


AGENDA ITEM NO. 5

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT BOARD REPORT

DATE: April 1, 2026
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Eric Morgan, General Manager 
SUBJECT: Presentation by Dr. Fred Watson and CSUMB ENVS 660 Students – “Locke-Paddon Wetland: Ecological History, Predictions, and Management Alternatives for the Future” (Watershed Institute Publication No. WI-2025-02)

SUMMARY

The attached [Wetland Analysis Report](#) is the final product of a pro bono, multi-month student research project conducted in Fall 2025. Supported by MPRPD, the City of Marina, and community partners (including the Locke-Paddon Citizens Group, Friends of Marina Parks, Citizens for Sustainable Monterey County, and Monterey Audubon Society), the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the wetland ecological conditions Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park.

Key sections cover:

- Ecological history (pre-1854 seasonal salt marsh conditions through modern changes).
- Current conditions and predictions (hydrology, vegetation dynamics, and wildlife trends).
- Management alternatives (five options ranging from no-action to active intervention).

Dr. Watson and his students will present the findings in person, including maps, data, and visuals, to the Board.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

FUNDING SOURCE

N/A

FUNDING BALANCE

N/A

DISCUSSION

The report documents ongoing challenges at the wetland, most notably the expansion of bulrush (and willows) that has reduced open-water areas, affecting habitat quality, aesthetics, and public sightlines. It analyzes hydrological conditions, habitat relationships for priority species (such as tricolored blackbirds), and regulatory/permit considerations for any interventions.

The students' recommended approach is selective, sustained management of bulrush and willows in targeted spatial patterns. This would maintain a balanced mosaic of younger/mature vegetation stands, cattails, open water, and native plants—improving habitat for key wildlife, enhancing public access and views, and supporting long-term ecological health. The five alternatives provide a clear decision-making framework that aligns with MPRPD's General Policy (passive recreation, habitat preservation) and the joint stewardship MOU with the City of Marina.

Staff views the report as a high-value, independent technical resource. Its findings will directly inform upcoming collaborative planning with the City (including CEQA-compliant updates to vegetation management, wetland enhancements, and other contemplated compatible community proposals). Receipt of the report formalizes its use in District decision-making and acknowledges the excellent work of Dr. Watson and the ENVS 660 students.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Board receive the report and presentation prepared by Dr. Fred Watson and graduate students from California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Department of Applied Environmental Science (ENVS 660 class).

ATTACHMENTS

[Wetland Analysis Report](#) (Locke-Paddon Wetland: Ecological History, Predictions, and Management Alternatives for the Future" (Watershed Institute Publication No. WI-2025-02))