MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: August 2, 2023

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Lew Bauman, Ph.D, P.E. Interim 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-June through mid-July 2023 in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. New Interim General Manager

On 7/13/23 the District Board of Directors appointed Dr. Lew Bauman to serve as interim General Manager for Dr. Rafael Payan until his return from leave of absence. Administration staff and the District team worked to integrate Dr. Bauman to the agency and help him get acquainted with District projects.

2. FEMA – Winter 2023 Storm Damage Compilation

Administration staff & Operations staff continue working on FEMA damages reporting requirements. Staff generally meet weekly with FEMA staff to review progress and answer questions from FEMA.

Admin and Ops staff are currently developing Scope of Work items for bidding and proposal solicitations through the District's online eprocurement platform on OpenGov. These Scopes of Work are expected to be presented to the Board at the August 2, 2023 meeting.

3. Laguna Grande Regional Park JPA

The cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD comprise the park's Joint Power Authority (JPA). The team continues to meet to discuss opportunities to enhance the park. In June and July, JPA parties approved resolutions adopting the park's Trail and Maintenance Strategy Project Mitigated Negative Declaration and Monitoring and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and the Trail and Maintenance Strategy Plan.

4. Training

Staff participated in the following training during the month: Fire Extinguisher Safety Training from the CJPIA; Embracing Generational Diversity and Succession Planning by LCW.

5. Year End Audit

Staff are reviewing FY22-23 activity and preparing documents for the annual financial audit. The bulk of audit activities generally run from July through December/January.

6. Palo Corona's Project-B Construction in General

Trenching for the permanent PG&E line and transformer began on June 5. A biologist from SWCA Environmental Consultants, and a tribal monitor were on-site for the trenching project. The next phase of permanent power service work will be performed by PG&E. Construction has been approved by PG&E, but no start date has been provided.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO)

1. Community Outreach

A. Master Gardeners

Staff and volunteers met with staff from Monterey Bay Master Gardeners to discuss partnering for monthly gardening days and programming in the Garland Arboretum and Native Plant Garden.

B. Social Media Posts (June 15-July 15):

For this reporting period, posts consisted of District news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming, a call for LGO! instructors, Carmel Valley Fiesta Days promotions, snowy plover education/dogs on leash at MDP (posts and video), a hot weather safety tips video, a Fourth of July safety reminders video, volunteer outreach, and educational content about the flora and fauna of MPRPD parks.

The following of MPRPD social media accounts grew in June-July.

- i. Facebook stats @MPRegionalParkDistrict (1) Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) | Carmel CA | Facebook
 - **1.** July 15 Follower Count: 2,252 (+10)
 - 2. Facebook Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 7,302 (↓ 80.6%)
 - **3.** Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (June 15–July 15):
 - June 28: GRRP California kingsnake (2,726 reach) (78 likes/reactions)
 - **b.** June 25: LGO! program promotion: How to Become a Field Naturalist (2,942 reach) (62 likes/reactions)
 - **c.** July 15: MPRPD outreach booth at upcoming Carmel Valley Fiesta Days weekend (2,175 reach) (49 likes/reactions)
- ii. Instagram stats @mprpd_Igo: Monterey Peninsula Parks (@mprpd_Igo) Instagram photos and videos

- **1.** July 15 Follower Count: 1,274 (+10)
- 2. Instagram Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 2,768 (û 73.3%)
- **3.** Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (June 15 July 15):
 - June 21: Summer solstice/bobcat video at PCRP (1,902 reach) (124 likes/reactions)
 - b. June 28: GRRP California kingsnake (362 reach) (38 likes/reactions)
 - **c.** June 24: Snowy plover nesting season information/dogs on leash at MDP awareness (346 reach) (36 likes/reactions)



Reserve your spot today for the How to Become a Field Naturalist: Earth & Water session next Saturday!

Earn how to keep a field notebook and about the local natural history of the Central Coast in this FREE program! This session will cover topography, geology, weather, climate, and hydrology.

Saturday, July 1st from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

●Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center

Registration required! Ages 13 and up.

• Find more info, and register for this FREE program here: https://secure.rec1.com/.../monterey-peninsula.../catalog (link in bio.)

Background image of a sketched landscape drawing with a pond and the above event information.

#mprpdandme #letsgooutdoors #carmel #carmelvalley #carmelbythesea #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereyevents #naturalist #nature #education #geology

How To Become A Field Naturalist

Earth & Water

Learn how to keep a field notebook and about the local natural history of the Central Coast in this FREE program!

This session will cover topography, geology, weather, climate, and hydrology.

Ages 13 and up.

Garland Ranch Visitor Center Saturday, July 1st 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

> Registration required: mprpd.org





! € While it's officially summer and human beach season, it's also still Snowy Plover nesting season. Make sure to share the beach with the federally protected (illegal to disturb or harass) and vulnerable Western Snowy Plover (Charadrius nivosus) this summer.

What can you do to help protect this special shorebird: keep all dogs ON leash at Marina Dunes Preserve, follow dog rules at ALL beaches, pick up & dispose of your dog's waste, keep distance, use binoculars to view fro... See more





Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)

June 17 · 🖁

₩Spectacular butterflies are enjoying the abundant habitat in Garland Ranch Regional Park!
These photos were taken at a recent volunteer enrichment event, a butterfly identification class at
Garland Ranch.

f you'd like to volunteer with us and get involved in events and volunteer enrichments like this one, click here: https://www.mprpd.org/volunteer-community-alive (link in bio.)

Did you know that Lorquin's Admiral males will perch all day to search for mates! Cottonwood trees, of which there are many at Garland Ranch, are one of the caterpillar host plants for this species, providing food and rolled leaf shelters for hungry caterpillars.

Image 1: Lorquin's Admiral (Limenitis Iorquini) butterfly at Garland Ranch, taken by Paulette Struckman. Image 2: Variable Checkerspot (Euphydryas chalcedona) butterfly at Garland Ranch, taken by Paulette Struckman.

#mprpdandme #garlandranchregionalpark #garlandranch #carmelbythesea #CarmelValley #carmelvalley #carmelriver #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereypark #wildlife #butterfly



▼Reserve your spot today for the Moon Movement and Mysteries program! Improve your
knowledge on one of the most familiar celestial bodies before the Perseid Meteor Shower arrives
in August.

**Body State Of the Most Property of the Mos

Sunday, June 25th from 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center Registration required! All ages.

Explore the moon and its motion across the sky with a local astronomer through stories, movement, and drawings at this FREE program. Enjoy a view of the daytime moon through a these people.

• Find more info. and register for this FREE program here: https://secure.rec1.com/.../monterey-peninsula.../catalog (link in bio.)

#mprpdandme #letsgooutdoors #carmel #carmelvalley #carmelbythesea #monterey #montereybay #montereycounty #montereyevents #moon #moonlight #astronomy #astronomyevent



All ages

MOON MOVEMENT & MYSTERIES

Explore the moon and its motion across the sky with a local astronomer through stories, movement, and drawings at this FREE program. Enjoy a view of the daytime moon through a telescope!

> Sunday, June 25th 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Garland Ranch
Visitor Center
Registration required
at mprpd.org



C. Visitor Center Totals

July 2023 marks one year of staff tracking visitor contacts during weekends, 10am-4pm, at both the PCRP Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). Staff are also opening both centers on holidays this summer, including Memorial Day (5/29), Juneteenth (6/19), Independence Day (7/3 & 7/4), and Labor Day (9/4). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers in June 2023.

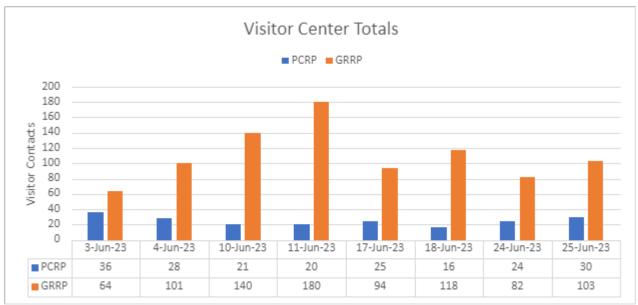


Chart 1: Visitor contacts in June 2023.

This next chart summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers at both centers during the entire 2022-23 fiscal year. The unusually high total at PCRP for March 2023 is due to the inclusion of DC visitation during the California Wildlife Day event (3/26).

Staffing the centers and interacting with park visitors is a critical component of supporting public outreach and the ranger staff. To better fulfill the ongoing demands more EECO staff and volunteers are needed.

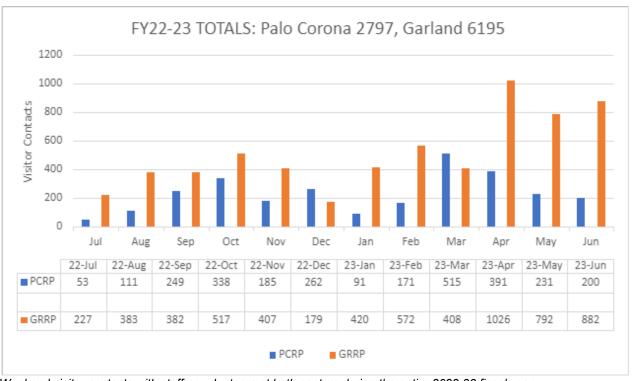


Chart 2: Weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers at both centers during the entire 2022-23 fiscal year

2. Education

A. Ventana Wildlife Society (VWS) Natural Science Discovery Camps Guided by EECO staff, VWS staff and campers (ages 8-12) enjoyed the GRRP Visitor Center and went on a tour of the arboretum and native plant garden during their 7/18 visit. The camp programs will continue their summer-long cooperation with MPRPD throughout July, visiting PCRP again on 7/24 and GRRP again on 7/31.

B. Middlebury Institute for International Studies (MIIS)

As part of a six-week undergraduate summer program for environmental science/sustainability students, staff led a hike at Marina Dunes Preserve discussing the historical and present day uses along the Monterey dunes system, conservation and restoration efforts, and projected climate change impacts. Students took part in the snowy plover protection video.



EE Coordinator, D. Wyatt, talks to VWS campers about native plants in the GRRP arboretum.



VWS campers explore and interact with the exhibits in the GRRP visitor center.

C. Scientific Illustrator Internship

Staff have hired CSUMB Scientific Illustrator intern, Adara Koivula, to create one (1) interpretive exhibit for the Palo Corona Regional Park (PCRP) Discovery Center (DC) focusing on tree species. The panel will depict seven (7) tree illustrations, with up to three (3) spot illustrations for each tree and a map. Panel size is approximately 4ft x 3ft and includes interactive and tactile elements.

3. Facilities

A. PCRP Discovery Center Exhibits

Staff are researching and developing interpretive panels related to the new 3-D topographical relief map of the Carmel River watershed, as well as a new interactive display regarding seven key trees species at the park. For the latter, MPRPD's scientific illustrator summer intern will be designing the original layout, graphics, and other special features of the exhibit.

4. Let's Go Outdoors! Guide and Programs

A. Program Updates

The Spring/Summer 2023 LGO! publication was circulated in the *Monterey County Weekly* on May 4th, which added many new participants to the programs. Feedback from recent participants has been largely positive and grateful.

B. Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Season

Staff have begun recruitment of instructors for the Fall '23/Winter '24 season. Proposals are currently being accepted.

5. Special Use Permits (SUP)

Staff are preparing several permits for a variety of uses, from filming on MPRPD lands to Car Week events and cross-country races. During this reporting period the following SUPs were issued:

A. Bean Dog Films

Filming shoot: Cameras will follow two friends enjoying walking and hiking around the vast parks and open spaces in the county. The resulting film be used by the Monterey Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).

B. California State Parks

Summer camp program: Children, ages 8-14, will access the PCPR trail system, the Carmel River, and the Discovery Center during the CA State Parks 2023 summer camp season.

C. California State University, Monterey Bay (A.J. Purdy)

Research permit: Researchers will be collecting live fuel moisture samples on MPRPD park lands to support Fire Risk mapping accuracy assessment in Monterey County, CA. Collection on Garland and Kahn Ranches and Cachagua properties will complement samples collected on the Santa Lucia Preserve to validate satellite-based estimates of live fuel moisture. The project is funded by a NASA grant through CSUMB and supports CAL FIRE pre-fire planning, as well as other long-term fuel planning for MPRPD.

D. Carmel Valley Kiwanis Foundation – Fiesta Mountain Run

This "Community Benefit Race" is scheduled for Sunday, August 6, 2023, where up to 250 trail runners are eligible to use the often rugged, steep, windy, rocky, dusty, narrow, and challenging trails of Garland Ranch Regional Park. Runners can select a scenic 7.7-mile or moderate 2.25-mile course. All proceeds are returned to the community to support youth activities, senior organizations, and high school scholarships.

E. Maribel Pictures

Filming shoot: A two-person crew with one camera and a tripod will be recording footage for a feature documentary, "Heaven through the Backdoor," at Garland Ranch Regional Park.

F. Middlebury Institute for International Studies (MIIS)

MIIS environmental science/sustainability students participated in a hike hosted by the Big Sur Land Trust from Rancho Cañada trailhead to the barn. Additional activities will include discussion of the Carmel River FREE project, the Palo Corona wetland/riparian restoration project, and an overview of other restoration projects in the Carmel Valley.

G. University of California, Davis, Sudden Oak Death and Fire Recovery Research project: In 2006 and 2007, an ecological monitoring plot network was established to examine the impacts of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) in Big Sur and the forests of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Since that time, the network of plots has seen three large wildfires (Dolan 2020, Soberanes 2016, and Basic Complex 2008). Researchers are studying the impacts of the fires on plant growth (primarily *Ceanothus* species) and soil nutrient levels.

6. Volunteers

A. Staffing the PCRP DC and GRRP VC

Volunteers helped staff the centers on the long 4th of July holiday (7/1-4) and Juneteenth (6/17-19) to augment EECO staff coverage and provide multiple points of contact during heavy visitation hours, thereby significantly reducing or eliminating any wait times/lines for visitors asking questions.

B. Trailhead Greeters

On both weekends and weekdays, some volunteers have been serving shifts at trailheads at both PCRP and GRRP for orienting visitors, relaying safety messages, and collecting feedback from trail users.

C. Facilitating Programs

During this reporting period, volunteers helped program instructors by facilitating 10 LGO! programs.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. Carmel Valley Fiesta Mountain Run

The Fiesta Mountain Run in Garland Ranch Regional Park is scheduled for August 6, 2023. Ops and EECO staff are finalizing the details on the special use permit to be issued to the event sponsor (Carmel Valley Kiwanis). Again this year, CV Kiwanis were charged a small fee to cover the cost of a District-provided portable toilet at the Mesa, and an MPRPD Ranger dedicated to the event.



Fiesta Mountain Run Course Map

2. Multi-Benefit Community Trail Repairs

Staff continues to take steps toward repairing damage to the Multi-Benefit Community Trail as a result of recent winter storms. Big Sur Marathon Foundation has agreed to contribute to the cost of the repairs, which include addressing areas of erosion and entrenchment to make the course race-ready. Staff anticipates having the repairs completed prior to the first BSMF cross-country event on September 9, 2023.

3. Frog Pond Fuel Reduction Project

Ranger staff has been coordinating and overseeing a fuel reduction project at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve within the oak woodland areas of the Preserve. Treatments include creating a shaded fuel break along the property boundary with Carlton Drive residents, and weed-whipping along the trail corridor where the trail parallels the oak woodland/willow grove interface. A licensed biologist will survey the site in advance of the project, which is scheduled to be completed by the Gabilan

inmate crew starting July 24th (assuming the crew does not get dispatched to an incident). Staff has been in communication with City of Del Rey Oaks staff, who is appreciative of the District's efforts.

4. Marina Dunes Education & Enforcement

Ranger staff has continued increased education and enforcement at Marina Dunes Preserve, particularly as we are at the peak of summer visitation. Ranger staff removed another homeless camper from the property, who was found along the southern (closed) entrance trail.

5. Rancho Canada Unit Mowing

Mowing of the Rancho Cañada Unit has taken longer than in prior years due to the requirement to observe bird nesting season and have a biologist onsite while mowing areas identified as CRLF (California Red-Legged Frog) habitat. The AMMs (Avoidance and Minimization Measures) continue to be followed during the project. Staff met with Cal Fireñññ onsite on July 21 to facilitate a site visit and discuss conditions.



Mowed areas of Rancho Canada Unit

6. Rancho Cañada Unit Pump Station Improvements

Staff is considering installation of a dedicated water storage system to serve the Rancho Cañada Unit landscape irrigation needs. This comes as the District is finding ways to minimize impacts to California red-legged frog habitat. The goal is to cease utilizing the entrance pond at Rancho Cañada as a storage feature for irrigation water. More on this in the coming months.

7. Rancho Cañada Unit Ranger Staff Office

The new "temporary" portable office trailer to be used for Ranger staff offices at Palo Corona Regional Park was delivered on June 21. Staff has begun moving furniture into the building, coordinating with IT and electrical contractors, and digging the

trench for the electrical conduit to serve the building. This unit will accommodate four additional work stations, copy machines, and a small meeting room.



Rangers Jake and Jared dig the trench for electrical service

8. MPRPD Staff Training

Ranger Staff coordinated Fire Extinguisher Training for all MPRPD staff. This training was held at the PCRP Discovery Center and provided free of charge by the District's Insurer, CJPIA.



Staff was given the opportunity to participate in a live-fire exercise

9. Trees Down

As temperatures rise, weak trees tend to dry-out and break under stress. Staff has been busy clearing down trees and branches that fell across District trails and roads, including a large branch that fell across the trail at Rancho Cañada (see pictures below). Tope's Tree Service removed a large dying pine tree that was leaning toward a neighboring property owner's home.







Dead Pine @ GRRP

10. Southbank Trail Closure

A segment of the Southbank Trail will be closed on September 15-17 for safety reasons in observance of a large special event impacting the easement.

11. Storm-related FEMA Damages

Staff continues to coordinate with our FEMA Program Delivery Manager toward addressing damages, effecting repairs, and recovering as many costs associated with the event as possible. Staff will be requesting approval to release a Request for Proposal for a multi-park road and culvert repair project at the August Board meeting. Staff continues to meet weekly with FEMA to coordinate these repairs and cost recovery.

12. Hatton Canyon Mowing

MPRPD is partnering with California State Parks to survey and mow tall grass and weeds at the District's Hatton Canyon property. California State Parks owns the

adjacent parcel and has agreed to survey their property and MPRPD's for nesting birds, in exchange for MPRPD's contractor mowing both properties.

13. Seasonal Brushing

Ranger staff utilized the Gabilan inmate crew to improve a fuelbreak at Palo Corona Regional Park paralleling the Highway 1 entrance road. A typical inmate crew offers fifteen temporary employees that are capable of operating power equipment at an extremely affordable rate.



Gabilan inmate crew brushing fuelbreak at PCRP Front Ranch

14. Dedampierre Ballfields Levy Berm

Ranger staff coordinated access for Monterey County Public Works' contractor Don Chapin to remove the temporary sandbag retaining wall along the northern levy of the Carmel River installed prior to winter flooding. The sandbags were emptied and removed, while the sand was stockpiled on site to be utilized in future years.



Don Chapin Company removing sandbags at Dedampierre Ballfields



Stockpiled sand for next flood event

15. Locke-Paddon Signs

Staff met with City of Marina staff to discuss the ongoing issue of wildlife feeding at Locke-Paddon Park. Feeding wildlife (particularly squirrels) results in burrowing and undermining of park infrastructure, including signs, picnic benches, and trails.

MPRPD provided "DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE" signage, which City of Marina staff will install at designated locations.





Ranger Joe and Dan Meachum at Locke-Paddon Park

16. Peak-season Visitation at Garland Park

MPRPD is amidst its peak season for visitation, particularly at Garland Ranch Regional Park, where visitors flock to the Carmel River for relief on hot summer days. As a result, Ranger staff installed signage prohibiting music at designated locations, prompted by multiple complaints of loud music from Bluetooth speakers. Appreciation was expressed on social media for the Rangers' efforts, which also involves very frequent visits to popular river access points to ensure people are abiding by District rules and regulations, especially on weekends.



Social media post of additional signage

17. New Trough at Fern/Sage Trail Junction

Ranger staff replaced the trough at the junction of Fern and Sage Trails at Garland Ranch Regional Park. The previous trough had developed weep holes which floods the trail and attracts yellow-jackets.



New trough at Fern/Sage Trail Junction

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

- 1. Marina Dunes Preserve Restoration Project: Staff held a kickoff meeting with Burleson Consulting to begin rolling out priority permitting and project planning activities and potential opportunities to work with Habitat Stewardship Project over FY 23-24.
- 2. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects: MPRPD staff continue to work with The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) and Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) on environmental review and permitting for Cal Fire funded fuel breaks and Coastal Conservancy funded projects on Garland Ranch Regional Park, including thinning of the eucalyptus grove near the Rancho Loop trail and a shaded fuel break along East Garzas Road. The project team is finalizing project CEQA and permit documents and expects to bring an update to the Board in September.
- 3. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project: The project team continues conversations with potential project funders and is in the process of preparing additional applications for grant funding while they continue to work on finalizing other state and federal permit applications.

- 4. Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project Plant Propagation: Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA), RANA the Cohabitat Co (RANA) and Ecological Concerns Inc (ECI) have been collecting seed and plant stock to support plant propagation and seed amplification for the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project. Collected seed is now ready to ship to seed amplification contractors that then grow crops of each species and harvest additional seed in summer 2024 and 2025.
- 5. Rancho Cañada Landscaping Irrigation Water Budget: Staff continue to work with MPRPD's concessionaire, Wedgewood Weddings, to develop an updated plan for landscaping that will ensure irrigated water consumption is under 5 acre-feet per year. Staff are currently exploring near-term opportunities to transition landscaping at the park to native landscaping and other improvements that will improve the property, user experience, and reduce ongoing operational expenses.
- 6. Laidlaw-Apte Vegetation Management Project: Vegetation and fuels reduction work at the Property began on June 14 and, as of writing this report, is expected to be completed by the end of July. The project experienced some delays due to contractor availability and equipment failure. Staff are appreciative of Cal Fire and the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District for their partnership and funding support.

7. The Multi-Benefit Community Trail

Staff continue to work with resource agencies and grant funders to develop a plan for realignment of sections of the Multi-Benefit Community trail.

8. Staff training: Drone Camp 2023: Staff attended a weeklong training that was held by the University of California and California State University focused drone equipment, hardware, mission planning, flight practice, data collection, data analysis, and applications for natural resource and environmental managers. Staff will now be seeking a Remote Pilot Certification (part 107) from the Federal Aviation Administration to begin drone usage at MPRPD.

(end of report)