

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: February 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-December 2020 through Mid-January 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 shelter-in-place orders.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- 1. Community Development Fund (CFD) Guidelines:** Staff worked with MPRPD's consultant and Legal Counsel in the refinement of the CFD Guidelines. These may be used to recruit citizens who may serve on the funds advisory committee.
- 2. COVID-related Orders, Meetings, and Updates:** Staff continued to participate in regular meetings held by the County Health Officer to ensure we have the latest information, and that planning, and implementation practices align MPRPD with the CDC's, State's, and County's latest guidelines and recommendations.
- 3. E-Procurement with *ProcureNow*:** Staff met with consultant to refine the process that is being customized to MPRPD's needs. This process will streamline MPRPD's solicitations for RFP's, RFQ's, RFB's, etc., benefitting prospective consultants and contractors and staff. Admin, EECO, and Ops divisions participated in this meeting to ensure division-specific needs are addressed.
- 4. Exhibit Design:** Scale models for two MPRPD PCR Discovery Center exhibits were developed. These, along with in-house drawn shop-drawings will help guide staff in the construction of these exhibits.
- 5. FEMA – Carmel Fire:** Admin and Ops staff continued to work with FEMA in response to the MPRPD fence replacement project. As previously reported, it is anticipated that FEMA will cover mitigation costs including a certain percentage of the \$5,000 deductible. Additional detail will be provided as it is obtained.
- 6. Human Resources:** Staff continued to work on personnel issues, welfare benefits, Open Enrollment for employee insurance coverage/benefits, and finalizing recruitment and hire for a vacant EECO position.

7. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Forest Preserve:** Staff continued to be in communication with Architect Stevens to discuss options for a late winter/early spring 2021 dedication ceremony. This event was previously cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. **Laguna Grande Regional Park:** Staff continued to work with the City of Monterey regarding the selection of a consultant to develop the park's Trail Maintenance Plan and discussed the scheduling of a Joint Powers Authority meeting to be held in mid-February 2021.
9. **Marina Dunes Preserve Field Office:** A location for a field office and storage compound was explored. Concepts include the installation of a portable Mobile-Mini type office and fenced in compound in proximity to the Preserve or leasing space at the Reservation Road State Parks compound and other sites is also being researched. The City of Marina's Planning Department has been contacted to determine if this will be allowed, and, if so, what permitting will be required.
10. **ParkIT! Initiative:** Mr. Ernest Chung, Founder has passed away. The *ParkIT!* Team continues to honor his vision, heart, brilliance, and commitment to community and conservation by advancing this important initiative. A pilot project is planned to be launched this summer. Details will be presented to the Board within the next few months.
11. **Project B – Restroom, ten pad, entrance plaza, and bus drop off:** Staff continued to work with Page & Turnbull to refine schematic designs in preparation for the next step which includes the develop plans and specifications for this project's amenities. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, bid documents may be ready by late May 2021.
12. **Rancho Canada Unit Habitat Conservation Plan:** The California Coastal Conservancy (SCC) informed MPRPD they received six proposals from highly qualified firms for this floodplain restoration project and had interviewed those firms as part of the consultant selection process. It is anticipated that a firm may be identified within the next few weeks thus, beginning the fee negotiation phase. Additional information will be provided to the Board as it becomes available.
13. **Roof and HVAC replacement:** Staff continue to work with consultants in preparation for this project which is now slated to begin after this winter's seasonal rains.
14. **Training:**
 - a. Response to COVID-19 pandemic (continued training)
 - b. Brown Act compliance
 - c. CAL/OSHA and other Human Resource-related regulations and matters

EECO DIVISION

- 1. Blue Zones:** EECO staff attended a virtual celebration of the expansion of The Blue Zones from Salinas to the whole of Monterey County. Blue Zones are rare longevity hotspots around the world where people are thriving into their 100s. The Blue Zones Project takes lessons learned from these hotspots and uses them to help people live longer and better through community transformation programs that lower healthcare costs, improve productivity, and boost national recognition as great places to live, work, and play. MPRPD has identified participation in the Blues Zones project to “create a healthier community and workforce” in MPRPD’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
- 2. Fiscal Year Goal – Benchmarking EECO resources and programs:** One of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 goals for the EECO Division is to benchmark park resources, facilities, and interpretive programs with other park systems. Staff met with East Bay Regional Park District Chief of Interpretation to obtain an overview of the interpretive and recreational resources they offered pre- and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff continues to reach out to additional contacts including Monterey County Parks, California State Parks, and national agencies to further inform this benchmark.
- 3. Service Learning at CA State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB):** Staff will again host CSUMB service learners this Spring 2021 semester, while practicing shelter in place measures. Projects will revolve around and relate to California Wildlife Day.
- 4. Special Use Permits:** Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) requested MPRPD’s collaborative support in the *2021 Race for Open Space* (ROS), a local trail running event dedicated to fostering an appreciation of natural spaces in Monterey County and celebrating the health benefits of time spent in nature. From Palo Corona Regional Park to Mitteldorf Preserve, this backcountry run will be limited to 40 participants maximum per day, assigned specific starting times to avoid gathering or a heavy concentration of runners at any given time, with a maximum of 120 participants over three weekend days in April 2021. This model has been and is being applied nationwide for these types of events.

Following the first couple of meetings, the BSLT staff sent the following to the

Ops and EECO teams, “...we are very grateful for MPRPD’s generosity and cooperation on this very specialized event and, as always, for the years of collaboration. A lasting partnership, tempered by hard work and mutual respect, yielding a diversity of health-fostering benefits for our shared communities and conserved landscapes.”

Staff is pleased to be working on the first Palo Corona Regional Park backcountry trail run with BSLT, an organization with a positive record of reaching a broad

constituent base including underserved populations, implementing environmental and educational management best practices, and connecting people to nature.

5. Training and Workshops: Staff attended a virtual workshop on how to “Create Multi-levels within your Volunteer Core.” The Office of Grant and Local Services (OGALS) Rural Recreation and Tourism Program introductory workshop, hosted by CA State Parks, was and is a requirement for prospective grantees applying for the multi-million-dollar, competitive grant program. A Prop 68 grant, the Rural Recreation and Tourism Program provides funding for new recreation features which support of economic, tourism, and health. The projects are designed to improve the health of residents and attract out-of-town visitors. Grant application are due in November 2021. MPRPD will be applying for these funds to advance several MPRPD capital improvement projects previously reported to the Board.

6. Public Outreach/Social media: Staff continues to post park updates, recent sightings, PSAs, and research technology to connect the public and volunteers to parks and open spaces.

a. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

- December 14 follower count: 1510 ▲
- New followers since November 13: 125
- Post reach (People reached at least once)
 - November 13 – December 14 average: 83 views per post
 - December 14 – January 14 average: 119 ▲ views per post

b. Reactions, Comments, Shares:

Reactions:

- November 13 – December 14 average: 5 reactions per post
- December 14 – January 14 average: 8 ▲ reactions per post

Comments:

- November 13 – December 14 average: 0 comments per post
- December 14 – January 14 average: 1 ▲ comments per post

Shares:

- November 13 – December 14 average: 1 share per post
- December 14 – January 14 average: 1 share per post
- Top 3 most popular posts: December 14 – January 14
 - 1/12 Animas Pond re-opened (609 views)
 - 12/15 Bobcat on the move (550 views)
 - 1/4 New Year, new hikes! (531 views)

7. Volunteers: Staff created a January 2021 Newsletter (**ATTACHMENT 1**) to keep the volunteers connected and informed. The January volunteer zoom meeting

introduces plans for the 2021 California Wildlife Day event and recruits volunteers to assist with this virtual event.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. Animas Pond Article:** The Monterey County Weekly expressed interest in doing an article highlighting the rehabilitation work recently completed at Animas Pond. Rangers escorted a reporter and photographer from the Weekly to Animas Pond on January 20, 2021, along with the District's amphibian biologist. An article may be forthcoming in an upcoming edition of the Monterey County Weekly.
- 2. Boundary Fence w/ Santa Lucia Preserve:** Rangers continue to discuss options to move forward with partnering with the Santa Lucia Conservancy to replace 4.5 miles of deteriorated property boundary fence-line between Palo Corona Regional Park and the Santa Lucia Preserve.
- 3. BSLT Race for Open Space:** As previously mentioned, Ops and EECO staff are working with the Big Sur Land Trust to facilitate the *Race for Open Space* at Palo Corona Regional Park. This event will traverse the Palo Corona backcountry, leading runners into the BSLT's Mitteldorf Preserve, and back. This event is proposed to happen in April 2021 following the cooperative planning of the event and the issuance of a Special Use Permit by the District.
- 4. Carmel Fire Damage:** As previously reported, Ops and Admin staff continued working with FEMA and Cal OES on public assistance funding to reconstruct the fence-line at the San Clemente-Blue Rock property that was damaged during the Carmel Fire. Most recently, Rangers and the District's GIS Consultant completed the Site Inspection Report and submitted to Admin for the report's submission to FEMA.
- 5. Essential Workers:** Rangers continues to operate on a limited staffing schedule, while remaining on-call to address emergencies. Hopefully, Rangers can be considered for vaccination during the Phase 1B roll-out. The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend was especially busy, reminiscent of March and April 2020 during the initial COVID-19 shutdown.
- 6. Memorial Bench Installation:** The "Listen" bench at Garland Ranch Regional Park was recently replaced. Located at the junction of East Ridge and Terrace trails, this is one of Garland's most popular bench sites. A fundraising effort was spearheaded by a local hiking group which provided the necessary funds to replace the aging bench but retain the existing plaque.

One of the benches located along the Loop Trail at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve was replaced with a memorial bench. Located within the redwood grove, this is a very popular area to stop and take in the beauty and sanctity of the Frog Pond.

- 7. Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) EQUIP Grant:** The Palo Corona cattle grazing team/contractor secured a grant in 2018 from the NRCS for cattle grazing infrastructure improvements at Palo Corona Regional Park, which the District agreed to match. Recently, the installation of a water pipeline from the Monastery Well to the PCRFP Front Ranch was completed, which will allow utilization of the Monastery Well to supply cattle troughs and storage tanks in the Front Ranch.
- 8. Palo Corona Mowing:** The annual mowing of the South Animas Unit at Palo Corona Regional Park was recently completed. The application of herbicide will soon follow. This application will slow the spread of invasive weeds and give cattle an opportunity to graze native grasses, with the hope of someday returning the area to native grassland.
- 9. PCRFP Road Grading:** Cal Fire was finally able to provide the services of a road grader to repair road damage caused by heavy equipment utilized during the Palo Corona Fuelbreak Project. The timing of this project was perfect given the forecast for significant rainfall in late January.
- 10. Projects A & B:** Rangers continued to provide project management services for Projects A & B at the Rancho Canada Unit. Both projects are in the schematic design phase and are moving forward. Replacement of the aged, fragile lateral sewer line from the RCU clubhouse to the sewer main was recently added as part of the Project A scope. Ops staff recently had the later line scoped and located, followed by a site visit by Whitson Engineers who is developing construction drawings and specifications for eventual inclusion in the project's bid packet.
- 11. Vasquez Trail at GRRP:** Rangers recently completed repairs to Vasquez Trail following damage caused by suppression efforts during the Carmel Fire. "Out-sloping" was reestablished, drain dips reconstructed, and new trail signs installed before the trail was officially reopened upon the public's notification.
- 12. Winter Prep/Trees:** Rangers have been making preparations in anticipation of winter rains, including clearing rain gutters and downspouts, culverts, and settling ponds. Downed trees will be especially challenging to quickly address this year due to the limited staffing schedule, however, Rangers remain on-call and will be dispatched as needed to address public safety hazards, including downed trees.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [January 2021 Volunteer Newsletter](#)