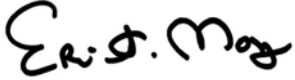


AGENDA ITEM NO. 7-B

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT BOARD REPORT

DATE: April 1, 2026
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Eric Morgan, General Manager 
SUBJECT: Planning at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park. Consider separating the wetland planning effort from the terrestrial planning effort and coordinate with the City of Marina on both.

SUMMARY

The Monterey Regional Park District (MPRPD) continues to work with the City of Marina (City) on a path forward to properly evaluate new proposals (including the Asian American Garden) at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park and vegetation enhancement treatments for the unique wetland resource which is being overtaken by bulrushes. With a new [Wetland Analysis Report](#) completed from CSU Monterey Bay's ENV 660 course and briefly presented, MPRPD hopes to coordinate with the City on comprehensive planning, CEQA analysis and permitting to improve facilities at this unique park, and take care of the declining wetland resource. The proposed path forward was briefly shared with the Marina City Council on February 18 in a [letter to the Marina City Manager](#) on February 14, 2026.

In turn, the [City requested MPRPD to separate out the wetland planning](#) component from the terrestrial planning component in hopes of fast-tracking wetland habitat enhancements contemplated in the CSU Monterey Bay's ENV 660 course report. The City and MPRPD both own the wetland areas of the park. The City has indicated a willingness to complete the planning and permitting necessary to enhance the wetland separate from uplands planning. District staff are eager to improve the health, biological diversity, and aesthetics of the wetland and wish to find a path forward to enhance conditions and passive recreational facilities at the park, centered around protection and enhancement of the wetland resource.

FISCAL IMPACT

The current action (seeking direction) has no immediate fiscal impact. However, the subsequent Scope of Work will inform a budget that will be proposed for the FY 2026-27 Budget.

FUNDING SOURCE

NA

FUNDING BALANCE

NA

DISCUSSION

Under the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, the MPRPD intends to complete the Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park Master Plan in partnership with the City of Marina and all stakeholders. In a letter to the City Manager dated February 14, 2026, the District proposed a comprehensive master planning path; however, the City subsequently expressed that it did not wish to proceed with a singular master plan process for the whole park. Instead, the City requested to separate the wetland planning component to fast-track the permitting and enhancement of the wetland resource.

To ensure project momentum while protecting District interests, staff recommend a two-track planning model. This coordinated approach allows the District to lead with wetland habitat restoration and passive recreational improvements while providing the flexibility to proceed independently on MPRPD-owned lands.

Track 1: Wetland Restoration & Management Plan

The 2026 CSU Monterey Bay (CSUMB) report, "Locke-Paddon Wetland: Ecological history, predictions, and management alternatives for the future," establishes the conceptual vision for restoration that could serve as the foundation for more detailed restoration and management planning and design in coordination with the City. By prioritizing this track independent of uplands and other potential park infrastructure planning, the District can qualify for specialized permit streamlining and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemptions that "Cut Green Tape", such as the CDFW Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) and other permit streamlining programs for environmental restoration projects that would accelerate the management of bulrushes and the restoration of open water habitat within the wetland. Utilizing SERP and similar CEQA exemptions allows the District to bypass the significantly longer and more costly environmental review timelines required for traditional development projects, potentially moving the restoration from planning to implementation on an accelerated schedule.

Track 2: Conceptual Upland Master Plan

In a parallel but separate process, the District could plan and advance a community-based planning process for the park's upland areas. Consistent with the comprehensive planning approach outlined in the February 14, 2026 letter to the City, this process will evaluate potential projects and uses within the uplands area, including the City's proposed projects on MPRPD property, to identify preferred alternatives for future Board consideration. This track will specifically assess existing sensitive habitats and regulatory mitigation areas, such as the 3.55-acre Holiday Inn mitigation site located within the Park, to ensure that new proposals do not conflict with standing conservation commitments and sensitive resources, while also advancing a community supported vision for the park.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The recommended action is not a 'project' under CEQA as it involves only planning and feasibility studies. Future implementation of the resulting plans will undergo specific CEQA review as applicable and required, potentially utilizing the SERP statutory exemption.

Staff respectfully request directions from the Board and Authorize the General Manager to:

1. Coordinate with the City of Marina to develop a joint Scope of Work and cost estimate (targeting 50/50 cost-sharing) for a Wetland Restoration and Management Plan. All planning, permitting, and environmental review guided by the 2026 CSUMB Wetland Analysis Report I recommended management alternative and specifically structured to qualify for "Cutting Green Tape" permit streamlining and CEQA statutory exemptions (e.g., SERP); and
2. Coordinate with the City of Marina to develop a scope of work and timeline for a community-based Conceptual Upland Master Plan. This process will engage the community in developing and evaluating new proposals to identify preferred alternatives, while assessing existing upland habitats and mitigation areas; and
3. Report back to the Board with a more detailed project proposal, including refined scopes of work, timeline, and estimated budget requirements, for final review and inclusion in the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) budget cycle.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [Wetland Analysis Report](#) (CSU Monterey Bay's - ENV 660 course)