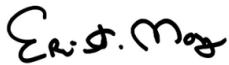


AGENDA ITEM NO. 13-B
MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
MID-MONTH STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: June 3, 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-April through mid-May 2026, in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Recruitment

Staff welcome Leigh Fitz, the new Administrative Assistant for the Operations and Management Division who started on June 2, 2026. Ms. Fitz is stationed at Garland Ranch Park Headquarters.

Staff welcome Angela Rodriguez, the new Finance Manager, who will begin her new position on June 15. Ms. Rodriguez is stationed at Palo Corona.

2. Training

The following training was attended during this period: CAPPO (California Association of Procurement Professionals) educational event - *2026 Legislative Update: What Public Agencies Need to Know*, (Hacking HR) *Mini Master Series (19 weeks)*, *AI and People Analytics*, and *AI Bootcamp* (Hacking HR) *Disability Accommodation* (California Public Employers Labor Relations Association)

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.

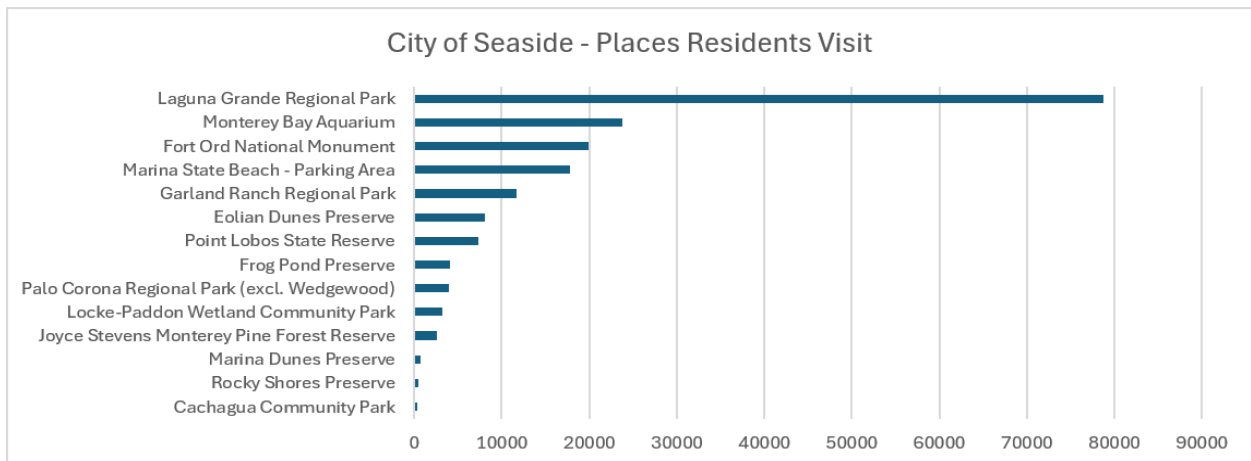
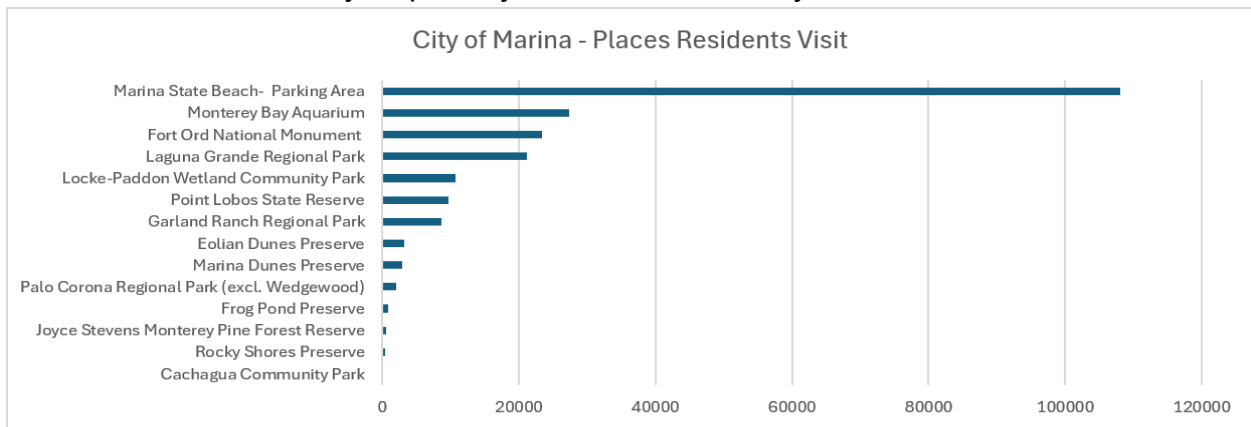
4. Data Analytics

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

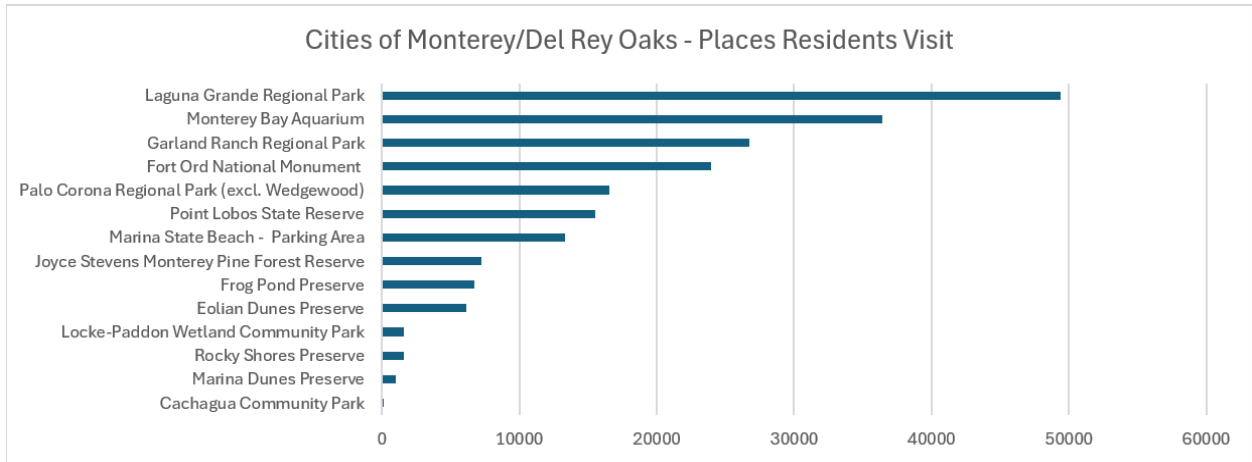
time, visitor origins, and movement patterns at real-world places. Staff have been using this tool over the last several months to generate ward profiles showing where residents choose to recreate outdoors and park profiles showing who is using various MPRPD park units, where they are from, how they 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 to help illustrate where residents of various jurisdictions like to visit. We added a few well-known attractions for comparison purposes in addition to your MPRPD park areas. Readers should be aware that the 2025 metrics below (2023 for Frog Pond) are using cell phone data to suggest visitation. Actual visitation may be quite different than what is portrayed, however, the ratios of visitors should be instructive.

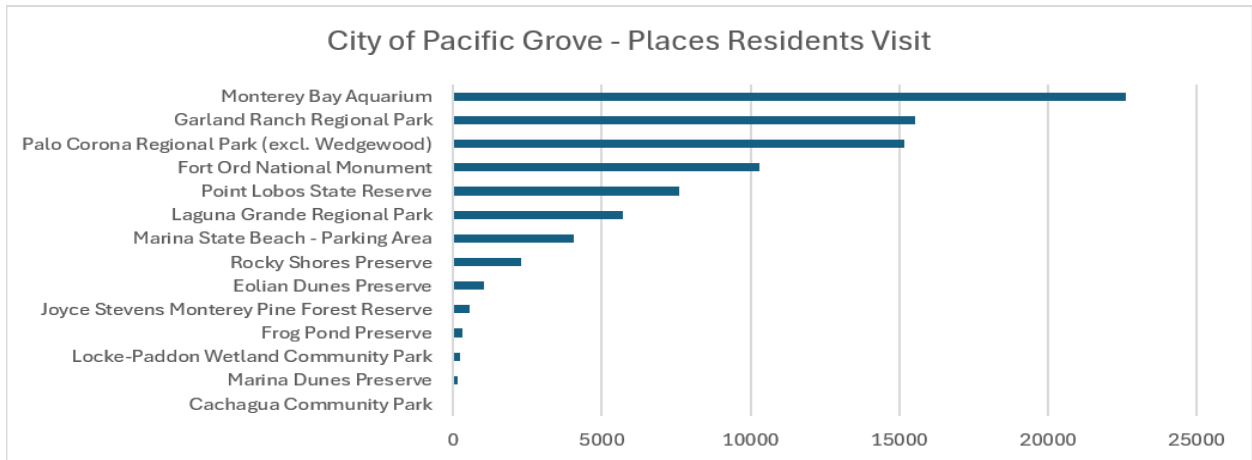
For Marina, residents headed for the beaches in 2025, and Marina State Beach was an extremely popular place they visited. Marina residents also joined Seaside/Sand City residents and utilized Laguna Grande Regional Park in Seaside/Monterey, especially to attend the weekly farmer’s market.



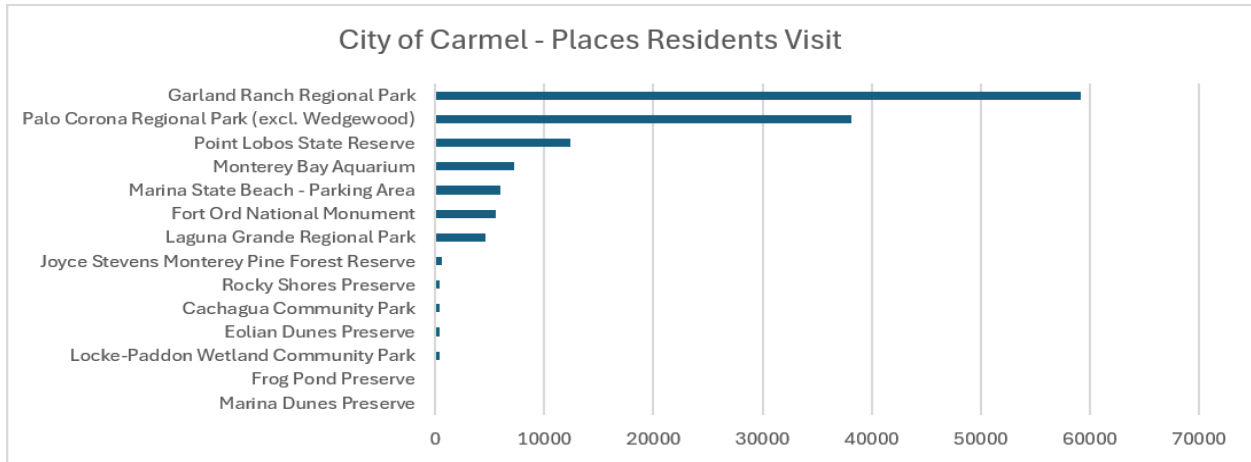
In Monterey/Del Rey Oaks, residents (especially adjacent homeowners) were frequent visitors to Laguna Grande Regional Park. They enjoyed Garland Ranch Regional Park in sizable numbers.



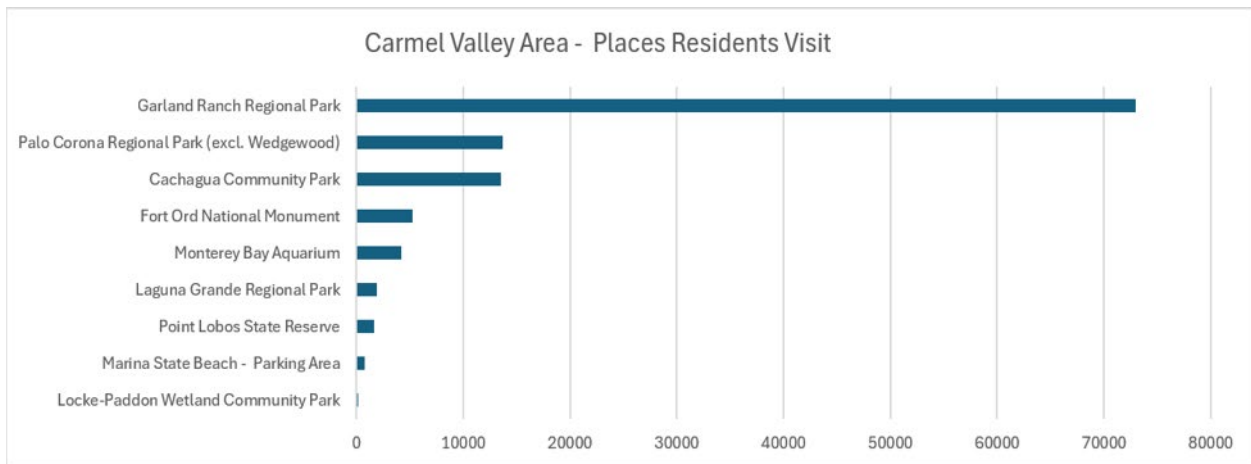
In Pacific Grove, residents showed their love for the Monterey Bay Aquarium at sizable numbers. Residents also traveled up Carmel Valley to Garland Ranch Regional Park and Palo Corona Regional Park in significant numbers.



Residents of the City of Carmel also traveled up Carmel Valley to visit Garland Ranch Regional Park and Palo Corona Regional Park. These residents contributed significant visitation to both parks in the valley.



Carmel Valley residents clearly favor Garland Ranch Regional Park over Palo Corona Regional Park. Many live within walking distance of trail access points and visit daily. Their visitation rates are comparable to Seaside residents' use of Laguna Grande Regional Park.

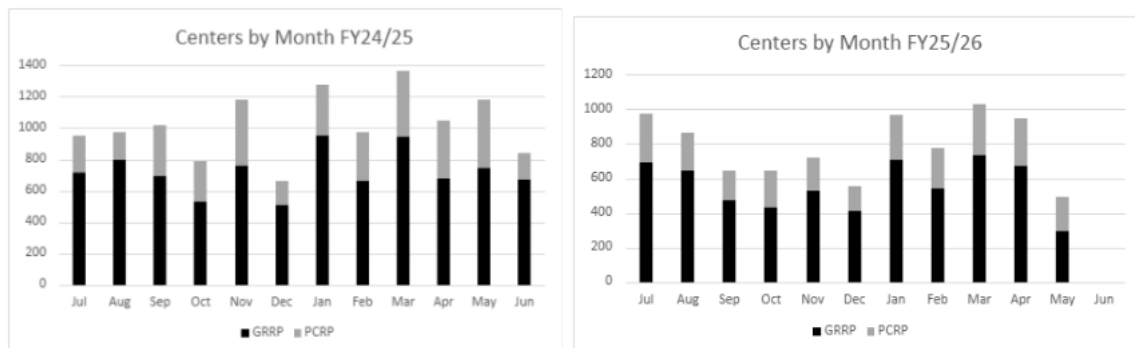


ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION

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.



Social Media Posts

Facebook stats	@MPRegionalParkDistrict @PaloCoronaRegionalPark @garlandranchregionalpark	
Followers on May 16	8,840	+117 from last month
Total Impressions	64,425	-14.3% from last month
Top 3 posts	Apr 17: Floodplain Restoration	24,736 impressions 1,224 engagements
	May 2: Rumsen Storytelling	8,594 impressions 327 engagements
	May 2: Seasonal Footbridges	7,162 impressions 308 engagements
Instagram stats	@mprpd_lgo	
Followers on May 16	2,215	+47 from last month
Total Impressions	13,511	-49% from last month
Top 3 posts	Apr 16: Orchids	1,236 impressions 95 engagements

	May 2: Seasonal Footbridges	978 impressions 91 engagements
	May 2: Rumsen Storytelling	1,931 impressions 84 engagements

c. ENewsletter

Staff worked with public relations consultants Spoke to produce the monthly e-News. The April eNews featured: recaps of special events like Earth Day and California Wildlife Day, article on the Wonders of Wildlife, and upcoming volunteer opportunities. The eNews also shared upcoming events that might impact visitors, such as seasonal mowing, field trips, and the Race for Open Space.

d. Marina Earth Day Apr. 18

Staff and volunteers supported the 20th annual Marina Earth Day event on Saturday, April 18 at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park by providing educational outreach booth and coordinating sign-in for service activities. The MPRPD outreach booth featured park history from the District perspective and ways to engage with our programs. The event was attended by hundreds of community members and tens of organizations who support our environment.



Holly, Sam, and Toni answer questions at the Marina Earth Day event.

e. **JPA 50th Anniversary Celebration Apr. 19**

Staff and volunteers co-sponsored the 50th Anniversary of the Laguna Grande Regional Park Joint Powers Agency (JPA) and participated in the Seaside Earth Day Celebration on Sunday, April 19th at Laguna Grande Regional Park. The MPRPD outreach booth featured park history from the District perspective, importance of the JPA partnership, ways to engage with our programs, and provided a cordage making workshop hosted by volunteer, Blake Bufford. Other learning opportunities that were provided throughout the events included a nature walk, a birding walk, multiple environmental groups, public works groups from both Seaside and Monterey, and remarks by city and District representatives.



Left: Community members view historical interpretive materials of Laguna Grande. Right: Adele Swing interpreting a historical map with a community member.

2. **Education**

a. **K-12 Education Programs**

Staff led three school programs during this reporting period.

Approximately twenty (20) students from Monterey Bay Charter School participated in a habitat hike to Animas Pond at Palo Corona Regional Park led by Staff. Along the hike, students learned about the park's habitats, land history, and the role of MPRPD. Students also carried backpacks during the hike as preparation for an upcoming backpacking trip through Monterey Bay Charter School.

As part of MPRPD's MOU agreement with the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Two (2) Staff and two (2) Volunteers provided a habitat hike for the Watershed Guardian museum program at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Eighty-four (84) students from San Benancio Middle School hiked the park's lower trails while learning about the Park's various habitats, while museum staff conducted water sampling activities with students at two locations along the Carmel riverbed.

Seventeen (17) students from Main Street Middle School participated in a school program in collaboration with the UC Santa Cruz MESA Program (Math Engineering Science Achievement). Four (4) staff members led students on a habitat hike, visitor center exploration, and wildlife adaptation activity. During this activity, students used critical thinking skills to investigate specimen samples and determine which habitats the organisms were best adapted to based on their traits.



*[Left] Students posing for a photo at the Mesa trail sign.
[Right] Megan talking about the river habitat along her hike.*

b. Let's Go Outdoors!

The Spring/Summer 2026 guide and programs have served over 280 participants during this reporting period. Programs featured: Rumsen Storytelling, Star Party, Palo Corona Backcountry hike, and more. Two programs were cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.



Palo Corona Back Country Hike led by Volunteer Andrea Eisler and helped by Steve Ibrahim, Brett Ritchie, and Susi Diallo.



Over 150 participants attended our most recent Star Party event.

3. Volunteers

a. Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

On Saturday, April 25 MPRPD staff and board recognized 51 volunteers who helped us preserve our open spaces, inspire positive & meaningful relationships with nature, and create a healthier community. The luncheon event gave staff and volunteers an opportunity for social interaction and to enjoy each other's company in an atmosphere of gratitude and giving

thanks. During the event, our staff recognized the 3,500 hours of service our volunteers contributed to MPRPD over the past year.



Volunteers, staff, and board representatives at the recognition event.

b. Education Volunteers

Education Volunteers assisted staff with two school programs serving 114 students from MESA and PG Museum. Volunteers assisting staff were Claudia Galvan, Andrea Eisler, Bruce Merchant

c. LGO! Program Volunteers

Volunteers led or facilitated the following LGO! Programs and hikes during this reporting period: Star Party, Hike Vasquez Knob, Beginning Birding in Laguna Grande, Best of Garzas Canyon, Awe Walk, Palo Corona Back Country hike, Night Hike, Nature Journaling, Nature Walks, Rumsen Storytelling, Spring Wildflowers walk, Snively's Ridge hike, and a Solar System Stroll.

Volunteer leaders and facilitators include Steve Ibrahim, Pari Mohan, Andrea Eisler, Brett Ritchie, Toni McDaniel, Lois Davidson, Mary Dainton, Sharon Osgood, Susi Diallo, Rick Berg, Cath Farrant, Bruce Merchant, and Vicky Thomas.

d. New Volunteers

Staff coordinated and presented one volunteer orientation session during this reporting period. Please welcome our newest volunteer, Bill Douros.

e. Outreach Volunteers

Volunteers Toni McDaniel and Sam Ross assisted staff at the Earth Day Locke-Paddon booth in Marina, and Lois Davidson, Barbara Barrett, Rebecca Law,

Mary Dainton, and Blake Bufford helped at the Seaside Earth Day / Laguna Grande 50th Anniversary booth.

f. **Visitor and Discovery Center Volunteers**

Volunteers Laurie Benner, Jon Benner, Marikay LeValley, Eric Hartwell, Coral Amende, Shannon Mandell, Mark Laycox, Ameila Craig, Tim Wilson Meagan Morales, Jordan Goldman, Angus Jansen, Barbara Barrett, Rebecca Law, and Kathy Simpson greeted and guided visitors at the Garland Visitor Center and Palo Corona Discovery Center. Tempe Wennerholm greeted visitors at the Palo Corona Trailhead.

g. **Volunteer enrichments and training**

Staff led trainings and preparation activities for Healthy Habitats school group programming and outreach booth preparation orientation for volunteers.

h. **Weekend Weed Warriors**

The Weekend Weed Warriors gathered on Saturday May 9th near the Garland Ranch Ranger Station to pull invasive Genista also known as French Broom. Seven (7) volunteers provided their valued time to help us remove ten (10) contactor bags of Genista from the area.



Bags of Genista & volunteer Bill Douros using a weed wrench.

4. **Special Use Permits (SUP) & MOU Events**

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

Staff issued a trail run special use permit for a competitive, fundraising race at Palo Corona Regional Park for May 9, 2026. There were just over 320

participants of all ages who participated 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

1. Seasonal Brushing and Mowing

Ranger staff continue seasonal brushing and mowing at all District properties, including properties closed to public access. Ranger staff are utilizing People Ready temporary workers for assistance to complete this project. Some areas have required a second (and in some cases a third) round of mowing as a result of the early season heat waves and late season rains.



2. EECO Office Trailer Update

District staff recently met with Cal Fire representatives to discuss the fire sprinkler requirement for the EECO staff office trailer located at the Rancho Canada Unit. Cal Fire maintains that fire sprinklers are necessary, but only a residential grade system will be required (as opposed to the commercial grade system originally anticipated). Ranger staff is seeking estimates from licensed fire sprinkler installers.

3. Memorial Day Weekend Visitation

With the unofficial start of summer upon us, Ranger staff is spending much more time patrolling along the Carmel River, particularly at Dedampierre Park, where river access remains an extremely popular activity. Ranger staff is happy to report no incidents or injuries during the recent Memorial Day holiday weekend.

4. Snively's Ridge Trail Reconstruction

Ranger staff recently completed a reconstruction project along a segment of Snively's Ridge Trail, specifically between the Sky Trail junction and the Garza's Canyon trail junction. Historically, this segment has suffered from significant entrenchment, which requires regrading and drain dip reconstruction. The District has received multiple comments from the public expressing appreciation for this project.





5. **FORTAG Project Update**

Ranger staff continues to participate in the weekly construction meetings for the Fort Ord Regional trail and Greenway (FORTAG) project. The main topic of concern for the District is determining where the public is going to park, and if the Highway 218 parking turnout will be available for public use when the Frog Pond reopens in October.

6. **Carmel River Flood Study Public Workshop**

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, with support from Supervisor Daniels' office, recently hosted a public workshop at the Mid-Valley Fire Station on May 19. The purpose of this workshop was to release the findings of the recently completed Carmel River – Paso Hondo Flood Study final report. Residents from the Paso Hondo neighborhood (along with others who were impacted) were in attendance while consultants from Balance Hydrologics provided a powerpoint presentation. At the end, the public was given the opportunity to ask questions related to the flood study findings.

7. **Cachagua Fire Department 50th Anniversary**

The Cachagua Fire Department recently celebrated it's 50th anniversary by hosting an event at the Cachagua Community Park that included booths, live music, and a free BBQ lunch. Prior to the event, Ranger staff brushed and highlimbed the area, filled parking lot potholes, posted signs, and secured the entrance gates into the horseshoe pits to discourage use.

8. **Sherar Property Road Drainage Improvements**

Ranger staff recently completed significant road drainage improvements at the Sherar Property, which included regrading, outsloping, drain dip reconstruction, culvert clearing, and dissipator installation. Even though this property is closed to

public access, it serves as a critical point of communication for the Garland Park security cameras and must be maintained.



9. PCRP Detour Trail Preparations

With the start of phase two, and the goal of keeping the Rancho Cañada Unit open to the public during the project, Ranger staff completed improvements to the realigned Detour Trail, which allows the public to circumvent the floodplain project to gain access to the Palo Corona Front Ranch Unit. Ranger staff cleared, mowed, and addressed hazards along the realigned Detour Trail, which was created utilizing a former golf cart path paralleling the Carmel River between bridges four and five.



10. FEMA Project at Dedampierre

District staff is coordinating the release of the Request for Proposals for the Dedampierre Park FEMA project, intended to resurface the Dedampierre parking lot with 375 cubic yards of class two aggregate and replace the parking bollards, which were damaged or lost during the January 2023 flood event. Ranger staff will be presenting this item to the Board for consideration at the June 2026 Board meeting.

11. O&M Admin Assistant Update

Please join Ranger staff in welcoming Leigh Fitz to the team! Leigh comes to the District from California State Parks where she served as a park aide at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. She possesses valuable administrative experience and is already familiar with MPRPD properties, particularly Garland Park. Her first day on the job will be June 2.

12. Trees Down

Multiple large trees came down across District trails this month, including a large oak tree blocking Saddle Trail, a large oak tree blocking Mesa Trail, a large willow tree blocking the access trail, and a large eucalyptus blocking Rancho Loop Trail.





PLANNING & CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION

1. Palo Corona Regional Park

- a. Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project: Phase 2 of the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project is now in active construction. During this reporting period, construction fencing was completed, equipment was delivered, grading began, concrete cart paths were removed, and field coordination continued through weekly construction meetings with the project management team, biological and cultural monitors, contractors, and District staff. Staff also completed a major public access transition: the Phase 1 Detour Trail is now closed, and the new Phase 2 temporary Detour Trail is open, routing visitors safely around the construction zone and across Bridge 5 toward Southbank Trail and Inspiration Point. This required close coordination among PCM, Rangers, EECO, consultants, and contractors to update trail maps, install wayfinding signage, improve gates and brushing, and communicate changes to staff and the public. See Report 8C-Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Phase 2 Construction Progress for more details.
- b. Goat Grazing Pilot Project: The District completed its first direct-contracted prescribed herbivory pilot project at the Rancho Cañada Unit. Approximately 400 goats grazed for 10 days around Pond 6 and the entrance area, treating roughly 10 acres of dense non-native grasses. This pilot demonstrated how targeted grazing can reduce fine fuels and manage invasive vegetation in sensitive habitat areas where traditional mowing can be more disruptive.



Goats grazing at the Palo Corona Regional Park entrance plaza.

- c. **Conservation Grazing Program:** Following Board consideration of the Palo Corona Regional Park conservation grazing lease, staff continued working to prepare the District to continue grazing beyond the current lease term, which remains an important tool for grassland health, fuel reduction, and habitat management at Palo Corona.

- d. **Rancho Cañada Expansion Unit Management Plan:** Staff advanced the start-up management plan for the County and CDFW easement over the former Rancho Canada Ventures property, with CDFW and County staff indicating the draft was generally acceptable and only minor edits were needed. Staff also coordinated with Monterey County HCD on the County review process and whether approval can occur at the staff level. Staff expect to submit a final draft for review and approval in June. Once approved, the plan will allow basic stewardship activities such as vegetation management, signage, litter removal, and site maintenance while a long-term management plan is developed

- e. **CDFW Bobcat Population Monitoring Project:** Staff continued coordinating with CDFW biologists and Santa Lucia Conservancy staff on a focused bobcat population monitoring study led by CDFW in the Palo Corona Regional Park area, including adjacent conservation lands and private lands. Recent work included field scouting in the Palo Corona backcountry to identify potential wildlife camera locations, scat transect routes, and other monitoring logistics. The study would support CDFW's long-term statewide bobcat monitoring effort and improve understanding of bobcat population dynamics, movement, behavior, health, and response to human disturbance in the Carmel Valley landscape.

- f. **MPPRD Headquarters Space Planning:** Staff continued early-stage office and facility planning to better understand current and future workspace needs at District headquarters. As part of this effort, division leads held an HQ Office Space Planning Walk on May 13 to review existing workspace conditions and discuss how administrative, planning, education, and operations needs may be accommodated more effectively over time. This work supports the broader goal of assessing staff office and facility requirements and beginning conceptual planning for phased improvements at Headquarters and the Ranger Station over the next several years.

2. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve:**

- a. **CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant:** Staff concept proposal for the CAL FIRE FY 2025-2026 Forest Health Program (Prop 4) grant program for "The Monterey Pine Forest Resiliency Project." was invited to submit a full grant proposal over in late June 2026 for development of a comprehensive Forest Management Plan, conducting biological surveys, and implementing large-scale forest health and resiliency projects within JSMPP over the next 5 years.
- b. **Floristic surveys at JSMPP:** Contract biologists have begun floristic surveys at Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve in support of vegetation management fuels mitigation planning. DD&A biologist are mapping rare and special status plant population to be protected during fuel mitigation work. They are also performing survey for endangered Yadon's piperia within area previously identified as critical habitat by MOU with the USFWS.

3. **Frog Pond Wetland Preserve**

- a. **Frog Pond Fuels Reduction:** Staff advanced planning for priority fuel reduction work at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve through the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan, which allows qualifying wildfire safety work to proceed under the Governor's emergency proclamation framework. MPRPD received approval for its EPP application in May 2026 and are now applying for grant-funded California Conservation Corps support to help implement fuel reduction work by October 2026.

4. **Garland Ranch Regional Park:**

- a. **Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Project (Eucalyptus Thinning & Removal):** Staff continued advancing the State Coastal Conservancy-funded eucalyptus removal. Staff shared a draft timeline with SCC and consultant staff focused on completing design and permitting for heavy-equipment access and eucalyptus biomass off-haul before implementation in summer 2027.

5. **Locke Paddon Wetland Community Park**

- a. **Wetland and Upland Planning:** MPRPD and City of Marina staff continued coordination on the wetland and upland planning scopes presented at MPRPD's May Board meeting. Staff discussed how to advance the work in a

coordinated manner with the City, including the relationship between wetland restoration planning, upland amenity planning, future CEQA/permitting responsibilities, and potential implementation roles. This coordination is intended to help align District and City expectations before initiating the next phase of planning, environmental review, and public engagement for the park.

6. Laguna Grande Regional Park:

- a. **Laguna Grande Fuels Reduction:** Staff advanced planning for priority fuel reduction work at Laguna Grande Regional Park through the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan, which allows qualifying wildfire safety work to proceed under the Governor’s emergency proclamation framework. MPRPD received approval for its EPP application in March 2026 and Staff are now comparing the EPP requirements to permit requirements to determine if the EPP will streamline vegetation thinning at the park. Staff plan to apply for grant-funded California Conservation Corps support to help implement fuel reduction work during by October 2026.