

# MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 – 2028



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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District Board of Directors (Board) is pleased to present the 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD). This document represents many hours of work and thoughtful, collaborative discussion about the future of MPRPD.

Driven by the participation of our community members, Board and staff, this plan defines strategies that will help guide decisions made by MPRPD for the next three years.

MPRPD has a bright future which exists, in-part, due to talent, determination, and previous strategic thinking. Our accomplishments have put MPRPD in an instrumental position to advance recreation, environmental education, research, and resource protection, conservation, and restoration throughout the region.

As with all organizations, we have challenges that require analysis, careful consideration, and purposeful action. Additional public input, planning, and strategic thinking will ensure we are in a position to have the greatest positive impact at delivering our mission of acquiring and maintaining open space within the MPRPD, by collaborating with partners and the community.

The 2025 - 2028 Strategic Plan provides a framework for developing and completing strategic actions over the next three years. The Board looks forward to developing, improving, and implementing actions that bring this strategic plan to life and continuing to make a positive difference to our residents and visitors, and our cultural and natural resources.

## **Board of Directors:**

**Jeffrey Markham, Director, Ward 1**

**Shane Anderson, Vice President, Ward 2**

**Dr. Kevin Raskoff, President, Ward 3**

**Kathleen Lee, Director, Ward 4**

**Monta Potter, Secretary/Treasurer, Ward 5**





# OUR STORY

The Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) developed the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan, in the months following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had a significant impact on all workplaces and MPRPD was no exception. MPRPD staff continued to work during those turbulent times in a responsible manner, keeping many of our hiking trails and open spaces available, offering a healthy outlet to the public who used park properties in increased numbers.

In spite of the pandemic, MPRPD was awarded a Certificate of Excellence in District Transparency from the Special District Leadership Foundation and was recognized by the Monterey Chamber of Commerce with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition in the Annual Business Excellence Awards. MPRPD continued to reinforce existing partnerships and establish new ones with numerous governmental jurisdictions, public, and private sectors, and not-for-profit organizations during this period. As a result, MPRPD received over \$37 million in grants from federal, state and local agencies and other parties for the research, planning, design, and construction of the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project at Palo Corona Regional Park – a monumental restoration effort first envisioned in 2016.

Despite pandemic-related work constraints, MPRPD achieved several significant accomplishments. Even so, and understandably, MPRPD was unable to accomplish everything laid out in the prior years' plan. Those elements remain important, and they are carried over into the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.



# OUR PHILOSOPHY

## **Our work at MPRPD is based on the following Principles:**

### **Adaptation and Resilience**

The world has continued to change, and adaptation continues to be key to our provision of services. New methods are sought and implemented, enhancing MPRPD's ability to be nimble and responsive to the "new world" in which we live. MPRPD's critical habitat, and natural and cultural resources continue to be protected and monitored. The high-quality environmental education programs and unparalleled trail-based experiences we offer are consistently delivered. MPRPD's continued award-winning business practices uphold the agency's reputation as one of the region's most transparent and best-run governmental agencies.

### **Cultivation of Partnerships**

The cultivation and nurturing of strong partnerships is the foundation of our success. Our work relies on productive relationships with Federal, State, and local agencies, funding partners, and not-for-profit collaborators.

We have developed and sustained strong working relationships with our region's Indigenous People, agricultural industry, and civic organizations. To "collaborate" is to "co-labor." We work together to provide and enrich significant state and regional wildlife corridors and natural habitat protection at multi-jurisdictional levels, provide active and passive recreation and have expanded MPRPD's environmental and cultural education opportunities in partnership with other jurisdictions by providing programs at their parks and museums.

MPRPD actively participates in regional transportation issues, including the Fort Ord Regional Trail & Greenway and ParkIT! initiatives, and creation of a transportation grant. These measures help connect the region's communities via a trail network, reduce vehicular traffic congestion on Highway 1, and provide opportunities for underserved, under-represented, and under-resourced community members to visit our parks and open spaces.

### **Implementation of Best Management Practices**

Best management practices optimize the use of time and resources. MPRPD values innovative solutions and is continuously looking to build on our own best management practices as well as learning from other agencies.

### **Responsible Stewardship**

Our land use conservation efforts are aimed at aligning with state and federal protocols and standards. Site-specific analyses of MPRPD's properties consider six core criteria, focusing on the protection, restoration, and monitoring of:

- Fire, flood and seismic event adapted natural and anthropogenic communities;
- Healthy watersheds;
- Native floral and faunal biodiversity;
- Cultural resources;
- Aesthetic, natural, and wilderness qualities of the region's riparian, upland, woodland, grassland, chaparral, and coastal habitats; and
- Responsible integration of recreational and educational programs to ensure compatibility with natural and cultural resources.



# OUR FORMATION

Pursuant to the authority granted in the Public Resources Code, Section 5500, the voters of Monterey County approved the measure which created the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District in the November election of 1972.

Momentum for a park district for the peninsula had been gathering for some years prior to the election. In March of 1970, the Sierra Club hosted a forum on the water supply problem on the peninsula. After that meeting, the idea of creating a special district for park and open space was discussed. A year later, the Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, and Audubon Club joined forces to create the Committee for Open Space.

In May, 1971, a grassroots effort began to collect 5,000 signatures to place consideration of an open space district on the November ballot. By October, the petition drive had been successful, and the board of supervisors placed Measure A on the ballot. District boundaries were set to match the Monterey Peninsula College District.

After the successful passage of Measure A, the new Board held its first meeting in December, 1972. MPRPD was entrusted to acquire lands for the express purpose of preserving open space and providing recreational opportunity. Since then, MPRPD has successfully protected over 14,000 acres of open space while maintaining balanced budgets and minimal overhead. The District has acquired or helped to acquire a total of 24 parks and open spaces, most recently the acquisition of the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park, the gateway to Big Sur.

The MPRPD's current boundaries cover over 500 square miles and include the seven incorporated cities on the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel Valley, Pebble Beach, and the Big Sur Coast. MPRPD is governed by an elected Board of Directors, representing the citizens in each of five wards.

# OUR PARKS



# OUR PROCESS

This 2025-28 Strategic Plan (Plan) reflects input from the public, community stakeholders, and organizational partners, and MPRPD’s volunteers, Board of Directors, and staff. The Plan was created to serve our community while balancing environmental, cultural, human, and financial considerations. This three-year plan will be used by the MPRPD for its annual work plans and budget development processes.

Annual management work plans will be created to focus on the vital few objectives critical to moving the organization toward the Strategic Goals included in this Plan. In recognition of the need for flexibility and responding to changing economic, social, political, and environmental conditions, this Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it is current and relevant, and that its goals are attainable, and if not, identify and implement measures that may help achieve their accomplishment.

## Terms used in this Strategic Plan are:

**GOAL:** An outcome statement that guides a program or management function.

**STRATEGY:** A coordinated, broad approach or direction adopted by an organization so that the organization can achieve its purpose.

**OBJECTIVE:** A measurable result that supports the achievement of a goal.

**WORK PLAN:** A written plan with defined action steps, timeline, the responsible party, and budget that supports the accomplishment of Goals, Strategies and Objectives. Staff will develop and submit an annual work plan for the Board’s review and direction prior to the beginning of each new fiscal year, which will begin on July 1st.



# OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

## **Mission**

To acquire and maintain open space in the MPRPD for preservation and use, working with partners and the community, for public benefit and enjoyment, and environmental protection.

## **Vision**

To have several large well-managed parks distributed across the MPRPD, representing a variety of habitats, concurrently protecting our environment, and enhancing our community's health, recreational, environmental education, and multi-modal transportation network opportunities.

## **Values**

To have safe, accessible open space for recreation, enjoyment, and protection of natural and cultural resources, and native habitat and wildlife.



# OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**Goal 1: Advancing Stewardship Through Land Use, Cultural Preservation, Natural Resource Conservation, Education, and Strategic Planning**

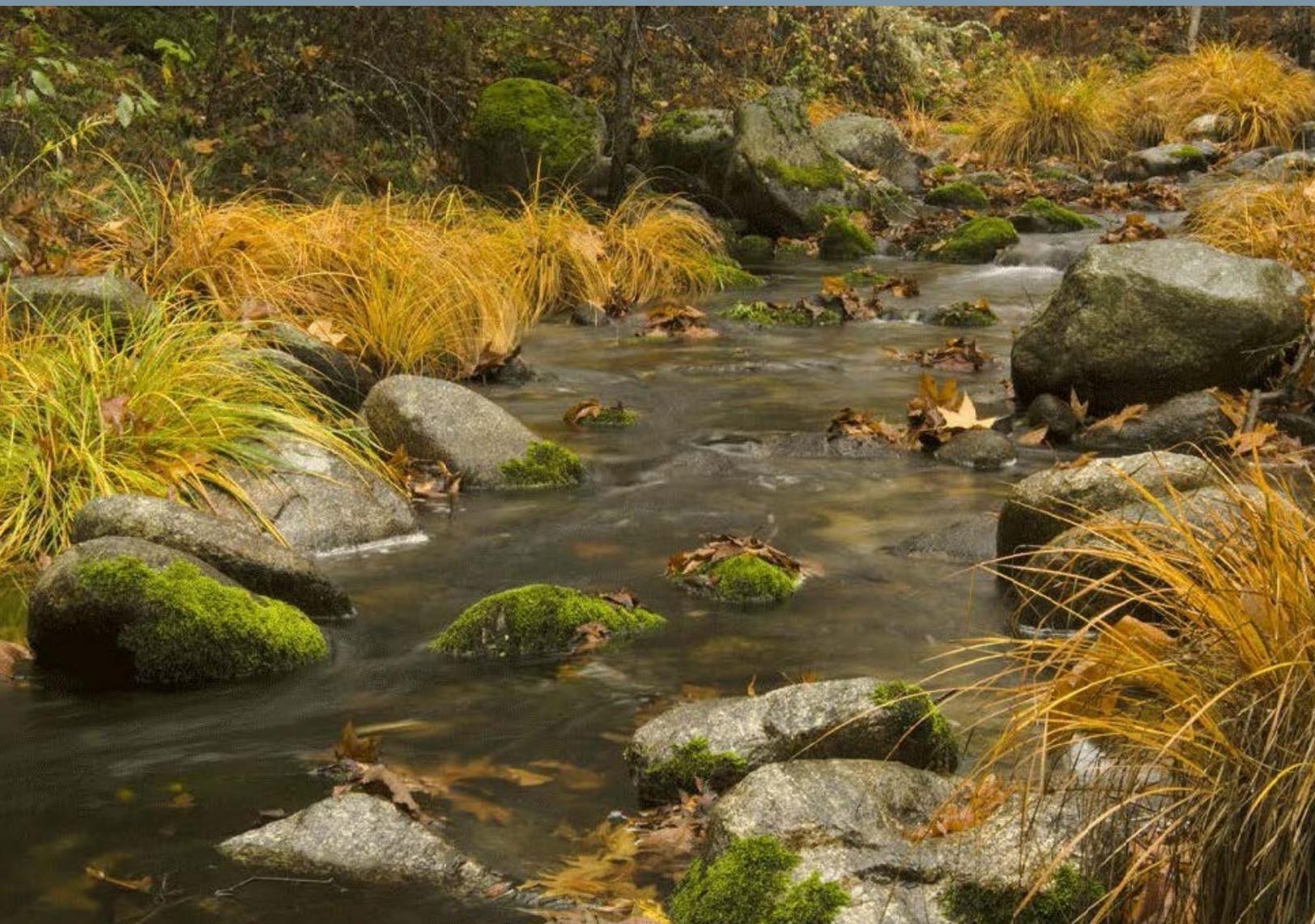
**Goal 2: Promoting Social Equity and Community Engagement**

**Goal 3: Strengthening Our Organizational Capacity**



# Goal 1: Advancing Stewardship through Land Use, Cultural Preservation, Natural Resource Conservation, Education, and Strategic Planning

We will develop and implement comprehensive graphic concepts, master plans, habitat management, wildfire hazard mitigation, cultural resource preservation, facility management, and interpretive, environmental, and cultural education plans for MPRPD's properties. These efforts aim to enhance the environmental, cultural, recreational, and educational value of our sites and facilities while improving public access and engagement.





# Goal 1

## STRATEGIES

**Be a leader in natural and cultural resource preservation, conservation, and native habitat restoration.**

**Update or create plans for MPRPD properties, prioritized by environmental and cultural significance and highly visited open space used for recreational and educational purposes.**

## OBJECTIVES

- Conduct surveys to identify and inventory natural resources, critical habitat, and wildlife corridors across all MPRPD properties.
- Establish dedicated funding and reserve MPRPD staff time to conduct annual management and treatment of invasive flora and fauna, pathogens, and fire and fuel reduction efforts.
- Complete Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project and reopen public trails.
- Audit MPRPD's grazing program and update lease terms to ensure resource protection and grassland management objectives are being met.
- Explore and implement ways to lower MPRPD's carbon footprint, including installation of electric charging stations, purchasing hybrid/EV plug-in vehicles, installing solar, etc.
- Complete Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan (VIEP)
- Complete Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park's Master Plan, in partnership with the City of Marina and all stakeholders.
- Complete facility inventories and condition assessments for all real properties and their facilities, fixtures, infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment to inform a future Asset Maintenance Repair and Replacement Plan.
- Finalize and implement Environmental Education Program Plan.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2027-28**

**2025-27**

**2027-28**

**2025-26**

**2025-26**

**2026-27**

**2025-28**

**2027-28**

**2027-28**

# Goal 1 continued



## STRATEGIES

**Evaluate and modify land use policies and ordinances to ensure alignment with each property's most significant purposes and management requirements.**

## OBJECTIVES

- Audit MPRPD property records and document property history, management requirements, and use restrictions.
- Evaluate and develop timeline for the revision of MPRPD land and resource policies, ordinances, and practices to maximize natural and cultural resource protection and integration of recreational and educational activities.
- Explore opportunities to acquire real property within or in proximity to the cities of Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, Sand City, or Marina that offer high quality and high impact environmental and cultural resource protection, habitat restoration, recreational, and environmental education opportunities and values.
- Evaluate properties that are currently closed or require permitted access.
- Reevaluate trail planning, connections, and allowable uses.
- Initiate planning for enclosed dog park at Palo Corona Regional Park.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2027-28**

**2027-28**

**2027-28**

**2025-28**

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

# Goal 1 continued

## STRATEGIES

**Convey or enter joint management agreements for properties that may better serve partners' missions to provide public access, and protection and use of lands held sacred by indigenous communities.**

**Make MPRPD properties, facilities, and surrounding areas more resilient to wildfire, flood, and other natural events.**

## OBJECTIVES

- Research and prioritize properties considered for potential conveyance and receiving agencies or organizations.
- Ensure that all jointly managed properties are guided by active MOU/joint management agreements.
- Create inventory of MPRPD facilities and needs for retrofit, relocation, or retirement to reduce the risk of catastrophic damage and future repair or replacement costs.
- Incorporate findings for ongoing operations and park plan updates.
- Biennially, evaluate the need of MPRPD properties, and pursue new efforts that mitigate potential impacts of, and enhance resilience to, wildfire, flood, and other natural events.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2027-28**

**2027-28**

**2025-28**

**2026-28**

**2025-28**

## Goal 2: Promoting Social Equity and Community Engagement

We will formulate and implement actions that overcome racism and discrimination, and social, physical, and economic barriers, by creating meaningful opportunities that are available to and welcome everybody in the enjoyment of MPRPD's facilities, programs, and open spaces.



# Goal 2



## STRATEGIES

**Enhance K-12 student access to programs, parks, and open spaces.**

**Reach and serve underserved, under-resourced or underrepresented populations by overcoming barriers that limit or prohibit public access and enjoyment of MPRPD's facilities, parks, open spaces, and programs.**

## OBJECTIVES

- Expand the Transportation Grants Program, especially those within areas of the County that may be underserved, under-resourced, or underrepresented for student participation at MPRPD's properties and annually report progress.
- Utilize technology to manage web-based teacher sign-up systems for field trips to MPRPD parks and open spaces.
- Provide interpretive and educational exhibits, signage and programs that are at a minimum bilingual.
- Provide all staff and volunteers cultural sensitivity training with a focus on diverse audiences and indigenous people.
- Increase and document outreach efforts to include diverse communities from the inception of planning and development of real properties, facilities, and programs to ensure cultural, educational, and recreational uses.
- Partner with the region's academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations that provide services to our diverse population and implement best practices to increase inclusivity in our services and operations.
- Identify social, physical, economic, and language barriers and implement measures that address these constraints by developing or modifying programs, exhibits, signage, and facilities.
- Collaborate with schools, institutes, and not-for-profit organizations to align MPRPD research and increase the capacity for regional research and also reduce costs and duplication of efforts.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2025-26**

**2026-27**

**2025-28**

**2025-26**

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

**2027-28**

# Goal 2 continued



## STRATEGIES

### **Become a leader regarding the Central Coast's Cultural history**

## OBJECTIVES

- In collaboration with the region's indigenous people, colleges, universities, private parties, and organizations tell the region's human history in exhibits in MPRPD's Centers and through Let's Go Outdoors! (LGO) programs.
- Research, plan, develop, and install interpretive exhibits and/or signage related to the region's human history on MPRPD properties including the Centers, and along trails and other appropriate sites.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

### **Become a leader regarding the Central Coast's Natural history**

- Research and implement/install environmental education and/or interpretive programs and exhibits on the region's geomorphology, hydrology, climate, biology, phenology, and the effects of climate disruptions.
- Explore collaborative opportunities that lead to the development of joint research, design, and installation of interpretive panels and programs.
- Highlight the significance of the region's agricultural history through interpretive exhibits and signs.

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

**2026-27**

# Goal 3: Strengthening Organizational Capacity

We will strengthen our organizational capacity and sustainability while fostering a transparent, communicative, supportive, and cooperative corporate culture that advances MPRPD's vision and mission by implementing this Strategic Plan's strategies to achieve its goals and objectives.



# Goal 3



## STRATEGIES

**Expand and sustain a robust volunteer program**

## OBJECTIVES

- Expand volunteer staff by 5% per year.
- Develop a volunteer webpage that identifies requirements and perks and serves as a recruiting tool.

## ESTIMATED DURATION

**2025-26**

**2025-26**

**Build a highly communicative and collaborative team and organizational culture**

- Conduct formal employee engagement survey and facilitated discussions to gauge areas needing improvement and garner tools for development of cooperation and collaboration, and increased morale.
- Revise Staff Core Values to reflect current census.
- Develop opportunities to work cross-divisionally.
- Create GIS Web Atlas of MPRPD Properties that is accessible by all staff.

**2025-26**

**2025-26**

**2025-26**

**2026-27**

# Goal 3 continued

STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	ESTIMATED DURATION
<b>Build staff capacity</b>	• Develop process to fill vacant positions within 90 days.	<b>2025-26</b>
	• Conduct organizational analysis to inform current and future needs, incorporating potential changes to MPRPD property portfolio and financial resources.	<b>2026-27</b>
	• Create training policy and expand learning opportunities.	<b>2026-27</b>
<b>Provide increased staff recognition</b>	• Recognize employees and volunteers via newsletter articles, staff, or Board meetings, etc. who have significantly advanced MPRPD's mission.	<b>2025-26</b>
	• Establish a formal recognition program.	<b>2026-27</b>
<b>Increase and improve staffing work spaces and facilities</b>	• Conduct professional assessments/ consultations to explore options for improved workspace resources for current and planned future staffing needs.	<b>2025-26</b>
	• Incorporate consultant findings into actions to address immediate needs, while also planning to address future staffing growth.	<b>2025-26</b>

# OUR COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

This strategic plan provides a blueprint for the future of MPRPD. Workplans to support the strategies and objectives identified will serve as a guide to budgeting, staffing, programming, and land stewardship in the future.

Our next steps are to:

- Utilize the strategic plan as a foundation for creating annual management work plans. Work plans will address the most critical issues facing the MPRPD, be tied to the annual budget process and include an assessment of staffing needed to accomplish the objectives.
- Engage the Board and staff in the development and implementation of workplans appropriate to their role in the organization.
- Review the strategic plan annually and modify as conditions change.



***“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.”***

— Alan Lakein