

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

DATE: August 05, 2020
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Rafael Payan, General Manager
SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Reports

SUMMARY:

This report serves as a summary of staffs' key tasks and projects since the last Board meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not applicable.

FUNDING SOURCE:

Not applicable.

FUNDING BALANCE:

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION:

The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects MPRPD's Staff undertook from mid-June through late July 2020 in addition to performing the District's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the State's and County's shelter-in-place orders.

By concurrently providing this information to the Public and Board, transparency is assured regarding these tasks.

Staff reports are listed by Division. Division Leads will respond to the Board's questions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Board review, accept, and file this report. No additional action is requested or required. The items listed here-in are for information only.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- 1. Budget:** Staff continued setting-up, launching, and tracking MPRPD's Board-authorized Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget.
- 2. California Employers' Retiree Benefit Trust Fund (CERBT):** Completed CERBT required year-end reporting.

3. **COVID-related FEMA Reimbursement:** Staff participated in a Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Webinar re: FEMA's potential reimbursement for COVID-related expenses.
4. **COVID-related Orders, Meetings, and Updates:** Staff continued to participate in regular meetings held by the County Health Officer to ensure we have the latest information, are aligned with the latest Order(s), and planning and implementing actions related to COVID-related response that align MPRPD's actions with the CDC's, State's, and County's latest guidelines.
5. **FORA Parcel Deed:** The deed memorializing MPRPD's acceptance of the 6.90-acre parcel recently conveyed by FORA to MPRPD as an addition to the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve was signed and recorded.
6. **Frog Pond Wetland Preserve's and Other Adjacent Parcels' Possible Integration:** A meeting between the City of Del Rey Oaks (DRO) and MPRPD was calendared for these two parties to discuss potential uses for several parcels east of General Jim Moore Boulevard. These parcels are in proximity to the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. DRO's City Manager and Staff subsequently followed-up to discuss this topic further.
7. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Forest Preserve Entrance Sign:** Staff met with Ms. Stevens at her residence and finalized minor embellishments for the sign. The following items were also discussed and are listed in the sequence they have been or will be executed:
 - a. **Plans and Specifications Approved:** County approved the construction drawings and specifications developed by MPRPD Staff. These support the sign's concept design. The County approved the proposed site location and issued the encroachment permit for the sign's installation. An encroachment permit is required because the sign will be located within Olmsted Road's 60' right-of-way.
 - b. **Sign Foundation/Slab:** Operations Division Staff formed and placed (poured) the concrete pad the sign will rest on.
 - c. **Stucco Finish:** The sign is nearing the stucco application phase, which is expected to be completed in late July or early August 2020. The stucco's finish coat will be a smooth "sand" texture.
 - d. **Color Pallet:** Samples may be painted on the sign once it is installed to ensure the best color combination is selected.

- e. **Sign Company:** A sign company will fabricate the sign's lettering and a silhouetted Monterey Pine stand image. The sign company will develop two mock-ups showing two different lettering styles from which Architect Stevens will choose. The font styles include: (1) Damned Architect; and (2) Franklin Gothic.
- f. **Bas-relief Sculpture:** The commissioning of an artist to develop the bas-relief of a stylized Monterey Pine sculpted image that can be affixed to the sign's vertical column continues to be explored. It may take a while to get this art-piece completed assuming an artist can be found, is willing to take the commission, and the price is within budget.

In the interim, Ms. Stevens has approved having a sign company fabricate and affix a 2-dimensional silhouetted Monterey Pine stand image onto the vertical column to give the sign a "finished look" while we await the completion of the bas-relief sculpture. Once the sculpted art-piece has been completed, it will replace the silhouetted image. MPRPD may consider the adaptive re-use of the silhouetted image, affixing it to the reverse side of this sign or some other venue.

- g. **Dedication Ceremony:** A proposed September 2020 dedication ceremony was favorably considered by Ms. Stevens. Staff will wait to see how the project advances over the next three weeks before we propose an official date. Ms. Stevens, Ms. Stevens' colleagues, the Board, and others will be polled to determine the best date and time.

8. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Forest Preserve Interpretive Plaques at a Turnout:** The County supports MPRPD's proposed request to consider installation of interpretive plaques along Jacks Peak Road. These plaques may offer information on: Jacks Peak's geomorphology/hydrology/biology; information about Monterey Pines and the Monterey Pine Preserve; Ms. Stevens' and her colleagues' past, present, and continued efforts to protect, preserve, and restore the largest remaining naturally occurring Monterey Pine Forest on the planet; Ms. Stevens being the first female architect at Fort Ord; the County/MPRPD partnership; and, other pertinent information.

Staff and other contributors will attempt to fast-track the design and development of these interpretive plaques, which may or may not be completed and installed in time for the entrance sign's dedication ceremony.

The County and MPRPD acknowledge that MPRPD may construct a turnout, trailhead, and trail within the Preserve in the future. However, since these will take time to budget, design, plan, permit, and construct, MPRPD is opting for the use of an extant turnout along Jacks Peak Park Road.

9. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Forest Preserve County/MPRPD "Partnership" Monuments at Entrance Gate:** The County and MPRPD concur that monuments that integrate the entrance gate's structural support posts may be constructed at a

future date. These monuments will reflect the entrance sign's design and will function like the extant entrance monuments do at the Palo Corona Regional Park's entrance gate. Signage at these monuments will memorialize the County's and MPRPD's coordinated management of Jacks Peak Regional Park and the Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve and will include the organizations' respective logos.

10. Policy Development: Staff continued to research, refine, and initiate development of various COVID-related administrative and operational policies and procedures. These shall be presented for the Board's review and action at future Board meetings.

11. Roof Assessment: Staff received three proposals and entered into a Professional Services Agreement with Roof Consulting Services, Inc., for \$39,550, to evaluate the Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's roof for replacement or repair, development of roofing plans drawn to scale, development of a complete bid-ready bid package, construction administration related to the bid package, and testing for asbestos.

12. Strategic Plan: Staff compiled samples of other organizations' Strategic Plans and related reports. These are being used as a template in the current updating of MPRPD's 5-Year Strategic Plan's development. The 2020-2024/25 Strategic Plan will include proposed COVID-19 and climate change-related actions MPRPD may be required to consider going forward.

13. Termite Treatment: The Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's main building was treated.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH DIVISION

1. Storybooks and Exhibits Continued Research and Drafting:

a. Carmel River Watershed Storybook and Exhibit:

- i. Staff continues to research the storybook exhibit content and design. This exhibit may be accessed online at the GRRP Visitor Center and the PCRPD Discovery Center and used for various school programs. Staff also met with partners to discuss the development of an interactive 3-D Carmel River Watershed map exhibit. Potential grant-based funding sources were discussed and will be explored.
- ii. Staff submitted a request to the Packard Foundation seeking their support the Carmel River Watershed map's development.

“We seek funding for an interactive 3D Carmel River Watershed exhibit at Palo Corona Regional Park in Carmel, CA. This multisensory exhibit showcases human and wildlife connections to the watershed, the impacts of consumption and alteration, sustainability, and climate science. Our strategic goals are to provide high quality, interactive experiences to diverse public audiences, and K-12 students. The exhibit demonstrates the vital relationships and conservation efforts for our natural resources.”

- b. California Condor Storybook:** The CA Condor storybook has been reviewed and is being readied for its online debut. It is being adapted into an audiobook version for the visually impaired. Online books will be connected to MPRPD’s website and promoted via Instagram, Facebook, and e-blast.
- 2. Palo Corona Regional Park Interpretive Master Plan:** The core planning teaming consisting of Staff, Volunteers, and National Park Service Personnel is finalizing the “parameters” portion of the PCRIP Interpretive Master Plan, including the identification and development of interpretive “themes” and “subthemes” sections.
- 3. Special Use Permits:** A single document repository for past and current special conditions for Special Use Permits has been drafted. This will create a more efficient permitting process. It is being piloted using the renewal of a limited number of existing research permits. The issuing of Special Use Permits during the pandemic is currently on hold.
- 4. Volunteers:**
 - a.** A video, Zoom-style volunteer meeting/enrichment included presentation updates on the proposed exhibits being designed by EECO staff, a first look at the California Condor Storybook, and tips on using MPRPD social media accounts to keep Volunteers and Staff connected.
 - b.** Keeping volunteers engaged is of critical importance. Staff released the July-August Volunteer Newsletter. Staff has begun volunteer spotlight interviews for the next two newsletters.
- 5. Professional Development:** In preparation for creating a climate change exhibit for the Palo Corona Discovery Center, Staff and the Interpretive Master Plan Core Team are participating in a 6-week online “Climate Change Crash Course” given by the National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NNOCCI). The course runs from July 12 through August 16, 2020.
- 6. Signage for the Cachagua Community Park Enhancement Project:** A sign for the new sports field and playground was completed and stored for a future dedication ceremony once the field is re-opened. Sports fields are currently closed in alignment with the Monterey County Health Officer’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 7. Palo Corona Regional Park Wayfinding-Signage Master Plan Update:** In August 2019, the Board authorized staff to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Design Workshop to create a Wayfinding-Signage Master Plan for the Palo Corona Regional Park's (PCRP) Rancho Canada and Front Ranch units, with a hierarchical system to extend the design into the park's Backcountry Unit. Signage within any park facility performs an integral function in orienting and connecting visitors to the site and creating a uniform aesthetic to the surroundings. The Wayfinding-Signage Master Plan includes graphic design standards for the range of signage types essential for the various conditions found throughout PCRP. Wayfinding signs identify, direct, and interpret features within the park and provide visitors with a sense of knowledge and safety. Signs also identify the location as a Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District unit, used to brand MPRPD and evoke images of the Monterey Peninsula's diverse natural and cultural history, landmark elements, and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities.

Assessment of the existing signage within several MPRPD parks, stakeholder engagement both in-person and through online applications, questionnaires and surveys were used to inform the formation of the design alternatives. Staff thoughtfully selected stakeholders* representing members of the Rancho Canada acquisition process, colleague organizations and business affiliates who regularly conduct business in the park, and a cross-section of staff and volunteers. To guide the design process meetings and informative sessions were used to collect data as follows:

- a. **September 2019:** Two-day site visit to inventory existing signage within several MPRPD's parks.
- b. **October 2019:** First stakeholder meeting introducing the team to the project and developing a dialogue to discuss the needs and observations related to existing and proposed signage on MPRPD property.
- c. **December 2019:** Three design alternatives for signage themes were presented to stakeholders providing an opportunity to discuss the merits of each theme related to style, colors, fonts, and materials. Based on comments received from the stakeholders in person and in a subsequent email questionnaire, Design Workshop revised the signage design alternatives.
- d. **February 2020:** Updated signage design alternatives were presented soliciting comments used to develop a preferred signage theme. Following this meeting an online survey was created and sent to a broader stakeholder group and received responses from 18-people before being closed on June 15, 2020.
- e. **July/August 2020:** The draft preferred signage design alternative will be developed in response to the results of the online survey.

- f. **Going Forward:** Staff continues to refine the preferred signage design preferred alternative(s) with the final draft anticipated to be completed by September 2020.

*Stakeholder representatives include: Big Sur Land Trust, California State Parks, Santa Lucia Conservancy, Wedgewood Weddings, Cal Fire, MPRPD's Interpretive Master Committee including representatives from California State University, Monterey Bay, National Park Service-Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance, and MPRPD Volunteers and Staff.

8. **Public Outreach/Social Media:** Staff continues to research the use of technology to connect the public and volunteers to parks and open spaces.

a. **Facebook statistics - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:**

- July 13 follower count: 1351 ▲
- New followers since June 15: 133 ▲
- Post-reach: People reached at least once
- May 15 - June 15 average: 1,200 views per post
- June 15 - July 13 average: 461 ▼ views per post

b. **Reactions, Comments, Shares:**

Reactions:

- May 15-June 15 average: 24 reactions per post
- June 15-July 13 average: 13 ▼ reactions per post

Comments:

- May 15-June 15 average: 2 comments per post
- June 15-July 13 average: 1 ▼ comment per post

Shares:

- May 15-June 15 average: 5 shares per post
- June 15-July 13 average: 3 ▼ share per post
- Top-3 most popular posts June 15-July 13
- July 6 DeDampierre and Cachagua Park reopening (1.3K views)
- June 30 Snake sighting (876 views)
- June 23 Monarchs - migratory species (792 views)

OPERATIONS DIVISION

1. **Cachagua Community and DeDampierre Parks:** These two properties were reopened to the public, except for their playgrounds and sports fields. A portable restroom was placed at DeDampierre for public use.

- 2. Incidents Response:** Rangers responded to several incidents in District Parks, including:
- a. ABC Assistance:** Assisted the California State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) with an incident involving underage drinking along the Carmel River at GRRP. Rangers provided video surveillance footage and intel on popular river access points. ABC and MPRPD will continue to communicate and partner on incidents involving underage drinking.
 - b. Black Bear:** A juvenile black bear was sighted at the Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit in proximity to the Discovery Center. Local news reports tracked the bear for several days showing that it traveled northward towards and including Jacks Peak Regional Park and the City of Marina.
 - c. CEMEX Boundary Fence Repairs:** Staff repaired the boundary fence at the terminus of Dunes Drive, in proximity to the Cemex, Dunes Resort and MPRPD's Marina Dunes Preserve properties, only to have it vandalized less than a week later. Surveillance cameras have been installed as a deterrent. Director Sorenson's assistance with monitoring and updates have been very helpful. Rangers continue to repair the fence due to it being breached on a regular basis.
 - d. Courtyard Fountain:** Rangers contacted a woman seen washing her hair in the Rancho Canada Unit's courtyard fountain. MCSO Deputies provided support.
 - e. Equestrian vs. Equestrian Incident:** A minor altercation was resolved at the River Trail easement west of Paso Del Rio at GRRP.
 - f. Fallen Trees:** A large Cottonwood tree fell across the Southbank Trail requiring fence repairs and removal of brush at the Rancho Canada Unit and on the neighboring Taylor property. While mowing the Whisler-Wilson property, multiple large oak trees were discovered across the Whisler Trail, blocking access. Mowing will continue at this location once fallen trees have been cleared.
 - g. Fire Extinguishers:** All District fire extinguishers were collected, inspected, and returned during early to mid-July.
 - h. Garza's Canyon Seasonal Footbridges:** This Canyon's seasonal footbridges were installed. Footbridges across the Carmel River will likely not be installed this year due to COVID-19 as a means of ensuring social distancing.
 - i. Mowing Continues:** Mowing and brushing of outlying properties has been completed including, Hatton Canyon, Thomas Open Space, Mill Creek Preserve, and Cachagua Community Park. This completes the first-round of seasonal mowing/brushing on District properties (except for Whisler-Wilson).

- j. **Project A:** This Capital Improvement Project is officially underway, beginning with an initial assessment conducted by the consultant's structural engineer and architectural team to evaluate the extant Rancho Canada maintenance building's condition.
- k. **Seasonal Ranger Position:** Ranger Hatton Vandervort-Verga has rejoined the MPRPD staff for another season. As previously provided, his email and phone number remain the same.
- l. **Small Fire:** A small wildfire, estimated to have consumed less than one-acre of grassland, was reported at Palo Corona Regional Park's Front Ranch Unit. The fire occurred in the early evening and was quickly doused by fire-fighters by 8:30pm. The cause remains under investigation.
- m. **Surveillance Footage:** Staff provided surveillance footage to MCSO who responded to a 911 call involving two parties engaged in a verbal altercation at Garland Ranch Regional Park.

ATTACHMENTS:

Not applicable.