



LET'S GO OUTDOORS! NEWS

Winter 2020-2021

The trail for 2021 is before us. While MPRPD offices and centers remain closed, our parks are open from sunrise to sunset. You are encouraged to get outdoors and stay connected through social media and at mprpd.org.

Rangers are Essential

Our rangers are on the front line of park operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are working harder than ever to keep our parks open, clean, and safe. They tackle these tasks while keeping a smile on their face - even if you can't see it under their masks.

As guardians of our parks and trail systems, MPRPD's rangers have always been friendly, informative, and diligent while maintaining trails, infrastructure, tools, and vehicles, and consistently providing high-quality public service. Each ranger is a jack of all trades. Beyond maintenance, their tasks include: patrolling parks, responding to medical calls, rescuing wildlife, and working with the community. These "busy bees" deserve all of the thanks we can muster.

Since the shelter-in-place order began in March, parks have seen an influx of new visitors resulting in more traffic than ever before. Our rangers work tirelessly to keep up with the extra wear and tear on the trails and debris that is left behind. Be kind to your forests' guardians.

Pack up what you bring in, use garbage bins, and be respectful of all rules. Most importantly please be sure to thank your rangers when you see them.



Rangers starting from left: Jeff, Nico, and Hatton on their reconstructed Fern Falls footbridge in Kahn Ranch. Not pictured: Caine, Jake, Joe, and John.

Marina Dunes Preserve Sharing the Beach

Rolling hills of sand create a magnificent backdrop as the tranquil waves tumble in from the emerald

sea. The Marina Dunes Preserve is not only picturesque, it also provides habitat for many threatened and endangered species. Dune dwellers like the black legless lizard enjoy protection provided by large woody

shrubs like mock heather, silver beach lupine, and coyote brush. Shorebirds like the western snowy plover lay their eggs in small depressions in the sand. The Smith's blue butterfly relies on coast buckwheat plants for the entirety of its life cycle. Monterey spineflower grows in mats on open sandy soil. Other native plants like beach sagewort and beach burr are fast growing and deep-rooted. These characteristics help stabilize the shifting sands of the dunes, enhancing habitat quality and promoting biodiversity. This unique blend of coastal species is remarkable, and we need your help to preserve this rare community of common and rare plant and animal species.

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You can help by staying on designated trails, heeding signs in closed areas, keeping your dogs on leash, taking your garbage home with you, and leaving naturally-occurring driftwood in place. Through these practices, we can enjoy the scenic and biological diversity of Marina Dunes Preserve for many years to come.



Joyce Stevens: A Force For Good

One of the newest additions to the impressive list of parkland conserved by the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District is the *Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve*. This 850-acre mosaic of Monterey Pine Forest, rare Maritime Chaparral, Coastal Scrub and pocket meadows of native grassland surrounds the County-owned Jacks Peak Park on three sides and includes the entrance road to Jacks Peak where Monhollan and Olmsted meet.

The new Monterey Pine Preserve is named in honor of Joyce Smith Stevens, one of the primary catalysts for open space conservation in the Monterey Bay region. Joyce has worked for over 50-years to safeguard, advocate, and educate on behalf of the Central Coast's incomparable environment. She is admired by local volunteers for her keen humor and tireless energy, and by civic leaders as an organizer, mentor, and visionary. She has been involved in numerous local causes that have protected scenic, ecological, and cultural resources throughout the Park District,

and the naming of the new Monterey Pine Preserve honors her many years of service in our community.

Joyce was born in Alaska and studied architecture at a time when there were few women in that profession. After practicing in Alaska, Joyce moved to Carmel in 1962 with her young daughter and felt awe and admiration for the beauty of the trees and natural landscape of the Central Coast. She worked as the staff architect at the Fort Ord Army base and designed the vaulted, open-beam church at Fort Hunter Liggett in south Monterey County.

Joyce has been active in the Sierra Club, The Monterey Bay Dunes Coalition, California Native Plant Society, Monterey Pine Forest Watch, and Big Sur Land Trust, where she was first appointed to the Board of Trustees in 1988 and later served as Secretary in 1991 and President of the Board in 1996.

Joyce has been a leading voice behind community efforts to preserve the Monterey Peninsula's iconic Monterey Pine Forest habitat - a unique forest type found in only three coastal California groves and on two

islands off the west coast of Baja. Joyce has raised our community's awareness of the rarity of Monterey Pine Forest, as well as the inherent value of natural resources and landscapes we all appreciate.

Her inspirational work dedicated to the conservation of our region's signature open spaces and natural resources has truly benefited all residents and visitors to the Monterey area. Her legacy of conservation endeavors are aptly acknowledged with a new preserve named in her honor. *Article by Nikki Nedefff.*



Joyce Stevens and MPRPD Ward 4 Director Kathleen Lee.

A Good Deed Indeed: Frog Pond Parcel Expands by 6.9 Acres

A joint agreement between Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) and MPRPD in July 2020, has resulted in MPRPD's possession of the deed to a parcel east of General Jim Moore Boulevard adjacent to the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. This new addition is currently closed, and will open upon completion and implementation of the site's Habitat Management Plan.

Human History of the Land

This new parcel and the land surrounding the Frog Pond has a rich history of changing habitats and land use. In the early 1900's the land was a grassy marshland. From 1917 to 1940, surrounding areas were used as a maneuver and artillery target staging area. Several of these parcels formally became part of the Fort Ord Army base in 1940. The 1994, deactivation of Fort Ord opened the landscape for re-use.

The Frog Pond had always been a thriving wetland used in various ways. Prior to the 1970's, the land was likely used to graze horses, cattle, and other livestock by the local ranchers.

Plans for building condominiums were proposed in the 1970's and through grass-roots efforts residents successfully protected Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. In 1977, MPRPD acquired the first parcel of this natural marshland to preserve it and provide access to the public through recreational trails.

Over the next 25 years, the cities of Del Rey Oaks and Monterey, FORA, MPRPD, and other stakeholders discussed road improvements, drainage issues, upstream development plans, public access, parcel delineation, and habitat protection plans. Today, the preserve is over 37-acres, with the western portion of the preserve open for passive recreation.

A Jewel of a Park

Frog Pond Wetland Preserve is part of the Highway 68 corridor watershed; part of a larger wetland habitat system that connects groundwater and surface water along Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, from Laguna Seca to the ocean and, is critical to flood protection.

Where else can you find a seasonal pond with its migratory birds and wildlife, willow trees, a small redwood grove, an oak woodland with a viewing platform over the water, and a walkable trail? A refuge for us all... indeed!



Know Before You Go: Your Social Distancing Keeps Our Parks Open

Many doors have shut amid the pandemic. Closures have disrupted life around the Peninsula and beyond. Places to recreate are few and yet we are able to keep many of our parks open through unwavering staff commitment and astounding public support. Staff continues to work diligently to implement COVID-19 related measures in our parks as visitors quickly adapt to new protocols.

We are enjoying an influx of new visitors to the parks. All users are asked to follow guidelines regarding trail usage. As our efforts continue, we say to you, "Keep up the good work!" Remember to be courteous, clean up after yourself, and stay home if you're sick so we can keep your parks open.

In order to protect the public, all indoor spaces are closed and will remain shut until further notice. New exhibits are being planned for both the Garland Park and Palo Corona centers, and we are excited to unveil them when we reopen. For now, stay in touch with us via our social media accounts or the MPRPD website. Share with us by posting your photos using the hashtag **#mprpdandme!**



California Wildlife Day

**Saturday & Sunday,
March 20-21, 2021**

**Virtual Experience
Visit carmelriverwatershed.org
and mprpd.org**



Board in Your Ward

In the November 1972 election, Monterey County's voting members approved the measure which created the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) and entrusted it to acquire lands for the express purpose of preserving open space and providing recreational opportunities. Mirroring the Monterey Peninsula College District's boundaries, MPRPD includes the Monterey Peninsula's seven incorporated cities, and the unincorporated communities of Carmel Valley, Pebble Beach, and the Big Sur Coast. The District consists of five wards with each ward governed by a voter-elected member of the MPRPD Board of Directors. We asked each Director to share their commitment as your representative...



Ward 1

"I will continue protecting regional parks for all to enjoy as well as enhancing the infrastructure and natural assets of the District."

Kelly Sorenson - Director
ksorenson@mprpd.org



Ward 2

"I will continue to work to maintain and increase peoples' ability to benefit from MPRPD's resources while working to protect these diverse resources for current and future generations."

Shane E. Anderson - President
shanea@mprpd.org



Ward 3

"My main goals are to help increase access and opportunities for our residents and visitors to enjoy our regional parks while also conserving and protecting our natural areas for generations to come."

Kevin Raskoff - Director
kraskoff@mprpd.org



Ward 4

"Our parks belong to everyone. I am proud of the work our District has done to ensure that our parks are open and accessible to all members of our community with equal access to these open spaces that are so vital to our mental and physical health."

Kathleen Lee - Secretary/Treasurer
klee@mprpd.org



Ward 5

"I am committed to helping everyone experience the physical and mental health that comes from spending time in parks."

Monta Potter - Vice President
mpotter@mprpd.org



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Parks and Open Spaces Reveal Themselves

The COVID-19 pandemic has, in one manner or another, negatively affected all of humanity. Even so, MPRPD has navigated these turbulent times by responsibly keeping many of our hiking trails, parks, and natural areas open for your use even as schools, businesses, and many federal, state, and local governments shuttered their properties.

Parks and natural areas revealed and reinforced themselves as essential to our physical, emotional, and mental health. The public's response has been enormous! Many people visited our sites for the very first time, discovering the magnificent lands, passive recreation, and environmental education opportunities MPRPD offers, and many visitors have returned. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to respect each other,

nature's wildlife, and the habitats we all depend on.

The model MPRPD formulated and implemented strives to make our properties responsibly available while protecting our natural and cultural resources. This model has been shared with and implemented by parks, recreation, and open space organizations across the United States.

As we continue to traverse this ever changing 'new world' in which we live, MPRPD is committed to protecting, restoring, and monitoring critical habitats, and natural and cultural resources, offering exceptional hiking experiences and high-quality environmental education programs, and upholding MPRPD's transparent, award-winning best business practices.

MPRPD will continue to function with essential personnel on site. The *Let's Go Outdoors!* programs, visitor

and nature centers, offices, and volunteer activities however, remain on-hold as we continue to navigate these challenging times while providing you the best services and experiences possible.

So, please continue to visit our parks and natural areas regularly to get some fresh air, sunshine, and experience a place free of the confines four walls pose. Take a full breath, stretch your legs, and allow your senses to take in the natural beauty that surrounds us! Enjoy one of our region's most essential places where you can take control and be in control of your own wellbeing.

For more information, please visit: MPRPD.org

Dr. Rafael Payan,
MPRPD General Manager

