AGENDA ITEM NO. 9-B

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
MID-MONTH STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING:	**November 4, 2026**
SUBJECT:	**Monthly Staff Report**
PRESENTER:	**Eric Morgan, 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-September through mid-October 2026, in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business**.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. **Recruitment**
   Interviews for the Special Uses Coordinator position were recently conducted, and staff is checking references for the candidate of choice. We hope to have the new position staffed in November. Staff are also reviewing applications for the Environmental Education Specialist position which closed late October.

2. **Training**
   Staff participated in the following training: California Joint Powers Insurance Authority, *Risk Management Forum* and California Association of Public Procurement Officials, *Beyond Transactions: A Strategic Mindset for Public Procurement.*

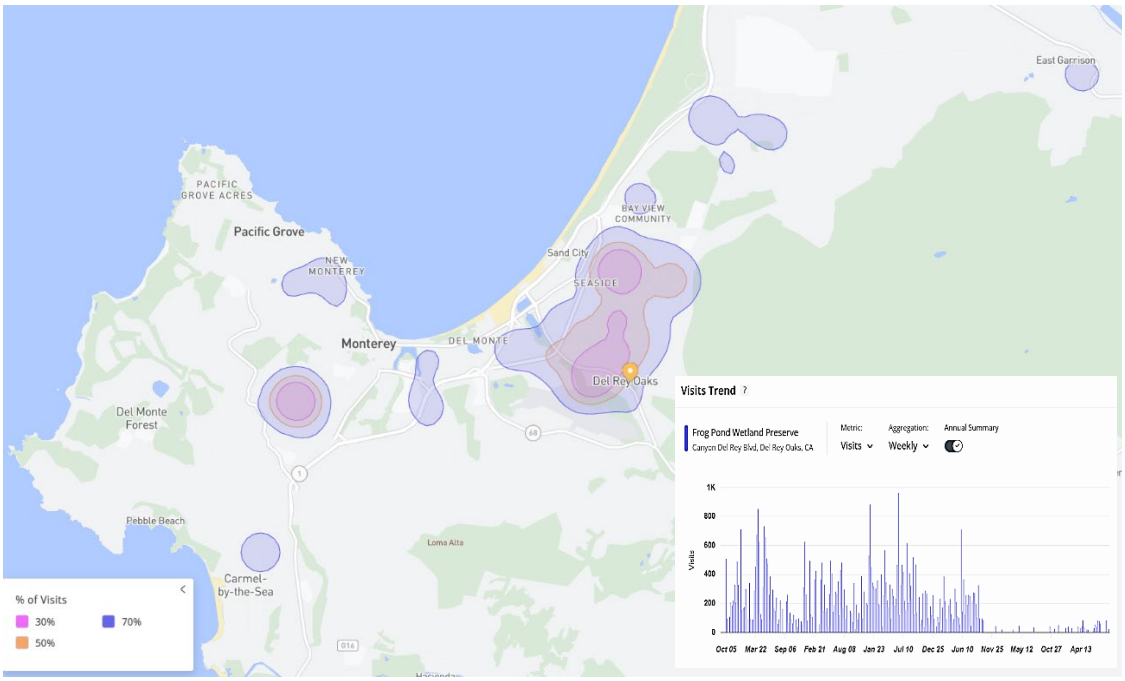
3. **District Financials**
   The District is currently conducting a qualification process to establish a qualified vendor list for professional forestry services. Applications from interested forestry professionals and firms will be accepted until November 2, 2026. Following the application period, staff will review the submissions and establish a qualified vendor list that will remain in effect for the next five years. Consultants placed on the qualified list will be eligible to provide professional forestry services for future district projects. Establishing a pre-qualified vendor list will improve efficiency by reducing the need to repeatedly advertise and conduct separate qualification solicitations for forestry related projects. This approach is also being considered for the needs of on-call services to streamline future procurements and district processing time while maintaining a competitive pool of qualified professionals.

4. Data Analytics

To better serve District residents, MPRPD staff continue to use a location-analytics platform that uses anonymized mobile device data to estimate foot traffic, dwell time, visitor origins, and movement patterns at real-world places. Staff have been using this tool throughout the year to generate ward profiles showing where residents choose to recreate outdoors and park profiles showing who is using various MPRPD park units, where they are from, how they are getting to those parks, and when they visit. The goal of this new initiative is to better understand our MPRPD customers and the residents we serve in hopes of improving our product delivery – our product being "your parks."

This month, we present the locations that visitors are coming from to hike around the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. This beloved Wetland Preserve has been closed to public visitation since September of 2024 as construction began on the Fort Ord Recreation Trail and Greenway (FORTAG). The location cluster shown below from October 1, 2020 to October 30, 2026 clearly illustrates the popularity of this reserve to Del Rey Oaks, Seaside and Monterey residents.

The District is working with the City of Del Rey Oaks, Transportation Agency of Monterey County, and community groups to open the trails in November and show some love to this treasured resource.



5. Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park

Staff carefully evaluated proposals for the wetland planning and permitting effort (Scope 1) and the conceptual master plan for the terrestrial elements (Scope 2) of Locke Paddon Wetland Community Park and have selected the most qualified

proposals. Staff look forward to making awards and getting these much-needed efforts underway. The Board Report this month provides additional details.

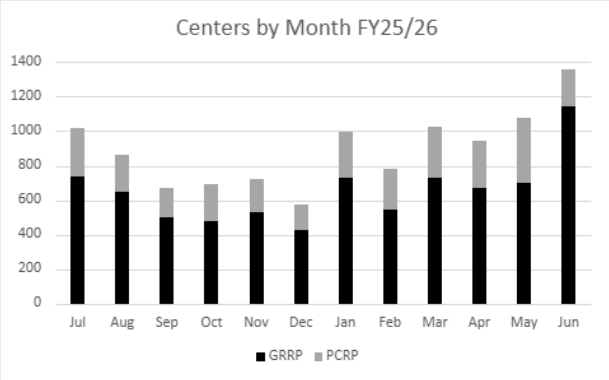
6. **Residential Lease Program Policy**
   Staff are consulting with legal counsel and reviewing the residential security program policies of East Bay Regional Park and Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space Authority and others in anticipation of presenting proposed guidelines to the Board next month. Each of those sister park district agencies manage between 40-50 residential units and have thoughtful program policies that assure that their facilities benefit the District. The District will soon have two dwellings repaired at Kahn Ranch and potentially available for occupation by tenants and/or caretakers.

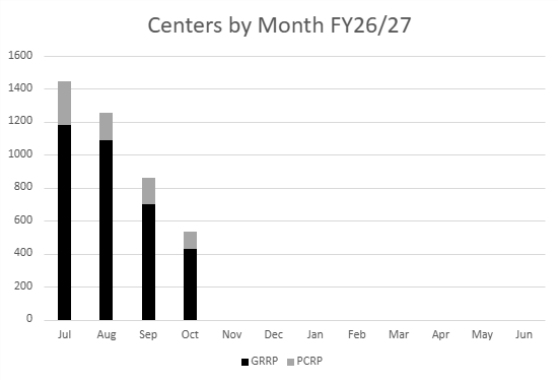
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION

1. **Community Outreach**

   a. **Visitor and Discovery Center Totals**

   Recording of visitor contacts at the Palo Corona Discovery Center (DC) and the Garland Ranch Visitor Center (VC) is ongoing. We have maintained extended visitation days since April 2024. The DC is open Friday to Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. As of October 5, 2026, the VC is open Thursday to Monday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Both centers are open Monday holidays.

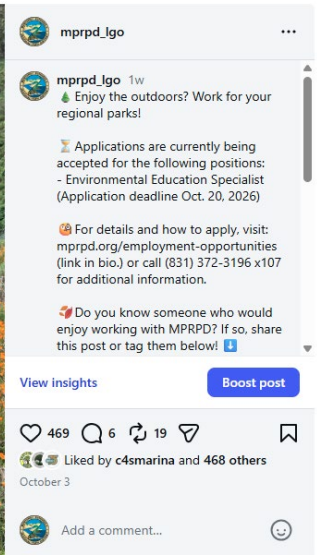




   b. **Social Media Posts**

Facebook stats	@MPRegionalParkDistrict @PaloCoronaRegionalPark @garlandranchregionalpark	
Followers on Oct 15	9,080	+27 from last month
Total Impressions	18,152	-53% from last month
Top 3 posts	Native Tree Planting	418 engagements 7,163 impressions

	CA Ebony Tarantula	118 engagements 7,163 impressions
	Work for your Regional Parks	96 engagements 940 impressions
Instagram stats	@mprpd_lgo	
Followers on Oct 15	2,543	+107 from last month
Total Impressions	24,225	+3% from last month
Top 3 posts	Work for your Regional Parks	985 engagements 14,000 impressions
	Festival of Birds	74 engagements 1,589 impressions
	Owl Species	73 engagements 956 impressions



c. ENewsletter

Staff worked with public relations consultants Spoke to produce the monthly e-News and posts highlighting MPRPD division achievements. The September eNews featured: new bridge and the floodplain restoration project, warm weather safety, our education outreach table at the marina library, and fall migration and the Townsend's warbler. The eNews also

included the Fall 2026/Winter 2027 *Let's Go Outdoors!* catalog announcement and a variety of upcoming events and announcements.

d. Wild Wednesdays at the Marina Library (Sep 23)

Staff continues to table at Marina Monterey County Free Library (MCFL), made possible by our MOU, during their monthly Wild Wednesday event, educating visitors about *Let's Go Outdoors!* programs and the western snowy plovers. Approximately 15 contacts were made, mostly with children under 8 and their families. MPRPD engaged families with an interactive activity on how plovers forage on the beach and why it is important to give these birds space. MPRPD and the Marina Library will continue this program until October, when we will take a break for the winter holidays.

e. Festival of Birds

Staff and volunteers provided bird-themed programming at MPRPD parks as part of the Monterey Bay Festival of Birds annual celebration hosted by Bird School Project. See Education section 2.c. for more information.

2. Education

a. K-12 Education Programs: "Everyone Can Do Science!"

Staff piloted the second "Everyone Can Do Science!" program, which aims to connect students with natural sciences and build capacity in the region for environmental education. Staff and partners are exploring opportunities to expand the program and are discussing feasibility and potential approaches to securing grant funding.

On October 14, MPRPD partnered with MEarth and the Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy (MIRA) to provide a science-themed program at Palo Corona Regional Park for 96 sophomore students from the Monterey Academy of Oceanographic Sciences (MAOS) club at Monterey High School. Students participated in hands-on activities focused on making science accessible and engaging for high school students. MEarth led an entomology activity at the Hilton Beilek Habitat that observed insects, their habitats, and their ecological roles. MIRA led a lesson and an interactive game about constellations and light pollution. MPRPD provided field trip coordination and facilitation throughout the experience.

b. Let's Go Outdoors!

The last of the Spring/Summer 2026 programs have served approximately 80 participants during this reporting period. Programs featured: Night Hikes, Solar System Stroll, and Tai Chi for Beginners.

c. Bird Walk & Wing Craft: Monterey Bay Festival of Birds

Staff led a family-friendly bird walk and wing craft activity at the Garland Visitor Center as part of the annual bird festival organized by the Bird School Project. Families spent time learning about wing shapes and their best-fit habitats before going on a walk to test their knowledge. After returning to the Visitor Center, they made wings of their very own to take home and enjoy.

3. Volunteers

a. Enrichments for Volunteers

i. **Cats With Collars**

Eighteen (18) volunteers gathered at the Discovery Center for a special talk on September 26 by Rachel Roberts, Senior Environmental Specialist, Bobcat Coordinator, Wildlife Diversity Program, Department of Fish and Wildlife about the Bobcat Population Monitoring Project studying the bobcats within Palo Corona Regional Park and the Carmel Valley.

ii. **Snowy Plover Guardian Training**

Staff from MPRPD, Monterey Audubon, and CA State Parks partnered to recruit and enrich their respective volunteers with a 1-hour virtual presentation on the Snowy Plover Guardian Program on October 5th. This training focused on plovers' rest-and-recuperation behaviors during the winter and how volunteers can engage with the public and continue to support these shorebirds.

b. LGO! Program Volunteers

Volunteers led or facilitated the following LGO! Programs and hikes: Beginning Birding Laguna Grande, Night Hike, Nature Walk Palo Corona, Solar System Stroll.

Leaders and facilitators were Mary Dainton, Cath Farrant, Rick Berg, Steve Ibrahim, Jennifer Smith, Jean Perkins, and Sharon Osgood.

c. Visitor and Discovery Center Volunteers

Patty Armstrong, Kathy Simpson, Eric Hartwell, Laurie Benner, Jon Benner, Tony Amarante, Barabara Barrett, Rebecca Law, Sam Ross, Shannon Mandel, Mark Laycox, Tim Wilson, Bruce Merchant, Lisa Hogan, Amelia Craig, Marikay LeValley, Jordan Goldman, James Folliard greeted and guided visitors at the Garland Visitor Center and Palo Corona Discovery Center.

4. Service Learners

Staff led and orientation for one potential Service Learner.

5. Partnerships and Training

a. Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning (VIEP) Training

EECO staff attended a 2-day virtual workshop presented by Dave Bucy on interpretive planning. This workshop provided foundational knowledge for staff to continue to create and execute District-wide interpretive plans. The workshop was recorded to train future EECO staff.

b. **Unlearning/Relearning California Indigenous History & Moving Toward Meaningful Tribal Partnerships**
EECO staff attended a virtual two-part peer learning series about California Indigenous history and building respectful relationships with tribal nations and Indigenous communities. These sessions shared practical ideas to help MPRPD connect with Indigenous communities.

c. **Monterey Bay Environmental Educators (MBEE) Network**
Staff met with network leaders to plan for the next quarterly convening of the MBEE Network.

6. **Special Use Permits (SUP) & MOU Events**
   a. **Habitat Stewardship Project (SUP)**
   Habitat Stewardship Project led nature walks at Garland Ranch Regional Park as part of their annual special use permit for 25 people.

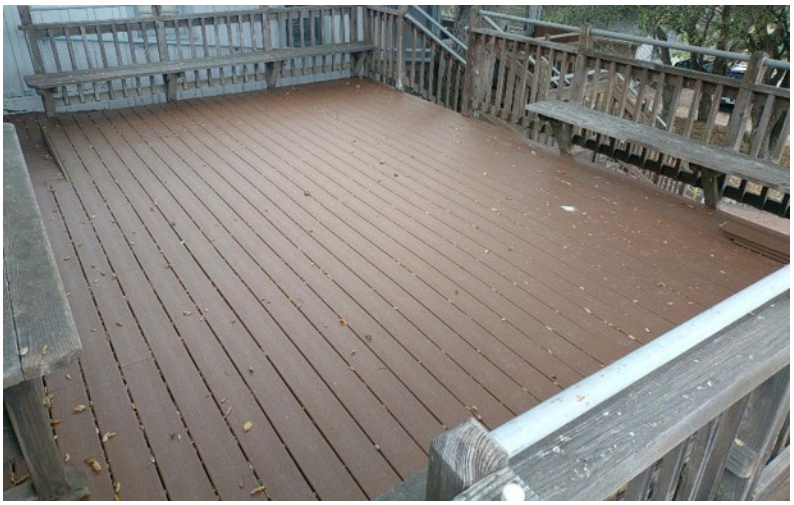
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. **FORTAG Update**
The first segment of the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway project is nearing completion, including the section through the corner of the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Ranger staff continue to participate in weekly meetings with TAMC project management staff, and hope to be able to reopen the Frog Pond in the coming weeks, after some much-needed trail maintenance. Ranger staff have continued to patrol the Frog Pond throughout the construction closure to monitor for trespass and illegal activity, which has been minimal.

2. **PG&E Remediation**
   The recent discovery of unauthorized brush clearing along Hitchcock Loop Trail at the Kahn Ranch Addition of Garland Ranch Regional Park has been rehabilitated by the responsible PG&E subcontractor, who performed the unauthorized work seeking to gain access to adjacent private property to replace an existing service pole. Ranger staff met the responsible subcontractor onsite, developed a scope of work in conjunction with P&C staff, and monitored the site during remediation.

3. **Garland Park Ranger Station Deck**
   The Garland Park Ranger Station deck project continues and is nearing completion on the east wing. Ranger staff continue to discover rotten joists that need to be

replaced before new deck boards can be installed. This will also be the site of the next all-staff meeting, to give all staff a chance to enjoy this new amenity.



4. **Enforcement/Patrol Log**

Enforcement remains an essential function of the MPRPD Ranger staff. This month's Ranger log includes multiple incidents of graffiti at Marina Dunes Preserve, a cut fence, and unauthorized dumping of household refuse at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Ranger staff were also recently notified of a broken skylight on the Visitor Center Garden Shed, which was apparently broken by a rock (later discovered by EECO staff inside the shed). Ranger staff have since replaced the skylight.

5. **Highway 1 Entrance Improvements**
Ranger staff teamed up with Fish Ranch staff to repair and repave the northern entrance into the Palo Corona Front Ranch, utilized by Fish Ranch residents. Multiple loads of cold patch were dumped, spread, and compacted, in advance of winter rains. District equipment was utilized, including the Dumptruck and Vibratory Roller. Similarly, Ranger staff recently teamed up with the Palo Corona grazing lessee staff to construct a retaining wall along the road to Inspiration Point that had become undermined due to cattle grazing.

6. **Winter Prep**

Ranger staff continues to be busy preparing roads, trails, and facilities for the anticipated “super el-Nino” winter season. This includes typical seasonal maintenance like the clearing of the drainage channel at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve paralleling Highway 218, cleaning out settling ponds at Garland Ranch Regional Park, and inspecting/clearing all District culverts and drain dips. The asphalt road repairs and armoring of drainages vulnerable to erosion (pictured below) are additional steps Ranger staff are taking in anticipation of a significant winter season. Ranger staff will also continue to monitor the weather forecast throughout the winter season, remove seasonal footbridges when appropriate, and coordinate with Monterey County staff to facilitate the installation of the new “Tiger Dam” system at deDampierre Park if/when needed.

Division Lead staff is also reviewing District policies and procedures to determine how best to position the District to respond quickly to potential flooding and/or high wind events.

Before

After

7. **deDampierre Park Parking Improvements**
   The last step of the FEMA project at deDampierre Park was recently completed, which included layout of the replacement poles (provided by FEMA) and installation by Ranger staff and an inmate crew. This project represents the last step in recovery from the winter storm damages from 2023. Ranger staff will work

with Admin staff to ensure they have all the necessary documentation to close out MPRPD's FEMA projects.

8. **Brush Chipper Safety Device**
   The safety device recently installed on the Bandit XP90 brush chipper is working exactly as it was intended. This device was installed free of charge by the District's insurer (CJPIA) and uses magnetic plates and metal bracelets to prevent operators from being inadvertently drug into the chipper.

9. Garland Park Entrance Ramp

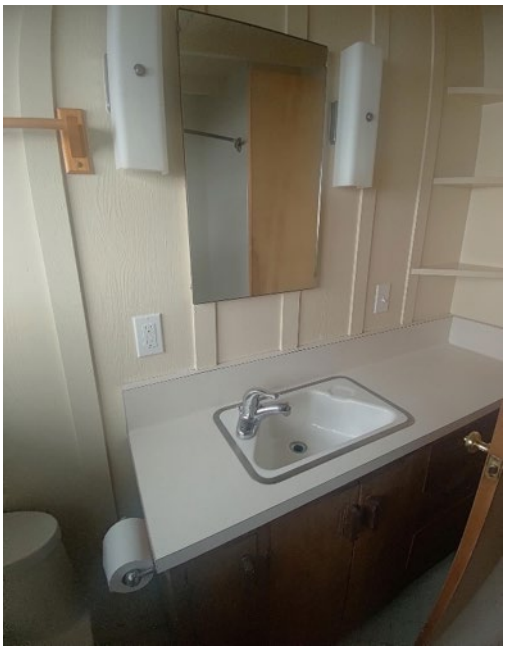
Ranger staff coordinated the repaving of the Garland Park entrance ramp from Carmal Valley Road. The previous asphalt had become cracked and displaced. Coastal Paving and Grading was contracted to perform this project, which has received many compliments from the public and staff.

10. Trees Down

Multiple trees down this month (nothing huge), including a broken cottonwood branch on Cooper Road and deadwood on Hitchcock Loop.

11. Kahn Ranch Rental Cabin Improvements

The improvements to the rental cabins at the Kahn Ranch Addition of Garland Ranch Regional Park is nearing completion. The next step is for both cabins to be tented for fumigation, which is scheduled for the week of October 26. After that, a final punch list will be developed and shared with the contractor. The District is discussing and updating rental agreement templates for these (and other) rental properties before selecting the next tenants.



12. Timber Fire Update

As of October 27, 2026, the Timber Fire remains at 97% containment, according to daily reports. However, all assigned resources, apparatuses, and personnel have been removed from District property. Ranger staff are very satisfied with the outcome of Cal Fire's suppression repair efforts on District property, which resulted in significant road and drainage improvements on District property, specifically at the San Clemente-Blue Rock Open Space Preserve. The District was fortunate not to have any properties affected by fire, but remained a cooperative partner and happily supported the incident through land-use agreements and coordination amongst field staff. Huge thanks to our partners at Cal Fire, the United States Forest Service, the Cachagua Fire Department, and others, on a job well done.

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

1. **Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park Wetland and Upland Planning RFPs:** Staff are supporting the Wetland and Upland Planning RFP process in coordination with the General Manager and procurement staff.

2. **Marina Dunes Preserve**

    a. **Western Snowy Plover Management:** Staff continue developing a targeted predator management program to support western snowy plover nesting and overwintering success at Marina Dunes Preserve, in coordination with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, Point Blue Conservation Science, and USFWS. Work during this reporting period included reviewing the Wildlife Services

cooperative agreement and work plan, developing the federal migratory bird permit application, and preparing supporting CEQA documentation. Staff are also consulting with CDFW regarding any additional permit requirements. Staff expect to bring the agreement and permit package to the Board for approval in February or March 2027.

3. **Palo Corona Regional Park**

   a. **Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project:** See Report 9C, Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Phase 2 Construction Progress, for details.

   b. **Rancho Cañada Trail Rehabilitation and Replacement Project:** Following removal of the remaining portions of the former Multi-Benefit Community Trail (MBCT) in accordance with the District's Streambed Alteration Agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), staff are implementing winterization and erosion control measures and preparing approximately 2.6 acres of retired trail areas for native seeding using species from the agreement's native grassland palette. Staff continue to coordinate with CDFW on this work.

   c. **Rancho Cañada Village:** Staff continue to coordinate with the Rancho Cañada Village (RCV) development team and its engineers regarding a proposed drainage easement along the shared property boundary with Palo Corona Regional Park. Coordination has focused on confirming the easement limits relative to the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project grading completed in that area, including review of survey monuments, easement mapping files, and as-built grading information.

   d. **Cal-Am Well Project:** Staff are coordinating with California American Water (Cal-Am) on its proposed Well Project, which includes a new well on Cal-Am property near Rio Road and approximately one mile of raw water pipeline running east across the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park. Staff continue to work with Cal-Am on the pipeline alignment and easement terms. Staff are also exploring whether certain Cal-Am activities, including portions of the pipeline project, could be covered under the District's Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP). Because the LEHCP's timing and scope are still being determined, staff have advised Cal-Am to continue pursuing its own permits for the project.

   e. **Smith's Blue Butterfly Habitat Volunteer Planting:** Staff are coordinating with EECO on a volunteer restoration event at Inspiration Point, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 5, with December 12 as a rain date. Volunteers will plant 200 seacliff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*), the host

plant for the federally endangered Smith's blue butterfly and remove invasive French broom adjacent to the planting area. The plantings fulfill USFWS mitigation requirements for buckwheat impacted during Phase 2 grading of the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project. PCM staff will lead the planting and provide equipment, transportation to the site, and interpretation on the butterfly and its habitat at Palo Corona. The event is limited to 16 volunteers, and registration details will be shared in the November newsletter.

f. **Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) Monitoring and Compliance:** Staff are finalizing the District's annual SHA monitoring and compliance report for submittal to USFWS in November. Staff would like to provide an overview and update on the SHA to the Board at its January or February 2027 meeting.

g. **Conservation Grazing Program:** Staff are completing final legal and procurement review of the revised conservation grazing lease RFP. Staff also continued management of the Palo Corona Regional Park Conservation Grazing Program, including coordination of the 2026 Residual Dry Matter (RDM) monitoring effort, grassland health monitoring, grazing unit rotation, and repair and maintenance of District facilities and grazing infrastructure. This work included installing electric fencing along Inspiration Point Road and repairing an eroded section of the road.

h. **Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP):** Staff are reviewing a revised draft of the Rancho Cañada LEHCP prepared by the District's consultant, SWCA Environmental Consultants. The revised draft will undergo a final round of USFWS administrative review before it is finalized and submitted for formal USFWS review and approval. Staff also continue to develop reference materials and deliver training for Operations and EECO staff and the District's concessionaire, Wedgewood Weddings, covering permit coverage, covered species avoidance and minimization measures, and habitat management requirements.

4. **Garland Ranch Regional Park**

a. **Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Project (Eucalyptus Thinning and Removal):** Staff continue to advance the State Coastal Conservancy-funded eucalyptus removal effort at Garland Ranch Regional Park. The temporary stream crossing design is at the 30% level and is being used as the basis for engaging the regulatory agencies and developing permit applications. Staff recently met with the State Water Resources Control Board regarding project coverage under the Statewide General Restoration Order Programmatic EIR (PEIR) and are developing background project information to support coverage

under the PEIR. Staff will provide a more detailed update to the Board once feedback is received from the permitting agencies and the design reflects their initial input.

5. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve**

    a. **Roadside Fuels Reduction:** See the Fire and Fuels Management update below for portfolio-wide EPP details, including the California Conservation Corps crew award for this project.

6. **Laguna Grande Regional Park**

    a. **Understory Thinning EPP Project:** Staff presented an update on the Project to the Laguna Grande Regional Joint Powers Agency Board at its October meeting. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has awarded 1,200 State-funded crew hours for the Project, enough to support a full crew for about two weeks and complete a first phase of work at no cost to the member agencies. Before crews can begin, staff are securing a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) to oversee work in forested areas and refine the final treatment prescription, and are working with the Cities of Monterey and Seaside to coordinate the work across properties and management areas. Staff will also complete biological clearance surveys and file a Notice of Commencement with the State. Work could begin as early as November, conditions permitting, and staff will report back to the JPA Board on the results of the first phase.

7. **Prequalified Consultant Selection Process (Registered Professional Forester Pilot):** Staff are working with Administrative staff to develop a streamlined process for selecting consultants from the District's prequalified lists, piloting it with RPF services needed for EPP fuels reduction projects. The District has released an RFQ to establish a prequalified list of RPFs. For each project, staff will select the most qualified RPF, request a proposal from that consultant, and negotiate a fair and reasonable fee, consistent with Purchasing Policy 3007. Staff are developing selection and proposal request templates that can be reused for other on-call services and expect to apply the process first to the Laguna Grande Understory Thinning Project in November.

8. **Fire and Fuels Management:** Staff continued implementation planning for District projects authorized under the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) framework.

    a. **California Conservation Corps Crew Award:** The CCC notified the District that it has been awarded Proposition 4 funded crew time for EPP fuel reduction work, including 1,200 crew hours for the Laguna Grande Understory Thinning Project and 1,800 crew hours for the Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve

Roadside Fuels Reduction Project. Staff are working with the CCC to schedule crews and hope to begin implementation before winter rains, particularly at Laguna Grande, where site conditions become saturated quickly once the rainy season begins.

b. **Fire Agency Access Agreements:** Staff are coordinating with CAL FIRE and the Carmel Highlands and Cypress Fire Protection Districts, which contract with CAL FIRE for fuels management services, on cooperative agreements that would allow those agencies to conduct fuels management work on District properties. The agreements would require work to comply with applicable environmental requirements and District terms and conditions. The first agreement, for fuels reduction at Laidlaw-Apte Bird Sanctuary, is completing review by CAL FIRE. Staff anticipate bringing the Laidlaw-Apte agreement to the Board for consideration in December, with additional agreements for other District properties to follow.

9. **CDFW Tiger Salamander Authorization:** Following last month's issuance of federal recovery permits to both Resource Conservation Specialists, CDFW issued Josh Carpenter a Memorandum of Understanding under the California Endangered Species Act authorizing research activities for California tiger salamander through October 2030, including at District properties. Together with his federal permit, this allows Josh to independently conduct tiger salamander surveys and sampling in support of the District's Safe Harbor Agreement and LEHCP. Jacqueline Brenton's corresponding state authorization remains pending.

10. **GIS and Data Management:** Staff advanced several efforts to improve how the District manages and shares its spatial data:

    a. **Data Governance and ArcGIS Online Cleanup:** Staff established a data management standard that designates the District's ArcGIS Online (AGOL) account as the agency data portal for core and field-ready datasets, with project-specific data stored in ArcGIS Pro project geodatabases. Using this framework, staff began reviewing and consolidating more than 200 hosted feature layers to remove outdated and duplicate content, transfer core datasets to the District's agency account, and ensure each dataset has a single authoritative version.

    b. **Asset Data Collection and Layer Sharing:** Staff developed a beta Field Maps application for updating the District's bench inventory, which is expected to serve as a foundation for a broader field operations data collection tool. As part of this work, staff are implementing a tiered sharing structure that protects master datasets and provides purpose-built views for staff, volunteers, internal

dashboards, and public maps, along with consistent symbology across District field and web maps.

c. **GIS System Outage:** The District's GIS virtual desktop environment has been offline since early October due to cloud server provisioning delays on the provider side. Staff are working with the District's IT provider to restore access and identify temporary solutions, and are evaluating longer-term options for reliable GIS computing capacity.