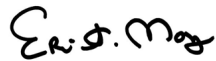


AGENDA ITEM NO. 8-B
MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
MID-MONTH STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: May 6, 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-March through mid-April 2026, in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Recruitment

Staff conducted the first round of interviews for the Finance Manager position in March and hope to make a selection within the next couple of weeks. Interviews for the Administrative Assistant position in Operations and Maintenance are scheduled to occur in late March/early May.

Staff are also proposing a new Special Uses Coordinator position for Board approval at the May meeting, with the hopes of beginning recruitment before the fiscal year-end.

2. Training

The following training was attended during this period: LCW Labor Relations roundtable and Hacking HR How to Create Your HR Operating System.

3. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Financial Audit

There is no update since last month as the auditor continues work on both the regular and single audits (required because of federal funding received for the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Project). Staff will provide audited financial statements once completed.

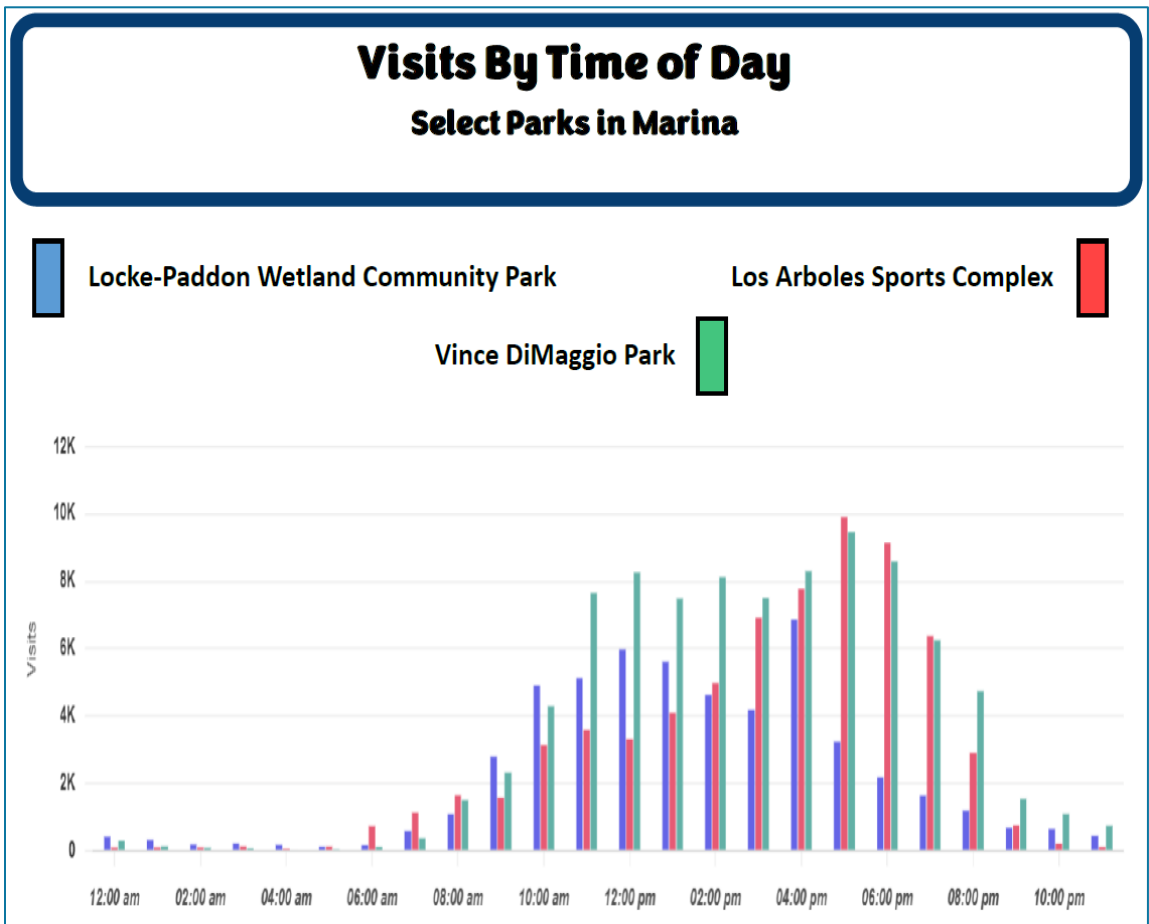
4. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget

Staff met with the Personnel and Finance Committees to discuss various items in the budget and will be meeting with the Citizen Oversight Committee to review the draft CFD budget. The budget hearing for FY2026-27 will be held on June 3.

5. 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 over the last several months 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 are sharing visitor metrics for three parks in the City of Marina in which the MPRPD was integral in establishing: Vince DiMaggio Park, acquired by MPRPD in 1979, Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park with the first lots acquired in 1979, and Los Arboles Sports Complex constructed with MPRPD funding assistance in 1982.

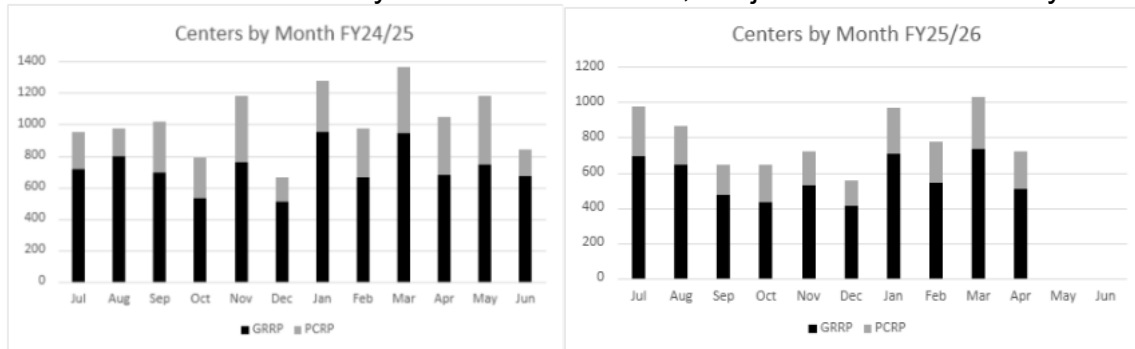


ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION

1. Community Outreach

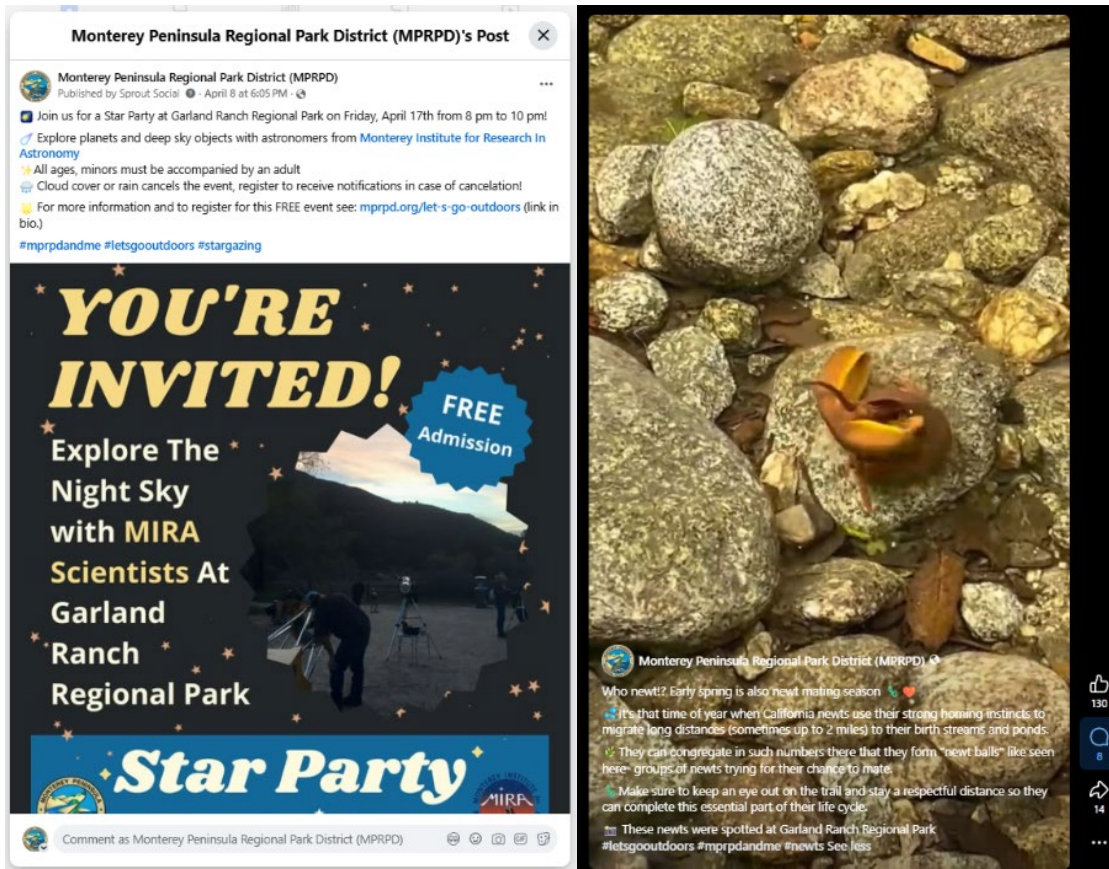
a. Visitor and Discovery Center Totals

Recording of visitor contacts at the Palo Corona Discovery Center (DC) and the Garland Visitor Center (VC) is ongoing. We have maintained extended visitation days since April 2024. The DC is open Friday – Sunday, and the VC is open Thursday – Sunday. Both centers are open from 10am – 4pm and continue to be open during the Monday holidays. The DC is open for additional days on an ad hoc basis, subject to staff availability.



b. Social Media Posts

Facebook stats		
	@MPRegionalParkDistrict @PaloCoronaRegionalPark @garlandranchregionalpark	
Followers on April 16	8,722	+140 from last month
Total Impressions	71,998	+1.9% from last month
Top 3 posts	Apr 08: Star Party	33,898 impressions 1,186 engagements
	Mar 25: Newts	9,905 impressions xx engagements
	Apr 12: CCC work	5,765 impressions 285 engagements
Instagram stats		
	@mprpd_lgo	
Followers on April 16	2,167	+30 from last month
Total Impressions	26,584	-62.8% from last month
Top 3 posts	Mar 25: Newts	7,487 impressions 327 engagements
	Mar 26: CWD	2,824 impressions 94 engagements
	Apr 08: Star Party	1,169 impressions 92 engagements



c. **ENewsletter**

Staff worked with public relations consultants at Spoke to produce the monthly e-News. The March e-News featured: promotions for the 50th Anniversary JPA Celebration, Marina and Seaside Earth Day, Wonders of Wildlife, and a recap of CCC work. The e-News also shared upcoming volunteer and LGO! Events.

d. **California Wildlife Day**

Over 1,200 community members visited Palo Corona Regional Park on Sunday, March 29 to enjoy “Nature in the Balance” themed environmental and cultural presentations, exhibits, walks, activities, and festivities. MPRPD and co-hosts Carmel River Watershed Conservancy worked with 20 volunteers and over 35 organizations to make this event possible.



From top to bottom: Opening presentation and cultural presentation introduction by Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, Big Sur Land Trust outreach booth, MPRPD outreach booth, and MPRPD interactive mural.

2. Education

a. Let's Go Outdoors!

Staff completed the delivery and management of the LGO! programming for the Fall 2025/Winter 2026 guide. During this season, we served approximately 1,050 participants in total, creating opportunities for community members of all ages to connect with local landscapes and build confidence outdoors.

Highlighted programs included Feel the Falls, a guided nature walk to a waterfall with time for reflection, and Tule Mat Weaving, a hands-on program exploring traditional uses of tule reeds. Programs like these are made possible through the support of dedicated staff and volunteers. Several programs were cancelled or rescheduled due to weather.

The Spring/Summer 2026 LGO! Guide was delivered to resident mailboxes the last week of March. It includes over 70 sessions with 39 unique offerings through MPRPD's registration site, plus 19 community organization camps, events, and other offerings.



Volunteer Naturalist Blake Bufford leading Tule Mat Weaving



Volunteer Claudia and a young family enjoying the Kahn Ranch waterfall on the Feel the Falls program



Cover for LGO! Guide Spring/Summer 2026

b. Interpretation

Staff work with Planning & Conservation Management staff to develop restoration and trail closure communication through digital media and short-term signage to interpret the native tree restoration at Garland Ranch Regional Park and temporary trail closure at Marina Dunes Preserve.



Restoration sign for Garland Ranch Regional Park.

3. Volunteers

a. California Wildlife Day Volunteers

Twenty (20) volunteers donated a total of ninety-six (96) hours helping prep, set up, facilitate, and clean up the California Wildlife Day (CWD) on a perfect weather day at Palo Corona Regional Park. Approximately 1,200 participants attended this 4-hour event.

CWD Volunteers were Amelia Craig, Angus Jansen, Barbara Barrett, Bruce Merchant, Cath Farrant, Mary Dainton, Claudia Galvan, Daniel Lee, Jackie Nelson, Jordan Goldman, Mark Laycox, Marty Tweed, Pat Herro, Shannon Mandel, Sam Ross, Sharon Osgood, Steve Ibrahim, Tempe Wennerholm, Toni McDaniel, and Vicky Thomas.



Volunteers and Staff at the California Wildlife Day event.

b. **LGO! Program Volunteers**

Volunteers led or facilitated the following LGO! Programs and hikes during this reporting period: Solar System Stroll, San Jose Creek Hike, Snively Ridge Hike, Kahn Ranch Waterfall Walk, and Beginning Birding at Laguna Grande. Leaders and facilitators included: Claudia Galvan, Patty Armstrong, Mary Dainton, Cath Farrant, Steve Ibrahim, Sharon Osgood, and Andea Eisler.

c. **Special Tours and School Fieldtrip Volunteers**

Volunteer Vicky Thomas assisted staff with a tour of the Discovery Center and hike for a group of 20 students.

d. **Visitor and Discovery Center Volunteers**

Volunteers Deb Kramer, Jordan Goldman, Mark Laycox, Shannon Mandel, Laurie Benner, Jon Benner, Barbara Barret, Rebecca Law, Coral Amende, Eric Hartwell, Meagan Morales, Tim Wilson, Marikay Levalley, and Amelia Craig, greeted and guided visitors at the Palo Corona Discovery Center and Garland Visitor Center. Tempe Wennerholm greeted visitors at the Palo Corona Trailhead.

e. **New Volunteers**

James Folliard began training with staff at the Garland Visitor Center, and Riley Guttadauro and Alisha Kopplin joined the Western Snowy Plover monitoring team at Marina Dunes Preserve during this reporting period.

f. **Weekend Weed Warriors**

Staff supported the Planning & Conservation Management staff by providing promotion via newsletter and social media. Five volunteers attended our Weekend Weed Warriors event on Saturday, April 11th at the Garland Ranch Regional Park Native Plant Arboretum.

4. **Partnerships and Training**

a. **Western Snowy Plover Guardian Outreach Booth at MDP**

Volunteers Barbara Barrett, Rebecca Law, Bruce Merchant, and Jennifer Smith, joined California State Parks, Amanda Preece at the entrance of Marina Dunes Preserve (MDP) on Friday, March 20 to talk to visitors about the Western Snowy Plover. The team contacted 36 visitors, including 6 on e-bikes on the street and 8 dogs on leash during their 2-hour afternoon outreach event.



Volunteers and Amanda Preece with California State Parks at outreach booth at Marina Dunes Preserve Trailhead.

5. Special Use Permits (SUP) & MOU Events

a. MILPA – Recreational Hike (SUP)

Staff issued a special use permit to MILPA (Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement – a recipient of the MPRPD Transportation Grant) to provide access to Palo Corona Regional Park as part of their programming: “Nuestras Costas: Restoring Access and Representation to the Outdoors,” which is designed to reconnect youth and young people of color with nature, cultural knowledge, and environmental justice through a transformative outdoor experience that inspires leadership and community action. The primary audience is youth from Salinas and South County. This permit was in progress before the establishment of the interim permit fee structure.

b. MEarth – Educational Hike (SUP)

Staff issued a special use permit for MEarth to access Garland Ranch Regional Park to provide a guided nature walk for the Community Partnership for Youth. This permit was in progress before the establishment of the interim permit fee structure.

c. Year in Nature Development Program – Youth Trail Run (SUP)

This permit provided access to a youth trail run for a competitive, community race at Garland Ranch Regional Park on April 12, 2026. There were 120 participants under 18 that participated in either a 1-mile or 3.2-mile circuit. This permit was in progress before the establishment of the interim permit fee structure.



d. **Big Sur Land Trust – Race for Open Space Trail Run (SUP)**

Staff continues to process a trail run special use permit for a competitive, fundraising race at Palo Corona Regional Park for May 9, 2026. There are expected to be 500 participants of all ages that will participate in various races between 1-mile to 35-kilometer circuit. This permit was in progress before the establishment of the interim permit fee structure.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE DIVISION

Frog Pond Brushing for Ranger Access

Ranger staff recently completed some minimal trail brushing within the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve to allow for continued Ranger access for monitoring of trespass and other illegal activity. TAMC's FORTAG Project continues to progress, with the FPWP reopening date scheduled for October 2026.

1. Trails Maintenance and Management Training

Three members of the Ranger staff attended Basic Trails: Maintenance and Management Program Training the week of April 27 in Scotts Valley, CA. This course teaches the basic principles of trail layout, design, construction, and maintenance. Subsequent offerings in this training series include intermediate and advanced courses, budgeting, and rigging.

2. Maple Canyon Trail Repair Project

A large oak tree recently uprooted at Garland Ranch Regional Park, significantly damaging the fill slope along the lower segment of Maple Canyon Trail. Ranger staff utilized native rock and soil stockpiled from a previous project to fill the void, reestablish the trail tread, and rehab the area.



3. Dedampierre Parking Lot Resurfacing Project

Staff is preparing to release the Request for Bids for the Dedampierre Park FEMA project next month, after receiving confirmation from CDFW that the project is not subject to lake and streambed alteration notification requirements. This project includes replacing 375 cubic yards of material lost during the 2023 winter flood event and installing new parking bollards around the perimeter and overflow lot.

4. Youth Trail Race at Garland Park

The inaugural Youth Trail Race event at Garland Ranch Regional Park on April 12 resulted in no incidents or injuries. However, Ranger staff documented a few changes that will need to be made to improve event logistics and coordination next year (assuming the event is proposed).



5. Interviews for Ops Administrative Assistant

Panel interviews for the Operations and Maintenance Administrative Assistant were conducted on April 28. Five candidates were interviewed, after which the top candidate was selected and made a conditional job offer. This is a part-time position that will report to the Supervising Ranger and be stationed at the Garland Park Ranger Station.

6. Garza's Canyon Trail Bridge Decking Replacement

Ranger staff recently replaced the redwood decking on the lower permanent footbridge along Garza's Canyon Trail, after receiving reports and then confirming that the decking was beginning to fail and posed a safety hazard. A Gabilan Crew helped hike-in the pre-cut deck boards to the project site.



7. Floodplain Project Phase 2 Support

With phase 2 of the floodplain project underway, Ranger staff assisted with preparations including trailer and equipment relocation, fence removal, tree identification, and site security. Ranger staff will continue to contribute throughout the project to ensure long-term sustainability and maintainability.

8. New Operations and Maintenance Trucks

The new trucks approved for purchase by the Board were delivered on April 7. Staff has ordered lumber racks, tool boxes, and installed MPRPD decals on each new vehicle. These trucks will soon be in service, and the Ford F-150s will be sent to auction. Ranger staff thanks the Board for their support!



9. New Mailbox at Garland Park Admin Entrance

The mailbox utilized by staff at the administrative entrance to Garland Park was recently destroyed by an unknown vehicle. Ranger staff replaced the mailbox and is attempting to locate the party responsible.



Old Mailbox



New Mailbox

10. Seasonal Mowing and Brushing

The unusual weather patterns this season have made it challenging for staff to schedule the seasonal mowing and brushing on District lands. Seasonal mowing and brushing is currently underway, however, there is a good chance a second round will be needed due to early season heat waves and late season rains.

11. Seasonal Footbridge Installation at Garland Park

Ranger staff installed the seasonal footbridges along the Carmel River with the assistance of People Ready laborers, since the timing of installation did not align

with the Gabilan Camp's training month. The planks across Garza's Creek were also installed with the assistance of People Ready.



Carmel River Footbridge



Garza's Creek Crossing

PLANNING & CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION

1. Palo Corona Regional Park

- a. **Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project:** Phase 2 of the floodplain restoration project commenced on 4/20/26. See Report 8C-Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Phase 2 Construction Progress for more details.
- b. **Goat Grazing Pilot Project:** The District reached a new milestone this month with MPRPD's direct-contracted targeted grazing pilot project. On April 16, 2026, the District's selected contractor, Star Creek Land Stewards, began grazing operations on 8.5 acres of annual grassland surrounding Pond 6 at the Rancho Cañada Unit. By utilizing grazing as a low-impact alternative to mowing, staff can effectively reduce hazardous fuels and suppress invasive weeds like hemlock and thistle in a way that is specifically tailored to protect the federally threatened California red-legged frog and its sensitive upland habitat.



Goats grazing in an enclosure around the Palo Corona Regional Park Entrance Road and Pond.

- c. **Rancho Cañada Village Development Coordination:** Staff continue working with the property owners of the adjacent Rancho Cañada Village housing development to facilitate the design of underground water and sewer pipelines serving that development, portions of which will be constructed on District property, and to coordinate the drafting of easements over District property with Cal Am Water and the Carmel Area Wastewater District. This work also includes notification to the state agencies that funded the acquisition of the property to ensure the proposed easements are consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant funding.
- d. **Conservation Grazing Program:** Following the release of the Conservation Grazing Lease Request for Proposals (RFP) in February, staff completed a rigorous selection process and found Renz Livestock to have submitted the most qualified and responsive proposal for the new conservation grazing lease that begins July 1, 2026. A Notice of Intent to Award the lease to Renz Livestock was issued on April 14, 2026, and award of the lease is scheduled for Board consideration at the upcoming May 6 meeting. To ensure the grazing program continues to be informed by quantitative ecological data, spring grassland diversity monitoring through Jodi McGraw Consulting is being completed via surveys in 30 paired plots to evaluate native plant populations and overall grassland health, which will directly guide grazing and other resource conservation activities at the property.



Jodi McGraw Consulting conducting grassland vegetation monitoring transects at Palo Corona Regional Park.

- e. **Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan:** To secure an Incidental Take Permit under the Endangered Species Act for operations and restoration at the Rancho Cañada Unit, the District is developing a Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP). On February 11, 2026, the District submitted the administrative draft of the LEHCP, along with supporting environmental and cultural resource documentation, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for initial review. Staff and the District's consultant, SWCA Environmental Consultants, met with USFWS staff to walk through the proposed covered activities, species protections, and the overall conservation strategy to ensure the draft meets all federal permit issuance criteria before moving toward formal submittal and public review.
- f. **Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) Monitoring and Compliance:** PCM staff recently completed the second round of required pond surveys at Palo Corona Regional Park to maintain compliance with the District's Safe Harbor Agreement and forthcoming Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan. In coordination with Denise Duffy & Associates (DD&A), these surveys track the health of the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog. This fieldwork also provides staff with the necessary hours to secure their own federal recovery permits for federally protected species handling building the internal expertise and qualifications needed to lead species conservation and management efforts.



Federally protected California Tiger Salamanders were captured during pond surveys at Palo Corona Regional Park.

- 2. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve: CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant:** Staff drafted and submitted a concept proposal for the CAL FIRE FY 2025-2026 Forest Health Program (Prop 4) grant program for "The Monterey Pine Forest Resiliency Project.", requesting \$7.5M. Requested funds would be to help fund forest health work at JSMPP, including: drafting a comprehensive Forest Management Plan, conducting biological surveys, and implementing large-scale forest health and resiliency projects within JSMPP over the next 5 years. If the concept proposal is selected, then MPRPD would be invited to submit a full grant proposal over subject to feedback and guidance form the review panel for their consideration for funding.

Marina Dunes Preserve

- a. **Coastal Dunes Restoration and Enhancement Project:** Restoration at Marina Dunes Preserve, a former sand mine, continues through mitigation partnerships with PG&E and MST. This month, staff cleared invasive iceplant along the North Access Beach Trail to reclaim habitat for the endangered Smith's blue butterfly and rare Monterey spineflower. The team utilized a "biological mulch" technique, leaving treated iceplant as a natural windbreak to stabilize dunes and support native recruitment. However, managing this fragile area remains challenging; staff found a recently completed restoration project was vandalized where trespassers moved and piled stabilization materials and trampled new Smith's blue butterfly host plant plantings. Staff suspect misguided volunteerism by individuals believing materials were trash. In response, staff are developing signage to notify the public they are in closed area that is undergoing restoration and subject to citation.



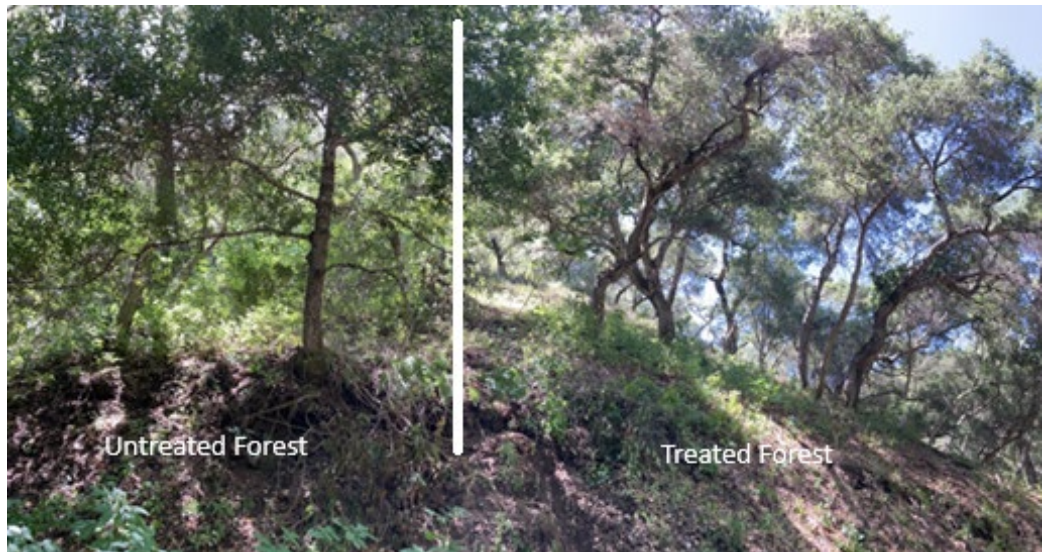
Burlap sand dune stabilization and restoration materials moved and piled by trespassers in a closed area of the preserve.

3. Garland Ranch Regional Park

- a. **Garland Ranch Regional Park Defensible Space Project:** The California Conservation Corps completed creation of defensible space around the Garland Ranger Station, the historic Cooper Barn, and separate building complex at Kahn Ranch. This work involves thinning dense vegetation along key access routes and structure slowing the spread of potential fires and ensures firefighters have a safe path to move equipment during an emergency. Every acre treated is first surveyed by qualified biologists, ensuring our fire-readiness work at the park avoids impacts to sensitive plants and animals.



Before and after photos of defensible space thinning adjacent to the Rancho Loop Trail at Garland Ranch Regional Park.



A single photo of the Kahn Ranch defensible space, showing tret forest to the right and untreated forest to the left.

- b. **Robinson Canyon Road Bridge Scour Tree Mitigation Project:** Following the District's issuance of an Encroachment Permit in Fall 2025, the planting phase was completed this month in the Carmel River floodplain at Garland Ranch Regional Park. County contractors installed 52 native trees, including 45 black cottonwoods and 7 coast live oaks, across a 0.35-acre area, with each tree secured by protective browse fencing. A benefit of this agreement is the long-term stewardship involved; the County is responsible for all watering and monitoring over a five-year establishment period. This partnership allows the District to enhance the riparian forest along the river using external resources, ensuring these native trees thrive as part of a healthy, biodiverse river corridor.



A black cottonwood planted at Garland Ranch Regional Park

4. **Sudden Oak Death Bio Blitz:** MPRPD hosted a Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz station at the Palo Corona Discovery Center (4860 Carmel Valley Road) from April 18–21, 2026, as part of the statewide 2026 SOD Blitz citizen science survey program. Volunteers completed a one-hour online training at sodblitz.info, then collected bay laurel leaf samples to map disease distribution across the region. SOD is a serious exotic disease threatening tanoak and oak species in coastal California forests, and timely detection on bay laurel leaves — which serve as a key host — is critical to enabling proactive management. Results will contribute to regional distribution maps and a broad genetic screening effort to detect a new, more aggressive variant of the pathogen already confirmed in the Bay Area.

MPPRPD's participation supports both community education and early detection efforts relevant to park forest health.