

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: July 07, 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-May 2021 through mid-June 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 COVID-related orders.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- Budget:** Staff finalized edits and prepared adopted Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget for distribution in June.
- Cachagua Community Park Concept Plan Review:** Staff and the Esellen Tribe met to vet the initial draft. The plan was well received, and a few revisions were recommended. Staff will also meet with other stakeholders to obtain their input and refine the plan, subsequently presenting the plan to the Board for review and action.



- 3. CERBT Year End Reporting Workshop:** Staff participated in a CalPERS year-end reporting workshop for the CERBT program, focusing on the 115 Trust that holds MPRPD's investment funds for employer provided retiree benefits. Complex year-end reporting is required to meet GASB 75 requirements.
- 4. City of Marina:** MPRPD met with the city's Mayor and City Manager to discuss several projects including: updating the Locke-Paddon Graphic Master Plan; exploring enhancement of several of the site's facilities and its habitat restoration; launching an Eagle Scout project that will create community garden planter boxes; and, advancing discussion between the City and United Way Monterey County to possibly identify a venue for the United Way within the City of Marina's boundaries.
- 5. COVID-19 Removal of Tiers:** Effective June 15, 2021, California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and tiers were removed. However, CAL/OSHA workplace requirements remain in effect.
- 6. Fire Management Plan and Initial Work at Garland Ranch Regional Park:** Staff continues to meet with Mr. Hertlein, Cal Fire, and the Regional Fire Management District to advance the plan's development and identify those measures that can be taken to address some immediate opportunities. Staff will update the Board as measures are advanced.
- 7. FORTAG and Frog Pond Wetland Preserve:** Staff participated in and continues to participate and meet with community members, the City of Del Rey Oaks and TAMC personnel, and FORTAG's founders to vet concepts and to seek and refine solutions that will enhance public access to the Preserve, while also helping to advance the FORTAG project and the site's environmental analysis and natural habitat restoration. TAMC will hold a Community Meeting on July 17, 2021.
- 8. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve Dedication Ceremony:** MPRPD's divisions successfully worked collaboratively with Architect Stevens and her colleagues to launch this event. Ms. Stevens was, and continues to be, very pleased with the outcome. Staff especially wants to thank our Board, the County of Monterey's Parks Department, Resource Management Agency, and Sheriff's Office, the Big Sur Land Trust, and many others for their support and help in making this a great event for Joyce and our region.
- 9. Laguna Grande Regional Park:** Staff continues to work closely with the cities of Monterey and Seaside on the park's Trail and Environmental Resource Strategies Plan.
- 10. On-site Walk for Project B Phase 3:** An on-site walk that included architects, landscape architects, engineers, project coordinators, grant writers, and MPRPD staff was held to kick-off discussions re: Phase 3 of Project B. Staff reviewed programmatic concept plans and potential locations for the planned amenities.

These include picnic areas, a nature play area, outdoor classroom, repurposed sand trap seating areas, pond overlook/wildlife viewing platform, multi-use trails, and a small amphitheater. These scope items may be considered in the pursuit of upcoming grant opportunities.

- 11. *ParkIT!* Shuttlebus Charging Stations and Storage:** Staff met with *ParkIt!* Committee members and consultants to discuss shuttlebuses. It was determined that the 24-passenger electric busses will be explored and may be the preferred alternative. MPRPD has included *ParkIT!* considerations in the design of the Rancho Canada Unit's Project's A and B. Site improvements and support facilities may include shuttlebus drop-off/staging area(s), designated parking for up to 25-cars, and potential on-site charging and storage areas. Staff will continue to work with the *ParkIT!* Committee to identify means of off-setting operational costs, revenue sharing, and other matters.
- 12. Project A & B Coordination Meeting:** Staff met with the projects' architects, landscape architects, engineers, project coordinators, and grant writers to provide coordination between Projects A & B, discuss public and staff electrical vehicle charging station requirements and potential locations.
- 13. Project B - Rancho Canada Park Restroom:** Staff held an introductory meeting with architects, project coordinators, and Romtec (the pre-manufactured restroom building's team). Meeting participants reviewed requirements for design package(s) and timeline(s).
- 14. RFQ for Construction Manager:** Staff released a Request for Qualifications for As Needed Construction Management Services related to, and required for, MPRPD's upcoming capital improvement projects. Staff used the ProcureNow "eprocurement" system. Three well-qualified firms responded. After a rigorous vetting process, two firms were selected to assist MPRPD. These two firms are: CM Construction Services, Inc., and Ausonio, Inc.

CM Construction Services, Inc., will provide reroof and HVAC replacement service for the former clubhouse (which now serves as MPRPD's headquarters, Discovery Center, and banquet/event facilities). Ausonio, Inc., will provide services related to Projects A & B.
- 15. Return to Work Procedures:** Staff continues to work on this item and shall provide the Board updates.
- 16. San Jose Creek Trail:** MPRPD met with several parties including the Esellen Tribe, the Ohlone Tribe, State Parks, Big Sur Land Trust, Point Lobos Foundation, and others to explore and identify viable options that may help advance opening of this

trail for public use. Updates will be provided to the Board as these parties refine concepts and formalize plans and timeframes.

17. Training: Staff participated in the Human Resource Certification Institute's: Returning to Work session.

18. Transparency Certificate: The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) has once again awarded MPRPD the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence. The SDLF Board of Directors congratulates MPRPD on achieving this important certificate and our dedication to excellence in local government. MPRPD has proven its dedication to being fully transparent as well as open and accessible to the public and other stakeholders. The SDLF shall present this Certificate to MPRPD's Board during regular session.



EECO DIVISION

- 1. Cross Country Course:** Staff, Big Sur Marathon Foundation representatives, and respective Legal Counsels, met to discuss and coordinate the subsequent drafting of an agreement, likely in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), for the proposed cross-country course. The draft MOU will be presented to the Board in the coming months.
- 2. Education:** Staff worked with local K-8 students to develop conceptual elements for a natural play area at the Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit. This research will help inform staff in designing the play area/pond complex and will be

used as one of the outreach elements for the Prop 68 “Regional Park Program” grant application, which is due November 5, 2021. If awarded to MPRPD, this highly competitive grant will help fund creation, expansion and improvement of our regional parks and facilities.

Activities most frequently listed by the students, both verbally and written, included (in this order of preference): climbing, jumping, hiking, running, sitting/relaxing, sliding, swinging, and playing.

Students identified several areas around the pond as good locations for the playground, with an emphasis on interacting with the park’s natural features including the pond, sand, trees, and connecting the playground with extant trails.

- 3. Marina Dunes Preserve and Smith’s Blue Butterflies:** As part of the Marina Dunes Preserve contract with Burleson Consulting Inc., local Smith’s blue butterfly (SBB) expert Thor Anderson and ecologist Lizzy Eichorn conducted an SBB survey on June 16, 2021. During the 1.5-hour survey in the northern portion of the Preserve, over 36-assumed SBBs were seen, and at least 25 were confirmed to be SBB. This is the most the research team has seen in one survey. The consultants plan to return soon to survey the Preserve’s central and southern portions.

The Burleson Team also installed “herbicide spray notification” signage in both English and Spanish in preparation for implementation of the Preserve’s weed eradication program.



***Euphilotes enoptes smithi* (Smith’s Blue Butterfly)**

- 4. Requests for Proposals (RFPs):** Staff has reviewed RFPs and is defining scope of work for the GIS (Geospatial Information Systems) firms that will be working with MPRPD. The goal is to develop a stable of qualified consultants thereby diversifying approaches to be taken, enhance timeliness, and address MPRPD’s changing needs for GIS and mapping.

5. **Restoration and Monarch Butterflies:** National Public Radio's/KAZU's Erika Mahoney interviewed MPRPD Volunteer Scott Hennessey, Connie Massotti, and MPRPD staff about the restoration efforts being performed at the Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit which has become a significant site for monarch butterflies to feed and reproduce. This site is considered a "garden for monarchs." A link to the article is: <https://www.kazu.org/post/green-thumbs-give-helping-hand-dwindling-monarch-population>



Monarch Butterfly habitat at Rancho Canada Unit

6. **Special Use Permits:** Point Lobos State Natural Reserve's Summer Adventures Day Camp event will bring campers to Palo Corona Regional Park. The event will help participants learn about local plants, agriculture, and natural habitats.
7. **Transportation Funds/Grant:** Staff is working inter-divisionally (EECO & Admin) with the Community Foundation of Monterey County to pilot a transportation grant program for District residents to get outside and enjoy nature during the 2021/2022 Fiscal Year. Additional detail shall be provided to the Board as this program is refined.
8. **Visioning Workshop:** Staff is formulating the long-term vision for the EECO Division as and its alignment with MPRPD's mission, strategic plan, and the Division's service types and delivery strategies.
9. **Volunteers:** During their May meeting, MPRPD's Volunteers met with staff to help create the 2021 Summer Wildflower Show. Volunteers submitted photos and reviewed the virtual show format.
10. **Wildflower Show:** Staff held MPRPD' 22nd Annual Summer Wildflower Show. This virtual event ran from June 12–20. This year's theme was Wildflowers in our Parks

and Watershed Landscaping. Volunteer alumni, Michael Mitchell gave virtual presentation on Wildflowers from MPRPD Parks, Monterey County, and around the world at his “Wildflower Travels” program. CSUMB student, Cole Mefford gave a presentation on “Dune Plants and Climate Change” and Melinda Nakagawa hosted a Wildflower Nature Journaling activity.

In addition to live virtual programs provided by CSUMB, a link to the California Native Plant Society -- Monterey Chapter’s montereywildflowers.com website was provided. Presentations focusing of monarch butterflies and the proposed native habitat restoration project at Palo Corona Regional Park’s Rancho Canada Unit were also held. Many pre-recorded and family-friendly activities were offered.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. Brush Fire at GRRP:** A small brush fire was reported and quickly extinguished at Garland Ranch Regional Park on June 1st. Cal Fire and Monterey County Regional Fire District Firefighters responded, along with MPRPD’s Ranger. The wildfire was located near the junction of the River and Saddle trails. The small vegetation fire was the result of unauthorized off-trail activity by a park visitor.

Four-days later, Rangers were able to identify and contact the “person of interest” reported to be in the area at the time the fire was reported. That person subsequently admitted to starting the fire. This information and evidence have been forwarded to Cal Fire for further action including, and up to, prosecution.



Firefighters dousing small wildfire at Garland Ranch

- 2. Cal Fire Training at RCU:** Members of the Cal Fire’s Cypress Fire District (CFD) utilized the Emergency Staging Area at Palo Corona Regional Park’s Rancho Canada Unit to host their first-ever Utility Vehicle Safety Course. A certified instructor was brought in to lead the training, which included the Kubota RTV

previously transferred by MPRPD to the CFD. MPRPD was happy to host this event, and even loaned CFD two additional RTV's to train as many firefighters as possible.



Firefighters training at the Rancho Canada Unit

- 3. CAWD Sewer Line:** Staff continue to coordinate with Carmel Area Wastewater District to prepare for replacement of the wastewater main thru the Rancho Canada Unit. Granite Construction received the contract for this sewer line project and is planning to break ground in July 2021. Rangers will work with Granite Construction to identify two areas for staging the project's equipment and supplies at the Rancho Canada Unit, as well as ensuring MPRPD assets and infrastructure are protected during trenching.
- 4. Downed/Dead trees:** Several large trees have fallen or have been felled by Rangers recently, including a large dead oak tree at Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, and a large Cottonwood at the Rancho Canada Unit, which almost crushed an electrical panel and transformer.



Trees removed at Frog Pond and Rancho Canada Unit

- 5. Irrigation Master Plan:** Rangers continue to work with BFS Landscape Architects to finalize the Irrigation Master Plan for Palo Corona's Rancho Canada Unit. This plan will include analyzing existing irrigation infrastructure and designing a system that will meet the current and future irrigation needs at the Rancho Canada Unit. The new irrigation system will allow MPRPD to abandon the current system used to

irrigate the former east and west golf courses, thus saving long-term maintenance and utility costs, and eliminating leaks associated with the current water distribution lines.

- 6. Joyce Stephens Monterey Pine Preserve Dedication Ceremony:** Staff participated in the coordination, preparation, and staffing of the JSMPP Dedication Ceremony held at Jacks Peak County Park on June 21, 2021. Rangers contracted the Monterey County Sherriff's Office to be present during the event, facilitated guest parking, posted signage, and assisted with set-up and take down of the event.



Ranger Narvaez directing event traffic; and event day

- 7. Project A:** Staff continued to work with Ten Over Studio Architects toward completion of the design development phase of Project A. A review of the design development plans that included District staff and consultants was held on June 24, 2021.
- 8. Rancho Canada Dog Park:** A Dog Park update meeting was held with the “Dog Park 4” (the project’s advocates) on June 8. An on-site Open House is scheduled for July 17, 2021, to allow the public an opportunity to tour the proposed dog park complex/site. Several vendors have been invited to set up booths on-site. A large turnout is expected, including County Supervisor Mary Adams.
- 9. Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration:** Rangers attended an on-site meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee at the Rancho Canada Unit to walk the site and discuss preliminary design elements and concerns. 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, was onsite from May 18 thru 29, 2021 to perform various field assessments and surveys.



Technical Advisory Committee at Rancho Canada Unit

10. Riverfield Well Improvements: Rangers coordinated improvements to the Riverfield Well (on MPRPD property) as part of the Carmel River FREE Project. Also Pump & Drilling utilized specs provided by Whitson Engineers to raise the well casing, install a new concrete foundation, and elevate the electrical panel to prevent damage from inundation during Carmel River high-water events. At PG&E's request, Rangers constructed a platform to facilitate meter readings.



Well modifications and platform to facilitate meter-reading

11. Seasonal Mowing/Brushing: The mowing and brushing of all District trails and open spaces continues. Rangers are now addressing areas that require a second mowing. Given the severity of drought conditions and wildfire potential, a "spotter" is utilized to monitor for inadvertent sparks from mowing equipment.