

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: June 02, 2021

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects MPRPD's Staff undertook from mid-April 2021 through mid-May 2021 in addition to performing the District's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the CDC's recommendations and the State's and County's shelter-in-place orders.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- 1. Budget:** Staff continued to develop the draft Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget in alignment with the Finance Committee's previous direction. The final draft will be presented to the Board for review and consideration at the June 02, 2021 meeting.
- 2. Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) Sewer Line Project:** The easement agreement for this project stipulates that CAWD and MPRPD are to "coordinate all construction activities." MPRPD staff will participate in the project's pre-construction meeting to reiterate MPRPD's parameters. CAWD and the project's contractor shall finalize safety measures related to keeping the park's trail access from the Discovery Center parking area to the Carmel River open to the public during construction. Regular meetings with MPRPD's personnel shall be instituted.
- 3. Carmel Public Library Presentation:** As part of the Henry Meade Williams Local History Lecture Series, MPRPD gave a public presentation entitled: *Birds, Bees and Bob Dylan: History of our land and its restoration on the Peninsula*. The presentation was advertised on the region's PBS radio station.

Topics focused on the effects of climate change (thus, Bob Dylan and his song, *The Times They are a Changing*. Topics included MPRPD's history and past achievements, recent and future habitat restoration and scientific research projects, and MPRPD's latest strategic plan. MPRPD's goal of creating a more environmentally literate and socially inclusive society was a central theme. The remote presentation was very well received.

4. **COVID-19:** Staff continued to participate in weekly Monterey County OES COVID-19 task force meetings and carefully track the County Health Officer's orders to ensure alignment with the latest protocols. Although other California counties have moved into the "safer" Yellow Tier, Monterey County remains in the Orange tier, indicating a Moderate risk level.
5. **FEMA and Carmel Fire Recovery:** Staff met with FEMA and CalOES for a Recovery Transition Meeting. Staff have completed all steps required by FEMA for the Carmel Fire application. This meeting transitioned staff working with FEMA to working with the CalOES team. MPRPD has 18-months to complete the fence repair/replacement in the San Clemente Blue Rock area impacted by the 2020 Carmel Fire. The 18-month deadline is February 22, 2022. Staff anticipates releasing and Invitation to Bid for this project via *ProcureNow* soon.
6. **FORTAG Alignment:** FORTAG's founders, TAMC, and MPRPD staff continue to meet and discuss the proposed trail alignment. The purple alignment included Exhibit-A shows the initial concept alignment. The yellow and red sections show the revised concept alignment which may be subject to further refinement. The yellow alignment recommends a pedestrian tunnel (yellow/blue hachured) under Canyon del Rey Blvd/State Route 218 to continue the trail's vehicular traffic-free alignment.

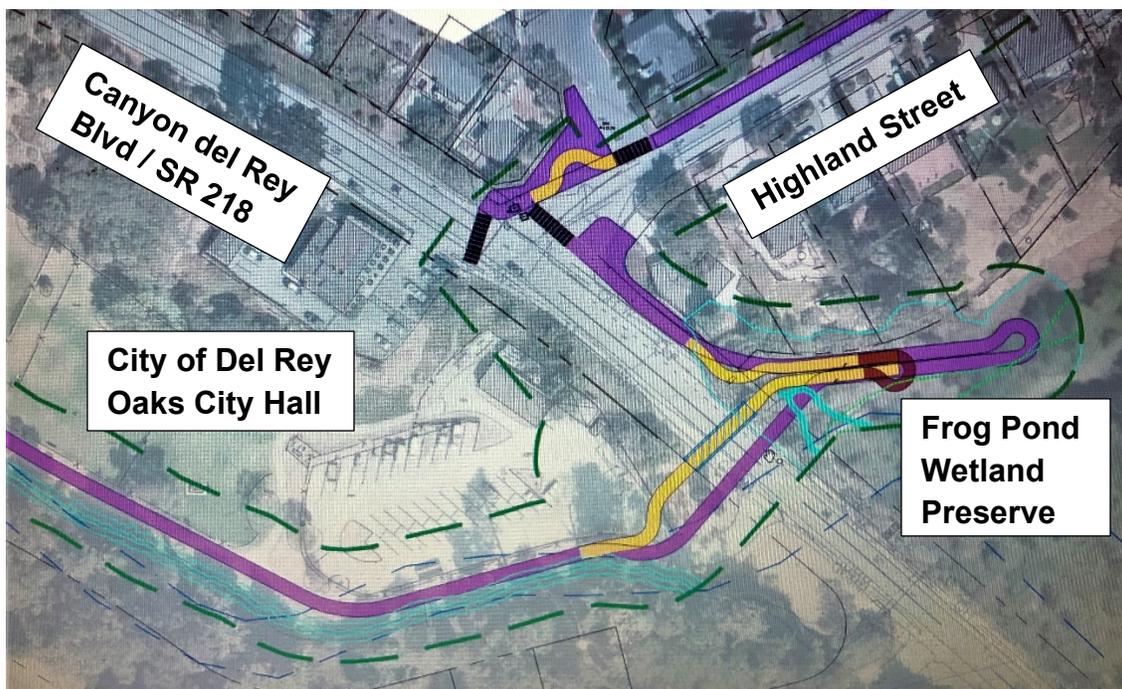


Exhibit-A: Proposed FORTAG Alignment at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve

7. **Irrigation System Master Plan:** Staff met with pre-qualified landscape architecture firm BFS Landscape Architects, and subsequently entered a contract for

development of an irrigation master plan for the Project B area, as well as the native habitat restoration area at the Rancho Canada Unit. Project B will analyze and recommend the need for numerous alterations to, or replacement of, the extant irrigation system. Operations staff will oversee this project.

- 8. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve (JSMPP):** The JSMPP Dedication Ceremony is scheduled to be held on June 21, 2021, marking the first day of summer. The on-site event will include guest speakers, planting of native plants, and the distribution of a limited number of the *Coastal California's Living Legacy – The Monterey Pine Forest* (Book). Staff will coordinate the event with the county.

Director Lee obtained Architect Stevens' revised guest list. The authors' electronic signatures will be incorporated in a card or a bookmark that can be inserted into the Book. Staff will continue to work with Director Lee and Joyce's pals for this event.

- 9. Laguna Grande Regional Park (LGRP):** In preparation for the park's trail, habitat restoration, and maintenance plan's formulation, the City of Monterey advanced the park's biotic survey. EMC Consulting Biologists initiated the survey at 10am, Tuesday, May 18, 2021. In advance of the survey, the cities coordinated and performed the site's clean-up, posting a 72-hour prior notice that the site's cleanup would take place on Monday, May 17, 2021. Thus, encampments were to be relocated prior to May 17th.

Funding for this park's enhancement is being shared by the cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD. Seaside's Council is slated to approve their portion of the LGRP budget item in May and MPRPD in June. The City of Monterey will present the entire LGRP contract to their City Council in late June or early July.

- 10. NRPA Magazine – MPRPD Contributes to Published Wildfire Article:** MPRPD co-authored an article in NRPA Magazine that focused on parks and recreation professionals across the United States protecting local lands and communities from wildfire. The article included MPRPD's proposed projects at the Rancho Canada Unit which included the proposed incident command center, maintenance building improvements that can support emergency-response crews, the dog park that can serve as an equipment storage/staging area, hydrants that may provide a source of fire-dousing water, and potential adaptive use of the banquet facilities as an emergency evacuation center or other purposes.

- 11. PARKIT! Initiative:** Under President Potter's leadership, the initiative continues to make important advancements. During a recent State Parks Commission, Commissioner Diana Wittenberg from San Marino, CA brought up the important

topic related to traffic congestion from Big Sur to Carmel. Meeting participants agreed there should be shuttles.

12. Project B: Staff continues to work with the architecture firm of Page & Turnbull, RGS Project Consultant, and the recently approved CMAS vendor to complete the project's Construction Document phase. The purchase order, approved by the Board at the May 5, 2021 meeting, was signed and returned to Romtec, committing the District to the purchase of the eight (8) accessible cabins restroom facility. Staff is now waiting for color samples to complete selections for this amenity.

13. ProcureNow System and Eprocure Portal: The new *Eprocure* portal *ProcureNow* system are now live and operating. Staff have released several solicitations. Registration for vendors is free and many have taken advantage of this new system to receive notices as soon as a solicitation is publicly released.

Vendors may ask questions and receive responses that are simultaneously available and visible to all vendors through this efficient and effective system. This eliminates the need for the traditional practice of issuing addenda related to questions and bid-related clarification/responses. This ensures all parties have the same information when developing and submitting their respective bid proposals. The *ProcureNow* system's additional advantages include allowing vendors to upload their bid proposals via the *Eprocure* portal, enable staff to evaluate proposals through the portal, and then build and maintain the contract through the portal.

14. Reroof & HVAC Replacement at RCU Administrative Building: Staff continues to work with multiple engineering firms, RGS Consultant, and the architecture firm of Ten Over Studio to complete the plan set for the reroof and HVAC replacement project at the former clubhouse complex that includes MPRPD's administrative offices, Discovery Center, and banquet facility/meeting rooms. Plans are expected to go to the County of Monterey for plan check as soon as the week of May 17, 2021.

15. Return-to-Work Procedures: Staff continued researching best management practices in advance of MPRPD instituting procedures that align with industry standards. At present, staff is exploring the formulation of a "phased-in" approach that will incorporate conservative measures in how MPRPD's functions are re-instated/reopened.

16. Training/Meetings: Staff participated in *CalPERS Employer Response Dialogue* sessions via Zoom. CalPERS provided updates regarding investment earnings, where future pension and health costs are going, and actuarial updates.

17. Water Catchment: Staff participated in a site visit from the Regional Water Management District to explore the use of grant funds to install a water catchment system at the Rancho Canada Unit's facilities. Analysis and discussion continue.

18. Wildfire Convenings: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has invited MPRPD to participate in *TNC's California Wildfire Convenings – Exploring Innovative Community Land-use Solutions* program. Staff has completed a program-related survey and will actively participate in this program.

EECO DIVISION

1. Cross Country and Fitness Course: Staff met with Big Sur International Marathon representatives and key stakeholders to discuss the next planning phases for the proposed Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's course. With no official cross country distance running course in Monterey County this "top 10" course will showcase MPRPD, the Carmel Valley and the Monterey Peninsula, and enhance the region's economy by attracting out-of-region users, especially during meets.

The course has been carefully designed to include an array of varied elevational and surface challenges. Surfaces will include small-dimension woodchips, decomposed granite, soil, and mowed native grass. The alignment continues to be vetted by advocates and course designers; MPRPD's concessionaire and staff; our habitat restoration and GIS consultants, and the Santa Lucia Conservancy. A refined, more legible plan will be presented to the Board for review and action at a later date.



- 2. Education:** Twenty seventh-grade students from All Saints Day School in Carmel Valley held one of the first organized field trips since March 2020. The five-hour program allowed students to hike to Inspiration Point and Animas Pond with stops along the way to look at various habitats. Later in May a sixth-grade class will be visiting the park.
- 3. Special Use Permits:** The University of California Davis conducted a Carmel Valley Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz. The citizen scientist-based event collected and submitted 12-samples. This is considered a sizable representation for the area. Analysis of the samples will take a few months. Analysis and findings are anticipated to be completed in October 2021.

Coordinator Kerri Frangioso sampled trails at Garland Ranch Regional Park but did not observe any symptoms of SOD in the areas she surveyed. One hypothesis is that symptoms are difficult to detect during dry years. Results from previous SOD Blitzes show that in dry years it is harder to find the pathogen than in wet years.

- 4. Staffing:** It is with great sadness and excitement that the EECO Division said goodbye to Megan Mason. She has moved out-of-state to find warmth and saguaro cacti in Tucson, Arizona. Megan's creative skills added a new dimension to the MPRPD social media platform. With an artist's eye and strong natural history knowledge, Megan elevated advertisement campaigns and interpretive displays. She created positive experiences for visitors at MPRPD's parks and was instrumental in development of online activities during California Wildlife Day and the summer Wildflower Show virtual events. We wish her the very best. Staff is now considering several options to fill the two now-vacant part-time seasonal positions.
- 5. Volunteer Newsletter:** Please check your email, the May/June 2021 Volunteer Newsletter is happily scheduled to be released in the coming days.
- 6. Wildflower Show:** Staff is preparing for the 22nd Annual Summer Wildflower Show. This virtual event will run from June 12–20, 2021. This year's theme is *Wildflowers in our Parks and Watershed Landscaping*. Volunteer alumni, Michael Mitchell will give a presentation from his new home in England, and Melinda Nakagawa is hosting a Wildflower Nature Journaling activity.

In addition to live virtual programs, there will be many informative pre-recorded sessions and family-friendly activities. Staff is preparing an educational quiz game to test your wildflower and pollinator knowledge. The game is entertaining to watch and even much more fun to participate!

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. California Coastal Trail:** Rangers continued to coordinate with the California Coastal Trail working group to identify the alignment for Segment 1, which traverses Palo Corona Regional Park from Carmel to the southern park boundary.

Backcountry tours were recently provided to members of the working group including Kelly von Shack, Mary Dainton, Steve Martin, and Paula Taylor.

- 2. GRRP Seasonal Footbridges:** All seasonal footbridges have been installed for the 2021 spring/summer season. Signs have been installed advising visitors to treat the bridges as an alternating single lane of foot traffic to allow for social distancing.

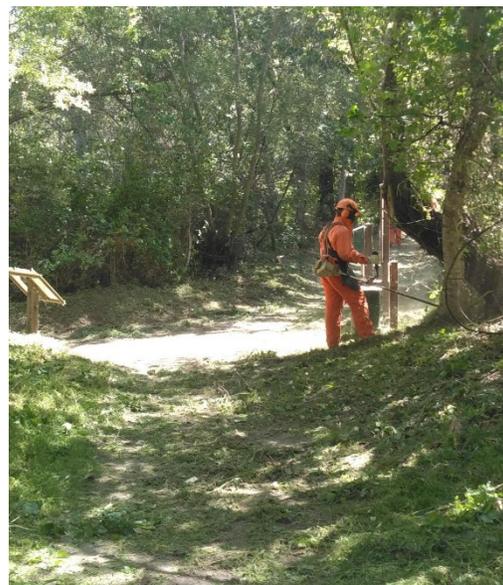


- 3. Irrigation Master Plan:** As mentioned in the Admin. Division's report, staff met with BFS Landscape Architects to kick-off an irrigation master planning process for Palo Corona's Rancho Canada Unit. This plan will analyze extant irrigation infrastructure and design a new system that will meet the current and future irrigation needs at the Rancho Canada Unit, including those associated with the site's forthcoming native habitat restoration project. The new system will allow MPRPD to abandon the current system previously used to irrigate the former east and west golf courses, thus saving long-term maintenance and utility costs, and eliminating leaks that may presently be found on the existing irrigation system.
- 4. MDP Plover Fence/Patrols:** Rangers are reporting fewer contacts involving off-leash dogs and trespassing violations. It appears the increase in patrols has sent the proper message.
- 5. Public Meetings:** Staff represented MPRPD at the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council's April 09, 2021 quarterly meeting, and the Monterey County Operational Area Disaster Council on April 28th.

- 6. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration:** Rangers are coordinating with McBain Associates, who has been hired by the California Coastal Conservancy to lead the floodplain restoration project at Rancho Canada Unit, on MPRPD's behalf. McBain's staff were on-site from May 18th-29th. During that time, Rangers provided site tours, gate codes, maps, and transportation as needed. A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee for this project was scheduled for May 24, 2021. The Board will be provided periodic summaries as the project advances.
- 7. Riverfield Well Improvements:** MPRPD has agreed to fund improvements to the Riverfield Well (on MPRPD property) associated with the Carmel River FREE Project. Rangers are utilizing Alsop Pump & Drilling to complete these improvements, which include raising the wellhead and electrical panel above the 100-year flood mark to ensure the well is not negatively impacted during high-water events. This will ensure compliance with the Agreement between MPRPD and Mrs. Fish, whereby this well continues to provide Mrs. Fish a source of potable water.
- 8. Seasonal Mowing/Brushing:** The mowing and brushing of all MPRPD trails and open spaces continues. Ventana Forestry completed a second round of mowing at the Rancho Canada Unit, in coordination with Monterey Audubon Society, to ensure mowing did not disturb or harm nesting birds. Rangers also recently completed mowing at Thomas Open Space, Southbank Trail, Palo Corona Front Ranch, Cachagua Community Park, and Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Currently, Rangers are addressing Garland Park trails, including those capable of being mowed by tractor, as well as single-track trails that must be brushed using hand-held equipment.



**Ranger Hatton brushing
around PCRP signs**



**Cal Fire Inmate Crew Member
brushing GRRP VC Trail**

