sand gilia at Marina Dunes Preserve.

The PG&E Mitigation Program was developed to provide conservation and compensatory mitigation planning/implementation related to discretionary permits. The Multiple Region Habitat Conservation Plan (MRHCP) offers incidental take coverage for 24 listed animal species in the Sacramento Valley and foothills, the north coast, and the central coast. The MRHCP allows PG&E activities to proceed that might result in the "incidental take" of certain endangered or threatened species by imposing requirements to minimize and offset any impacts to the potential habitat of such species.

Marina Dunes Preserve was selected as a site for Smith's blue butterfly conservation efforts in large part because of the established three-year Restoration

Action Plan (RAP) presented to the MPRPD Board of Directors in April 2021. At this time the proposed mitigation project area includes approximately 41 acres of the 62-acre coastal dune Preserve. Staff anticipates presenting a comprehensive overview of the project along with a Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Agreement between PG&E and MPRPD at the December 1, 2021, Board meeting for the Board's consideration.

5. Special Use Permit (SUP): SUPs issued during this reporting period included:

A. Big Sur Land Trust: The Big Sur Land Trusts' Mitteldorf Preserve is now open to the public after years of trail and bridge repairs and enhancement. The Preserve's closure was caused by the 2016 Soberanes Fire and subsequent storm-generated erosion.

Big Sur Land Trust staff is preparing to take youth and other parties on trails accessing the Mitteldorf Preserve through Palo Corona Regional Park's back country. In partnership, the Big Sur Land Trust is issued annual Special Use Permits to access MPRPD lands.

B. Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History (PGMNH): The PGMNH hosted a 10-week California Naturalist Certification Program. Over the course of the program, subject-matter experts provided participants an in-depth look at the region's ecology. Garland Ranch Regional Park was the host site for the river-riparian and geology segments of the training.

6. Press Releases: Press releases provide the region's residents and visitors up-to-date information on programs and projects occurring through-out the District. The following press releases were issued during this reporting period:

A. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Enhancement Project (released 8.31.21): Story was published in the Monterey Herald on September 1, 2021; and,

B. Fire Fuel Management Efforts at Garland Ranch Regional Park (released 10.6.21): Story was published in the Monterey Herald on October 11, 2021.

7. Training: MPRPD's Savannah Pena is attending California Naturalist Course from September 1 to early November to become a Certified California Naturalist. The information, techniques, and best practices learned will further enhance MPRPD's education and outreach programs.

8. Volunteers: Matt McGee, presently enrolled in CSUMB's Environmental Science master's degree program, provided a Zoom-based presentation during the October MPRPD Volunteers Monthly Enrichment Meeting. The presentation's title was "Mammal and Bird Distributions Along an Urbanization gradient in the Salinas Valley." This information helps our team understand the dynamic relationship between the region's inland and coastal migratory and endemic fauna.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. CAWD Sewer Line:** Carmel Area Wastewater District's (CAWD) general contractor (Graniterock Construction) continued to make progress with the installation of the Rancho Canada Unit section of CAWD's sewer main replacement project.



Graniterock Construction Co. installing new 16" sewer line at Palo Corona Park

- 2. Fuel Mitigation at Garland Ranch Regional Park:** Fuel mitigation work continued at Garland Ranch Regional Park, including the removal of a significant number of eucalyptus trees bordering the Rancho Loop Trail. Fire fuel removal has been accomplished by Gabilan Conservation Camp crews.



Brush to be chipped (on left) and wood rounds to be relocated (on right)

3. Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan for Garland Ranch Regional Park:

The District continued to make process of developing an RFP for the Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan (Plan) for Garland Ranch Regional Park. As previously reported, MPRPD's Board previously authorized Fiscal Year 2021-22 funds for this Plan and the park's initial fuel mitigation project.



A newly constructed 30' fuel break along the Rancho Loop Trail

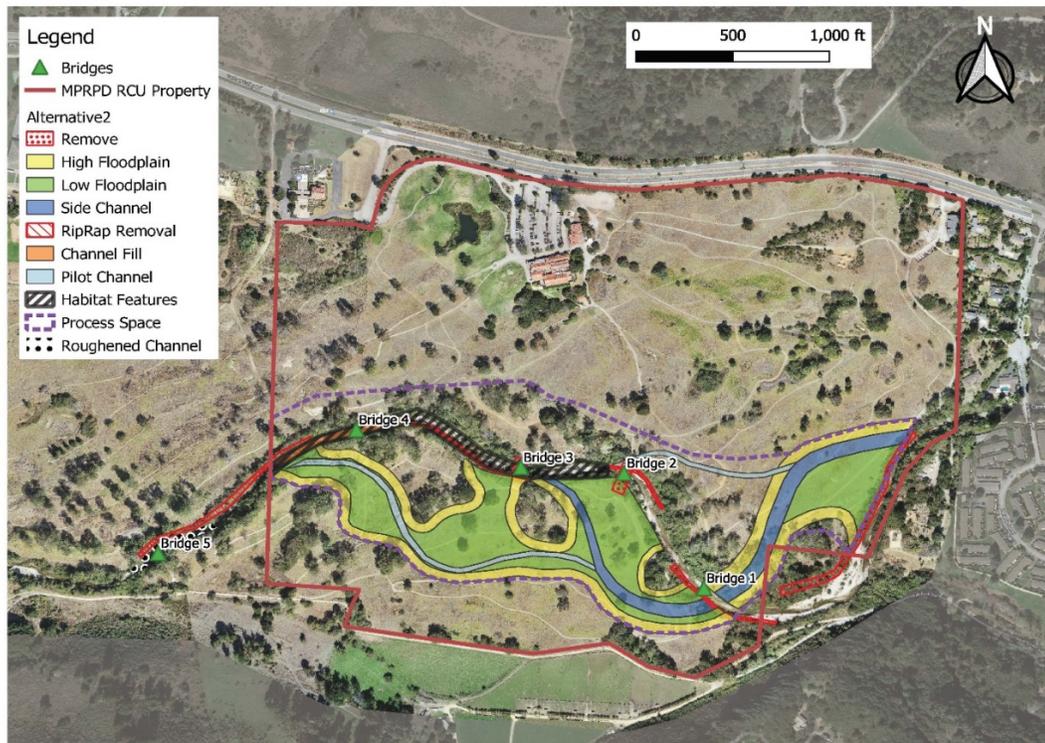


Gabilan Conservation Camp Inmate crew chipping brush and raking along the Rancho Loop Trail

- 4. Habitat Restoration Plan for the Rancho Canada Unit:** Staff continued to meet with California Coastal Conservancy personnel and the project's consultants to refine the initial concept plan. Once the concept plan has been refined and the proposed preferred alternatives have been identified, the project's consultants and staff will present these to the Board for its review, comment, and consideration.

Initial analysis indicates that substantial quantities of excess soil (fill material) may be generated during the grading and contouring of the site. This fill material may be used to cover and smother invasive non-native grasses presently found on the former golf course links. This may create a suitable seedbed for the seeding and planting of native plants including grasses, shrubs, and trees.

Fill material may also help redirect site-generated stormwater runoff to enhance the site's extant wildlife corridors and provide a source of water to the site's ponds. Because the former golf course and its ponds were not originally designed to intentionally capture on-site stormwater/sheet flows, nor with wildlife's interests in mind, fill material may potentially be used to create new wildlife/environmental education-friendly ponds. This would allow MPRPD to replace and abandon the extant ponds.



Rancho Canada Unit's Initial Habitat Concept Plan

5. **Seasonal Bridges Removed:** To avoid damage that may potentially be caused by the Carmel River's fast-rising waters caused by seasonal rains, and in anticipation of recent forecasts prognosticating a series of "atmospheric rivers" that may bring above-normal quantities of precipitation to the Central Coast, Garland Ranch Regional Park's seasonal pedestrian bridges spanning the Carmel River were removed and stored for the season. These seasonal bridges shall be reinstalled in late spring of 2022 after the threat of flash floods has no longer been forecast by the National Weather Service and other organizations.