

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: September 07, 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-July 2022 through mid-August 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. Classification & Compensation Study:** Staff continued working with consultant on classification and total compensation study. The draft report is planned for presentation to MPRPD’s Board during the 05 October 2022 meeting.
- 2. Cleaning and Repair of Discovery Center Heating Duct System:** The sheet metal return-air system was repaired prior to the system’s cleaning. Cleaning was accomplished by using a negative pressure application. Once vacuumed, all of the return-air boxes were sanitized with a bleach solution. The cleaning professional stated that it looked like the system had not been cleaned in a very long time, if ever. Exhibits & office desks were draped to prevent any damage from airborne dust and other contaminants.



3. **Dog Park:** The “Dog Park Four”, Max’s Helping Paws, and staff met to explore the option of installing a “pop-up dog park” at Palo Corona Regional Park’s Rancho Canada Unit. The proposed fence-enclosed dog park will be located immediately “east” of the park’s maintenance compound. This was one of the public’s most requested amenities during well-attended meetings and on-line surveys that helped formulate the park’s general development plan.
4. **Integrated Multi-benefit Community East Trail and Floodplain & Upland Restoration Project:** The project’s coalition composed of the State Coastal Conservancy, McBain Associates (the project’s engineers), and MPRPD staff met with a Trout Unlimited representative. Meeting highlights included learning about grants that may be available and pursued to implement this project; concurrence that the coalition is making good progress; and that “Palo Corona Regional Park’s Multi-benefit Community East Trail will be modified and integrated as part of the restoration project’s design, providing an outstanding end-product that shall benefit nature and humanity for generations to come!”
5. **Meeting Room Improvements:** Staff continued discussions for proposed improvements to the Palo Corona Regional Park Discovery Center. Based on current information, staff may develop an RFP to better gauge architectural concepts, the building’s modification capabilities, and cost estimates.
6. **Palo Corona’s Project-B Construction:** Construction activities continued on schedule through mid-August. The restroom building’s foundation and walls were completed, and work began on roofing and interior utilities; the multipurpose pad’s foundation grading continued; and utility work commenced for irrigation lines and electric vehicle charging stations.

Weekly progress meetings are held with the project’s architect, contractor, construction manager, and MPRPD staff. Tribal monitors remain on-call to assist with identification of negative impacts to cultural sites. No impacts were encountered in the past month. The team continues to coordinate closely with Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets to ensure impacts to Wedgewood’s events do not occur. The concessionaire’s and MPRPD’s patron access and vendor site deliveries are carefully coordinated and monitored.

Signage memorializing Project-B’s (construction) Proposition 68 grant funding and other informational signage have proven effective, and feedback has been positive. MPRPD staff also met to plan the site’s permanent signage which will be installed near the extant flagpole. These signs will welcome visitors and provide the park’s way-finding maps, rules, regulations, and notices.

NOTICE: MPRPD staff halted construction in late August due to very recent confirmation that a species of concern has been confirmed in proximity to the construction site. Preconstruction analysis did not indicate this was the case. Staff

promptly contacted and began coordination of measures with regulatory agencies. Updates to the Board will be provided as we learn more.



Multipurpose Pad Foundation



Restroom Building Walls and Roof Framing



Trail Entrance Improvements Near Extant Flagpole



**Restroom Building Storage Room
Interior Utilities Chase**

7. **ParkIT! Initiative:** The initiative's steering committee continues to discuss and formulate options that may help reduce vehicular traffic congestion along State Highway 1 at, and in proximity to, Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. Options may include remote parking and shuttle service, and opening other parklands in the area to alleviate visitor congestion at this exceedingly popular state park.
8. **Recruitment:** Staff continued working on recruitment efforts and hiring of two new Environmental Education Specialists.
9. **San Jose Creek Trail Opening Steering Committee:** Staff continued meeting with State Parks' personnel to advance and coordinate the opening of the San Jose Creek Trail for public use. Administrative staff participated in an internal site visit along the soon to be opened San Jose Creek Trail. Administrative staff are responsible for responding to public phone calls and questions, as well as issuing permits, if the option to issue permits, versus permit-free access, is implemented.
10. **Youth-focused Overnight Science Camp Options Being Explored:** Senator Larid's staff invited MPRPD to participate in a site visit to the former San Clemente Dam site to explore options for the planning, construction, and opening of a new youth-focused overnight science camp in the Monterey County Region. Additional site's may also be researched.

The proposed youth camp could offer an array of outdoor activities similar to those presently offered at Camp Quien Sabe including, swimming, hiking, nature lore, games and camping.

Updates to the Board will be provided as we learn more.

EECO DIVISION

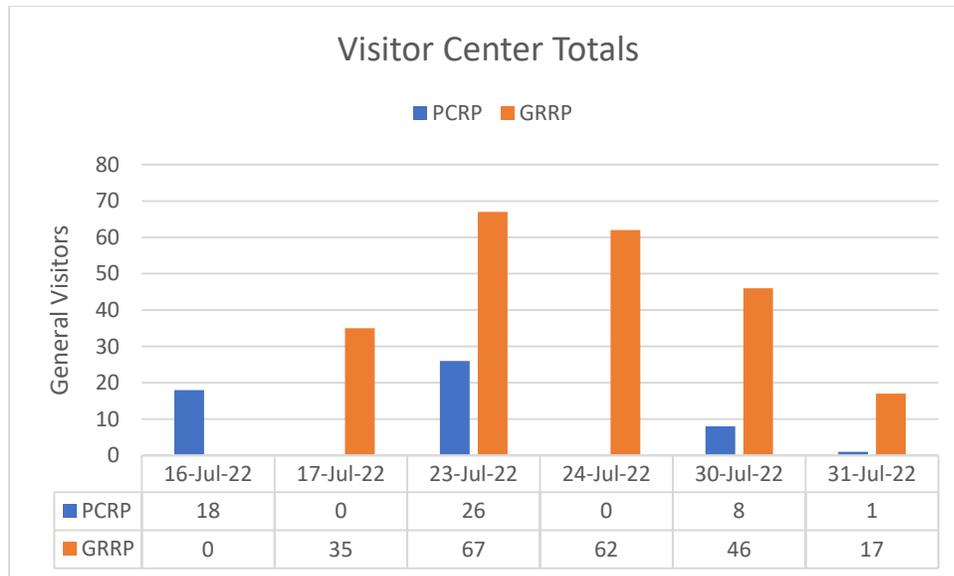
1. Community Outreach:

- A. **50th Anniversary Celebration:** Save the Date! MPRPD is celebrating its 50th Anniversary on Saturday, 03 December 2022. Focusing on the theme of **50 years with you, our community, and our lands**, the event is being designed with two platforms:
 - i. **Month-long Get Outdoors Challenge: #50Kfor50 and #30miles30days.** This social media inspired campaign encourages people to walk, hike, or run as they explore our parks and open spaces.
 - ii. **Community Event:** The month-long challenge will culminate with a day-long event at Palo Corona Regional Park.

B. Blue Zones Project of Monterey County (BZP): Starting in July 2022, EECO staff began meeting with BZP representatives Kendra Howell - Senior Policy Lead, and Tanja Roos - Community Program Manager, to collaborate on creating fiscal year 2022-2023 community program goals. Goals include support in development marquee activities in strategic cities, sponsorship of MPRPD’s 50th Anniversary events, and establishment of a regional “ParksRx Program”.

BZP and United Way of Monterey County recently launched a “Born Learning” signage campaign. This self-guided trail program uses signage to engage parents, caregivers, and children to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities. MPRPD is researching the potential of implementing the program at select urban interfacing parks.

C. Visitor Center Totals: With the re-opening of MPRPD’s discovery/visitor centers, EECO staff began to collect data on volunteer and staff interaction at PCRP and GRRP. Below is a summary of weekend visitation at MPRPD’s discovery/visitor centers in July 2022. Declines in visitation totals may be influenced by recently reported increases in COVID frequency.



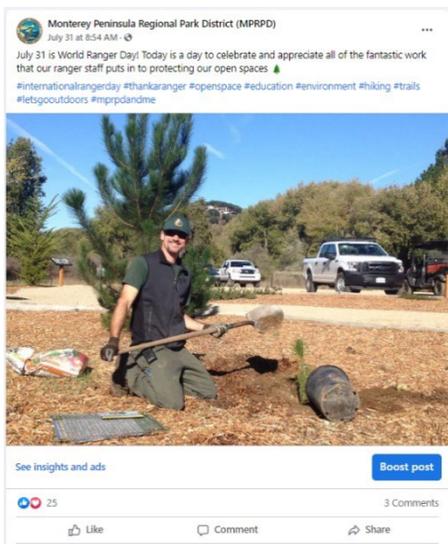
D. Social Media Posts: For this reporting period, posts consisted of highlighting park happenings and educational content related to *Summer at the Parks*. MPRPD used social media for relaying relevant trail closures at Kahn Ranch, celebrating Worldwide Ranger Day, and advertising upcoming Let’s Go Outdoors! events. MPRPD social media account followings grew in June-July.

- i. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:
 1. July 15 follower count: 1,894 (+39)
 2. Facebook Page Reach: 3,482 (↑ 11.9%)
 3. Top-3 most popular posts: July 15 – Aug 14

- a. 8/10 Bird of Prey Advertisement (2,839 views)
- b. 7/22 New Mountain Lion Exhibit (426 views)
- c. 7/31 Worldwide Ranger Day (365 views)

ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd_lgo:

- 1. July 15 follower count: 843 (+44)
- 2. Instagram Page Reach: 420 (↓ 7.3%)
- 3. Top-3 most popular posts: July 15 – Aug 14
 - a. 8/10 Birds of Prey Advertisement (264 views)
 - b. Kahn Ranch Closure (254 views)
 - c. Palo Corona golf ball cleanup (246 views)



2. Education:

A. K-12 Education Programs:

- i. Working with Seaside Middle School teachers and the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) program coordinator, staff has identified program timeframes to enhance and reinforce current life science curriculum (STEM Scopes) through accessing PCPR and the park resources.

On-site programming is projected to occur this spring's 2022/2023 school year for nearly 300, 7th grade students. Staff plans to include the LGO! transportation grant to transport students via bus to the program site(s).

- ii. Staff continues to research potential partnerships with state and local entities such as State Parks PORTS program and Pacific Grove Museum Watershed Guardians program.

3. **Interns: CSUMB Scientific Illustrator Intern:** Ms. Cady DeLay, a recent graduate of CSUMB's Scientific Illustrator Program, is working with MPRPD staff to create graphics and illustration for educational wayside panels for the Marina Dunes Preserve. Graduating in 2019 with a B.S. in Marine Biology and minor in Art, Cady completed a Scientific Illustration Internship for a Smithsonian facility located in St. Lucie County, Florida where she collaborated with aquarists and educators to create multiple interpretive panels on coral reef ecology and local species identification.

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

A. Publishing Guide: Staff drafted the special 50th Anniversary edition of the LGO! guide, which was sent to the printer on 31 August 2022. It is projected to be delivered to all district residents the last week of September 2022.

B. Program Updates: Staff is working with returning and new instructors to provide new offerings for the 2022/2023 Fall/Winter season of LGO! New courses may include medicinal use of plants, birding on the Odello property located on State Parks' land, how to become a naturalist, monarch sanctuary stroll with Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, and experiencing nature with children with the Ventana Wilderness Society. San Jose Creek Trail hikes may become a collaborative effort between State Parks Interpreters and MPRPD volunteer naturalists.

C. Featured Community Organizations: The "Community Happenings" section of the LGO! Guide will feature free opportunities for our community hosted by about 17 different organizations. For full listing, please see final publication.

D. Advertisement of Volunteer Opportunities: Staff created a new marketing strategy to recruit volunteers through the LGO! Guide. This strategy identifies volunteer opportunities as “stewards” and “educators” to appeal to two different audiences via a full-page of the guide. Additionally, Volunteer events, such as fuel management days and instructor training have been created.

In past guides, only a small call-out box with a general call to action or volunteer events was utilized. This brought in a few potential recruits.

E. Summary Statistics: Staff is conducting an audience analysis of participants attending LGO! programs pre-pandemic (2008-2019) and post-pandemic (January 2022-September 2022). This statistical summary is designed to provide a basic understanding of who the District serves through LGO!, and will include demographic information such as: gender, ages, residents’ locations, and number of participants.

Board members are invited and respectfully encouraged to submit specific demographic or programmatic questions, that can be answered through basic data retrieval and statistical analysis, to Ms. Savannah Peña, EE Coordinator for Programs at eeordinator@mprpd.org by September 30, 2022.

5. Staffing:

A. Mr. Michael Biedebach resigned from his Environmental Education Specialist position to focus on his final year of his CSUMB master's degree studies. His positive “can do” demeanor and friendly disposition provided excellent customer service at MPRPD centers, programs, and outreach events. Mike reinvigorated the GRRP arboretum and native plant garden in addition to enhancing and expanding MPRPD’s social media platforms.

Mike had a new lifetime experience during the “Birds of Prey Encounter” program. Mike had a Harris hawk fly by and land on his birder’s glove. Words could not express the joy he felt as he held “Lex Luther.”



6. **Visitor Interpretive Education Plan (VIEP):** MPRPD staff assisted National Park Service's (NPS) Outdoor and Recreation Planning Staff with creating a presentation to share with NPS Staff and Park Superintendents about our collaborative work on the VIEP and Visitor Education Guide App, during the NPS's National Share Fair held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center in North Carolina.



7. **Volunteers:**

- A. **Interdivisional Fuel Management Volunteers:** Planning and Conservation, Operations and Maintenance, and Environmental Education and Community Outreach staff had several meetings to create Fuel Management Volunteer projects for the fall-winter program calendar and are working together to create future integrated volunteer programming.
- B. **Volunteer Program Partnership:** MPRPD staff led twenty Point Lobos State Natural Reserve volunteers on a “wonderfully” informative tour of the PCRPD Discovery Center. This is an exciting first step in plans to work with partnering agencies to create training opportunities for our collective volunteers enhancing programming and outreach for all.



OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. Cal-Am Test Well for Rancho Canada Village:** Ops staff facilitated a site visit and access for Cal-Am's drilling subcontractor (Cascade Drilling) to drill a test well on MPRPD property. Pending results of the drill test, this site will be used to construct a new well that will provide water service to the adjacent Rancho Canada Village residential development.
- 2. East Trail Improvements:** Rangers continued to identify and construct critical trail linkages that are now being utilized and enjoyed by the public to "bridge" the Multi-benefit Community East Trail (Trail). For visitors who do not wish to walk or run the entire Trail, these connections offer shorter loops by connecting segments of the Trail's network.

The Trail's opening has proven popular and has been welcomed by the public since its opening on 08 June 2022.

As part of MPRPD's best management practices for this park, Rangers removed - and continue to remove - extensive sections of broken chunks of the former golf cart paths' in situ concrete and petroleum-based asphalt surfacing by backfilling with permeable, decomposed granite path fines, similar to those used at the region's popular State Parks and Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation trails.



Rangers John and Hatton finish-raking the trail

- 3. Fire Extinguisher Inspections:** On 11 August 2022, MPRPD's Rangers coordinated the annual inspection of MPRPD's fire extinguishers. Tri-County Fire was hired to perform the pressure testing and inspections, while Rangers gathered and redistributed extinguishers to and from identified locations.

4. **Garland Ranch Regional Park (GRRP) ADA Improvements:** RGS (MPRPD's consultant), and Operations, Planning & Conservation staff are discussing options for ADA-compliant improvements at the GRRP Ranger Station. Proposed improvements include redesigning and replacing the wheelchair ramps from the parking pad to the meeting room.



GRRP Ranger Station Wheelchair Ramp to be Replaced

5. **GRRP Fuel Mitigation & Fire Management Plan:** Progress continues on the GRRP Fuel Mitigation & Fire Management Plan, including recurrent monthly meetings with the Concerned Citizens of Carmel Valley group. On 06 August 2022, MPRPD's Board President Potter and staff attended and provided an update to the Boronda/Garza's Firewise Community, which was well received.



MPRPD President Potter speaks to Boronda/Garza's Firewise Group

6. **Kahn Ranch Barn Roof:** Rangers recently finished installing a new roof on the Goat Barn at GRRP's Kahn Ranch Unit. This building was the final structure that required new roofing at the Kahn Ranch and was completed using fire-rated wood shakes to maintain the building's historic architectural integrity.



Ranger John working on Kahn Ranch's Goat Barn Roof

7. **Monterey County Regional Fire District's (MCRFD) Division Chief Interview Panel:** Ops Staff was asked to participate in the selection process for MCRFD's next Division Chief. Former Division Chief -- David Sargenti, was recently named as MCRFD's new Fire Chief, thus creating a vacant Division Chief position. The panel convened 23 August 2022 at 8am at MCRFD's headquarters in Salinas, CA. Information on the selected candidate will be provided once we learn more.
8. **PG&E Pole Replacement:** MGE (PG&E's subcontractor) replaced a power pole at GRRP's Kahn Ranch Unit. The pole was compromised due to multiple woodpecker bores. The new pole was wrapped in a fire-retardant mesh that PG&E recently started using, which provides some protection against wildfire.



Old pole



New fire-retardant pole

- 9. Project-B Construction Project:** Rangers continued to be engaged with Avila Construction and provide support to Project-B, including addressing on-site unforeseen issues, updating construction signage, enforcing construction-related trail closures, and participating in weekly check-in meetings.
- 10. Rancho Canada Perimeter Fencing:** MPRPD's Ops staff and General Manager recently met with Wedgewood staff to discuss installation, design, and alignment of a new perimeter fence that will identify the limits of Wedgewood's leased space and create a boundary around the wedding venue located south of the former clubhouse. A visually appealing split-rail design (used in other areas on the property) has been suggested and preliminarily approved.
- 11. Ranger Training:** Mr. Jared Martens, MPRPD's newest Ranger, attended PC832 Training in Shafter, CA. in July 2022. By completing this training, Ranger Martens now has the authority to enforce rules and regulations and issue citations on MPRPD properties. Ranger Martens is scheduled to attend Public Employee Responsibility Training on 09 September and ATV Training on 24 September 2022.
- 12. Southbank Trail Fence Repairs:** Rangers began replacing sections of failing fence along the Southbank Trail corridor, including new posts, braces, and wire. Short sections of fence line will be replaced at a time in order to maintain security of neighboring properties. Rangers conducted an inventory, purchased materials, and are utilizing a combination of in-house and inmate labor on this project.



New Section of Southbank Trail Fencing

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

- 1. Capital Improvement Planning:** MPRPD staff are working with the Finance Division to begin developing capital improvement needs inventory for MPRPD lands. This effort will help inform future workplan and funding priorities for MPRPD.
- 2. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation and Management Plan:** The project team is currently onboarding a new project manager from Rincon Consulting as the previous project manager has had to step away from the project for unexpected family reasons. We are grateful to Rincon for identifying a new project manager, but the transition has delayed the project by 2-3 weeks. The project team is updating the project schedule and is currently focused on launching the Project website and notifying the community of the first virtual stakeholder outreach meeting that will be scheduled for late September 2022.
- 3. Garland Ranch Regional Park Ranger Station Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Planning:** MPRPD Planning & Conservation Staff and Ops Division's Rangers are developing initial designs for ADA-compliant improvements to the park's Ranger Station. This work is still in the preliminary design phase, but staff hope to begin construction later this fiscal year.
- 4. Marina Dunes Preserve PG&E Mitigation Project:** Staff are seeking State Coastal Conservancy's approval to proceed with the PG&E Mitigation project on the Marina Dunes Preserve. The Conservancy is currently evaluating the project's compatibility with their deed restriction over the property and should provide a response to MPRPD staff in September 2022.
- 5. Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's Multi-benefit Community East Trail (Trail):** Staff initiated selection of a consultant to design and implement soil stabilization and revegetation work adjacent to the recently constructed Trail at the park's east side, immediately adjacent to two former golf course water-trap ponds.
- 6. Rancho Canada Acquisition 1707 Instream Flow Dedication:** Staff have received confirmation the State Water Resources Control Board is now processing MPRPD's petition to dedicate 185 acre-feet per year of the property's groundwater right to support instream flows in the Carmel River. Once recorded, the property's groundwater extraction will be limited to up to 5 acre-feet per year of groundwater extraction for landscaping irrigation, and up to 10 acre-feet per year for restoration irrigation purposes.
- 7. Rancho Canada Floodplain & Upland Restoration and Multi-benefit Community East Trail Integrated Project:** The project team, composed of the State Coastal Conservancy, McBain Associates (engineering consultant), and MPRPD personnel, is finalizing the 65% basis of design memo to share with the project's technical advisory committee for input. In alignment with the park's approved

general development plan and MPRPD's goal of providing public access to their public lands, this project entails the integrated design and construction of the Floodplain and Upland's restoration and Multi-benefit Community East Trail. Scope items specifically include reconstruction of Bridge #1 (the park's upstream-most bridge) that spans the Carmel River, to provide public access to the park via the Southbank Trail, especially for pedestrian visitors accessing the park from the Hacienda Carmel and Quail Meadows residential communities.

Pending additional coordination with resource and funding agencies, the team anticipates revising the project's initial designs in the uplands area surrounding the floodplain to accommodate realignment of the recently constructed Multi-benefit Community East Trail away from the proposed wildlife corridor.

The project is seeking permitting coverage from California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Statutory Exemption for Environmental Restoration Projects (SERP), a recently developed permit streamlining process for restoration projects. The team is also considering whether to apply for permits under the State Water Resources Control Board's newly developed Statewide Restoration Permit program, a recently approved permitting process that streamlines approvals for restoration projects. Meanwhile, the Coastal Conservancy continues to explore and apply for grant funding for the project. If grants are awarded, they would be transferred to MPRPD prior to construction. The project team may provide a project update presentation to the Board as early as October 2022.

- 8. Rancho Canada Irrigation and Landscaping Planning:** In anticipation of the State Water Resources Control Board's approval of MPRPD's 1707 dedication petition, staff are working to confirm that it's irrigation infrastructure and landscaped areas are compatible with the upcoming requirement to cap groundwater consumption for landscaping irrigation at 5 acre-feet per year.

Staff expect that the total on-site irrigated landscaping area may need to be reduced to ensure compliance with this requirement. Wedgewood weddings and Banquets staff will develop a revegetation plan that may help transition portions of these formerly irrigated areas to a native plant palette. Staff have discussed this with Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets and will continue to meet with the concessionaire to conceptualize landscape modifications in alignment with the agreement between Wedgewood and MPRPD.

- 9. San Jose Creek Trail Public Access Planning:** MPRPD continues to prepare for expanding access to the San Jose Creek Trail at Palo Corona Regional Park this year, including trail and facility site preparation, map development, and developing internal and interagency communication protocols for trail operations and emergency response. This requires close coordination with California State Parks which is not prepared to allow unsupervised public access on its lands. Staff hope to provide a joint presentation with California State Parks on the status of San Jose Creek Trail and near-term plans for public access at MPRPD's October Board Meeting.