AGENDA ITEM NO. 9-C

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD REPORT

DATE:	**November 4, 2026**
TO:	**Board of Directors**
FROM:	**Jake Smith, Planning & Conservation Program Manager**
REVIEWED BY:	**Eric Morgan, General Manager**
SUBJECT:	**Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project Monthly Progress Report**

SUMMARY

This report updates the Board on construction of the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project from late September through late October 2026, and describes work planned through late November 2026. Phase 2 construction, which began on April 20, 2026, is nearly complete. Key updates this month: shipping of the new pedestrian bridge has been delayed, and the District has set conditions under which it could still be installed this year; the State Coastal Conservancy is adding $650,000 to its grant to cover the added riverbank protection cost described in last month's report; and the District received its first advance payment from the Wildlife Conservation Board.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA.

FUNDING SOURCE

NA

REPORT

Project Background

The Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project is restoring approximately one mile of the Carmel River by reconnecting it to its historic floodplain. This multi-year project is transforming a former golf course into thriving river, wetland, and upland habitat that will:

- Support native wildlife, including threatened steelhead trout
- Help reduce flood risk by allowing the river to spread more naturally during high flows
- Create future opportunities for public recreation and outdoor learning

The project is being completed in three phases over three years. Construction of Phase 2 began on April 20, 2026.

MONTHLY CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Work Completed (Reporting Period Late September – Late October 2026)

- Biologists, archaeologists, and cultural resource monitors were on site whenever active construction occurred.
- Crews finished the rock and boulder riverbank protection at a bend in the new river channel (an area called IC-6), using the lower-cost design described in last month's report. Crews also built riffles, which are shallow, rocky stretches of stream that add oxygen to the water and provide habitat for fish, and then removed the temporary ramp used to reach the area.
- Concrete work was completed on the two supports that will hold each end of the new pedestrian bridge. The final concrete was poured at the south support on September 28 and at the north support on October 6. Crews then removed temporary steel walls that kept the work areas dry and moved the crane into position for bridge installation.
- The new bridge, which was expected to arrive October 12, has been delayed in shipping. See "Bridge Delivery Delay" below.
- Crews continued grading around the bridge supports and elsewhere in the floodplain, and began building a realigned access road at the project entrance.
- Crews began placing logs and other large wood in two floodplain areas. During high river flows, these "wood habitat structures" give fish and wildlife places to shelter.
- Planting of native plants continued across the floodplain, including on the slopes of a side channel. A nursery plant delivery arrived October 1, and a six-person crew planted through much of the period.
- In mid to late October, native seed was sprayed onto bare soil across the floodplain (a method called hydroseeding). This helps hold soil in place and establish native plants before winter rains.
- Crews loosened soil that had been compacted by construction equipment so that new plants can take root.
- Trail work continued, including grading of the new walking trails and gravel surfacing on the trail leading to the new bridge.
- The area that will be used next year to store equipment and materials for Phase 3 was leveled, and the extra soil was used at the north bridge support and the parking area.
- Crews began cleaning up the site and removing equipment, water tanks, and temporary haul roads, and checked that fuel and generator storage areas have spill protection in place.
- No work took place on October 22 because rain was forecast, at the request of the inspector who oversees the Project's stormwater runoff protections. Crews prepared the site for rain earlier that week.

- Staff led a tour of the project area on October 28 for the State Coastal Conservancy.

Upcoming Work (Late October – Late November 2026)

- Install irrigation lines to water new plantings, along with a rock trench, starting the week of October 26.
- Finish most remaining Phase 2 construction, other than the bridge. The contractor is targeting October 30, with some planting, irrigation, and seeding continuing into November.
- Finish placing the remaining wood habitat structures.
- Install the new bridge, if it arrives in time and conditions are safe (see Bridge Delivery Delay below).
- Prepare the site for winter rains and remove remaining equipment, including removing all temporary structures from the Carmel River by November 30.
- Finish installing the well pump, water tank, and related electrical and plumbing work at the former golf driving range, once equipment arrives.

Photo 1:Excavation of a new trail protection rock trench leading the Bridge 1, prior to filling with rock armoring and willow plantings.

Photo 2: New trails under construction within the restored floodplain.

Photo 3: Native seed being sprayed onto bare soil to protect it from erosion this winter.

Photo 4: Rapid growth of willow cuttings planted during phase 2 of the project.

BRIDGE DELIVERY DELAY

The new 265-foot steel pedestrian bridge is being built in Colorado by a subcontractor to the Project's construction contractor, Teichert Construction. Its delivery has been delayed several times, and it has not yet arrived. Teichert asked the District whether this work period could be extended so the bridge could still be installed this year rather than in 2027. The state and federal wildlife agencies that issued the permits have preliminarily agreed to allow work in the river through November 30. On October 26, the District agreed to a conditional extension. If the bridge does not arrive by November 11, or the District decides installation cannot be safely finished by November 30, Teichert will remove its equipment from the river and secure the site for winter, and the bridge will be installed next year during Phase 3.

PHASE 2 CONTRACT POSITION

Staff continue to track Project costs closely as Phase 2 wraps up. Once the remaining work is finished and pending contract changes (change orders) are negotiated, staff will report the final cost of Phase 2. If the construction contract needs to be amended, staff will return to the Board with a recommendation.

RIVERBANK PROTECTION (IC-6) FUNDING

Last month's report explained that the construction bid documents listed much less rock riverbank protection at one bend of the new channel (called IC-6) than the design plans required, and that the design team developed a lower-cost design to complete it. The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), one of the Project's grant funders, has reviewed the revised design and confirmed that it is starting the process to increase its grant by $650,000. This covers the estimated added cost of $250,000 to $600,000, plus a boulder trench to protect the trail to the new bridge this winter.

GRANT ADVANCE AND PROJECT CASH FLOW

The Project is paid for mainly through state grants from SCC and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). Grant payments do not always arrive at the same time construction bills are due, so staff have been working with both agencies to make sure funds are available when needed.

This month, the District received its first advance payment of $3,250,000 from WCB, equal to 25 percent of WCB's $13,000,000 grant. The District has also requested WCB's second and third advance payments, and has requested reimbursement for eligible costs it has already paid. WCB decides whether to approve each additional advance based on how quickly earlier funds are being spent. In the meantime, the District continues to pay contractor bills from SCC grant funds already on hand, and refills that account as WCB payments arrive.

The District has not needed to use the reserve funds the Board authorized last month as a backup source of cash flow, and staff will report to the Board if that changes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None.