

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: October 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

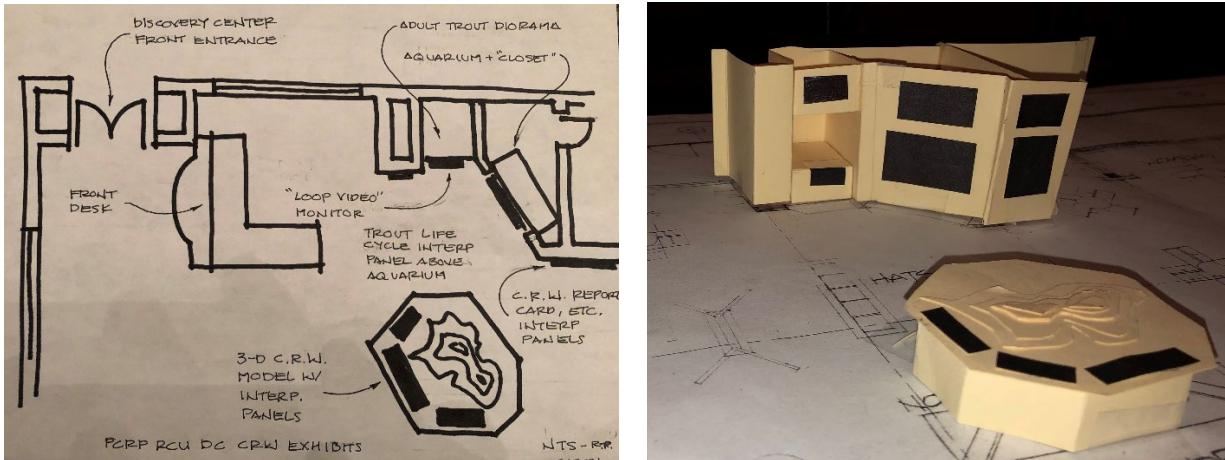
PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects MPRPD's Staff undertook from mid-August 2021 through mid-September 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 guidelines.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

- 1. Audit Conference:** The Finance Committee and staff met with the District's auditor's Bob Callanan and Robert Perl from CliftonLarsonAllen on Wednesday, September 22. This meeting reviews the process and progress of the audit and lays out the basic items covered and not covered in an audit of the District's financial statements.
- 2. Benefits and Compensation Study:** Had introductory meetings with new consultants to begin planning for Compensation and Benefits Analysis and Demography/Redistricting services.
- 3. Carmel River Watershed Conservancy:** Carmel River Watershed Conservancy and MPRPD met to discuss and conceptualize the proposed Carmel River Watershed's initial concept design. This proposed multi-media exhibit will be located at the Rancho Canada Unit Discovery Center. Exhibit components may include a 3-D model showing the Carmel River from its headwaters in the Santa Lucia Mountains to its mouth at the Pacific Ocean; an aquarium featuring juvenile steelhead trout; the existing steelhead trout diorama and life cycle exhibit; an on-demand video loop that will highlight a flyover covering the 30-plus mile Carmel River; the river's "report card" that will be periodically updated to track its health and restoration, and other interpretive plaques.

Staff proposes development of similar multi-media exhibits to enhance current California Condor, Indigenous Peoples of the Central Coast, and various flora, fauna, and geology exhibits.



Proposed Carmel River Watershed Exhibit's Initial Concept Sketch and Models

4. **COVID-19 Fiscal Relief for Special Districts:** Staff attended a session sponsored by CSDA regarding COVID-19 Fiscal Relief for Special Districts. Eligibility requirements were reviewed, along with pertinent timelines. The application period is a two-week window between October 1 and 15. There is \$100M available to independent Special Districts, that have received no other reimbursement relief directly from the State or Federal Government. Each district's allocation is based on its proportionate share of the total unanticipated costs and revenue losses incurred by all districts during the eligible periods. (Example: A special district's revenue losses and unanticipated costs represent 10% of the total losses and costs incurred by all special districts. The special district is **eligible** to receive up to 10% of the total \$100 million allocation).

Allocation Overview for Eligible Periods:

- **Revenue Losses:** 2020-21 revenue from all fund sources compared to 2018-19 revenue from all fund sources. All revenue losses and unanticipated costs must be incurred due to COVID-19.
- **Unanticipated Costs:** Unanticipated costs incurred between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021 (aligns with similar federal timelines). NOTE: Defined as costs that would have been an eligible use for CARES Act or ARPA).

Staff will be gathering District data to determine if we qualify for submittal. If approved for reimbursement, funds are expected to be distributed no later than the first week of January 2022.

- 5. Habitat Restoration Plan for Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit:** California Coastal Conservancy, McBain Associates (the restoration project's consulting firm), and MPRPD staff continue to develop and refine initial concepts for this project. The project will integrate and compliment the Carmel River Free Project and may be expanded to also include MPRPD's section of Hatton Canyon.
- 6. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve:** A Certificate of Acknowledgement and Appreciation issued by Senator John Laird to Architect Stevens for her steadfast protection and preservation of the Earth's largest natural stand of Monterey Pine was hand-delivered to Architect Stevens by MPRPD staff.
- 7. Laguna Grande Regional Park:** The City of Monterey and MPRPD continue to work together in the pursuit of grant funds for implementation of the park's Trail Maintenance Strategies and Environmental Enhancement Plan. A potential concept that may enhance the park's recreational and wildlife-viewing accessibility, security sightlines, and native flora and fauna habitat includes the proposed construction of firebreaks within the park.
- 8. Locke-Paddon Wetland Regional Park:** City of Marin and MPRPD staff met on-site to inspect the park's existing restroom. City and MPRPD staff will explore options possibly leading to the building's renovation.

EECO DIVISION

- 1. Community Outreach:**
 - A. Blue Zone Project Monterey County:** Blue Zones staff led a program at Palo Corona Regional Park on September 10. Approximately 20 participants joined this free event and split into two groups hiking to Inspiration Point or the Oak Knoll Trail. Staff continues to work with the Blue Zone Project to offer various activities.
 - B. CSUMB ENSTU 349S - Environmental Interpretation and Outreach:** Staff led a field excursion for CSUMB students to the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Students participated in activities to develop environmental and interpretive messaging, focusing on techniques for communicating environmental messages to diverse audiences.
 - C. Digital Education/Social Media:** Social media posts were created and posted. Posts consisted of predator-prey interactions and classifying plants by some of their specific physical characteristics.

Plants by Growing Habit		You can identify & classify plants too!		Plants by Growing Habit
				
Tree	Herb			This single main stem or the trunk gives rise to many branches that bear leaves, flowers and fruits.
	These are just a few!			Trees are big and tall.
Shrub				Stems bear leaves, cones, flowers, or fruits.
Plants by Growing Habit		Plants by Growing Habit		Some trees can live for hundreds or thousands of years
They complete their life cycle within one or two seasons.		Shrubs are medium-sized, woody plants taller than herbs and shorter than trees. (usually 6m-10m tall)	They have bushy, hard, and woody stems with many branches.	
Generally, they have few branches or are branchless.	The herb is a short-sized plant with soft, green, delicate stem without the woody tissues.	Although stems are hard, they are flexible but not fragile.	Keep following us to learn more and test your knowledge!	
These can be easily uprooted from the soil.		The life-span of these plants usually depends on the species.	#knowyourparks-MPRPD	

Plants by Growing Habits Interpretive Site

- D. Let's Go Outdoors! Catalog and Programs:** Promotion of programs that, subject to compliance with CIVID-related guidelines, may start as early as January 2022.
- E. Service Learning – CSU Monterey Bay:** Staff recruited several CSUMB students as follows:
- Two students from the School of Computing to work on data management for MPRPD's program calendars and various contact lists;
 - Two students from the School of Design to work on the San Andreas Fault exhibit that will be located at the Palo Corona Discovery Center and the website for the annual wildflower show in June 2022; and,
 - Two students studying other disciplines who will be assisting with MPRPD's Environmental Education Program.
- F. Special Use Permits:** The following special use permits were issued during this reporting period:
- Blue Zones Project of Monterey Bay:** Hike at Palo Corona Regional Park;
 - Celebration of Life – Lorna Monroe Wonder Woman 5K Walk:** This event honored the accomplishments of this exceptional teacher, triathlete, and

environmentalist. The event hosted 125-family members and friends who walked the Rancho Canada Unit and South Bank Trail network at PCRP.

- iii. **CSUMB SWAMP Training:** Students from Professor John Olson's Freshwater Ecology course were granted access to the Carmel River at Garland Ranch Regional Park to train and practice collecting freshwater invertebrates and making habitat measurements following the California Water Board SWAMP protocol.
 - iv. **Monterey Peninsula Water Management District:** This agency was issued encroachment access to the Carmel River via MPRPD lands for vegetation management in the active channel through December 15, 2021.
 - v. **Moss Landing Marine Labs:** Randomly picked by a computer, deDampierre Park was selected for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Wetland Condition Assessment, a nationwide survey of wetlands. The nationwide survey consists of a 40-meter radius circle in which all data is collected to record observations about plant species, soil, hydrology, and water chemistry to assess the health of wetlands nationally.
2. **Training:** Staff attended a webinar on "Building Relationships and Working with Federally Unrecognized Tribes." Staff also participated in a California Naturalist Course that will run from September 1 to November 3, 2021.
 3. **Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan:** Staff met with Green Infrastructure Design to create a story gathering and mapping chart. Staff met with Susan Morley, archaeologist, for input on gathering cultural stories for our parks and open spaces.
 4. **Volunteers:** At the monthly August 26 volunteer meeting, Bethany Schulze, a California permitted bat ecologist and acoustics specialist gave presentation on her Hoary and Western Red Bats research. This presentation was recorded and is available to view upon request.



Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)



W. Red Bat (*Lasirurs blossevillii*)

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. CAWD Sewer Line:** On 13 September 2021, Carmel Area Wastewater District's (CAWD) general contractor (Graniterock Construction) broke ground at the Rancho Canada Unit for CAWD's sewer main replacement project. Ops Staff is coordinating with CAWD, Graniterock Construction, Psomas Construction Management, Rincon Consultants, and MNS Engineers to protect the District's assets and infrastructure, including daily and weekly check-in meetings to ensure compliance with the Temporary Construction Easement granted to CAWD by MPRPD.

Underground water lines and electrical conduits were marked and potholed for avoidance, and the public has been rerouted around the construction site. Even so, the contractor accidentally struck two water lines during trenching but were promptly repaired. This project is scheduled to continue through the end of October.



Graniterock Construction Co. trenching and installing new 16" sewer line



Worksite with Rancho Canada Clubhouse in background

2. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Maintenance: Rangers recently completed the Sedimentation and Encroaching Vegetation Removal Project at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. This dredging project included the strategic removal of excess tullies that reduced the amount of surface water available to wildlife and the relocation of accumulated sediment that reduced the pond's water volume. For this project, staff utilized the District's excavator, bucket tractor, and dump trucks to haul and relocate excavated materials and spoils.

On 01 September 2021, the Monterey County Herald published an article detailing the Preserve's history and providing details on the project. The Pond's wildlife is certain to benefit from this project come Spring 2022, as there will be significantly more capacity and surface water. As has previously been the case for several decades, Rangers will return in 2-3 seasons to repeat this process.



Ranger John loading excavated tullies into District dumptrucks



Now, all we need is some rain!

3. Fuel Mitigation at Garland Ranch Regional Park: Fuel mitigation work continues at Garland Ranch Regional Park, including the removal of a significant number of eucalyptus trees bordering the Rancho Loop Trail.

For the past several weeks, crews from Gabilan Conservation Camp (Camp) have been working hard to fall, chip, and buck eucalyptus trees up to 20" DBH (diameter breast height). The Camp has been supplying its own woodchipper as it can accommodate much larger sized timber than the District's woodchipper. This also keeps the District's woodchipper available for other assignments.

Wood rounds too large to be chipped are being relocated to the Rancho Canada Unit and are being stockpiled at the "blister" for eventual chipping. The District has been fortunate to receive inmate crew assistance amidst a very heavy wildfire season. MPRPD will continue to utilize Camp crews, subject to their availability, to continue this important work. A press release is being developed in cooperation with the EECO Division for distribution in the coming weeks.



Brush to be chipped (on left) and wood rounds to be relocated (on right)

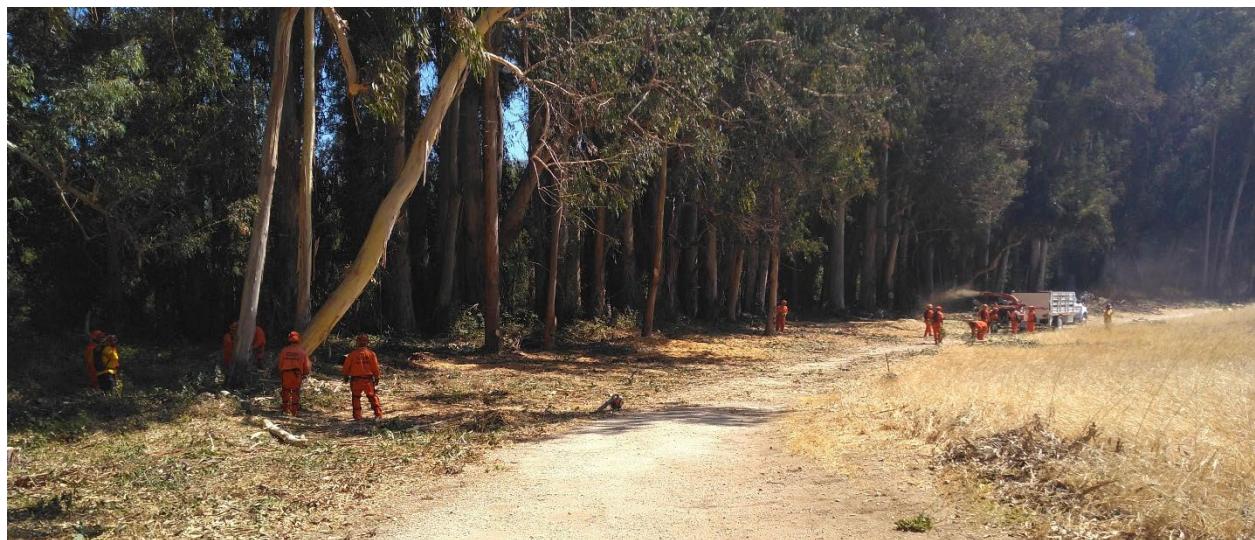
4. Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan for Garland Ranch Regional Park: The District is also beginning the process of developing an RFP for the Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan (Plan) for Garland Ranch Regional Park.

MPRPD's Board authorized Fiscal Year 2021-22 funds for this Plan and the park's initial fuel mitigation project, mentioned in Item #3, above.

Ops staff met with Resource Conservation District of Monterey County personnel and Regional Government Services (the District's grant writer and consultant) to develop a strategy for pursuing grant funding and help draft the Plan's RFP.

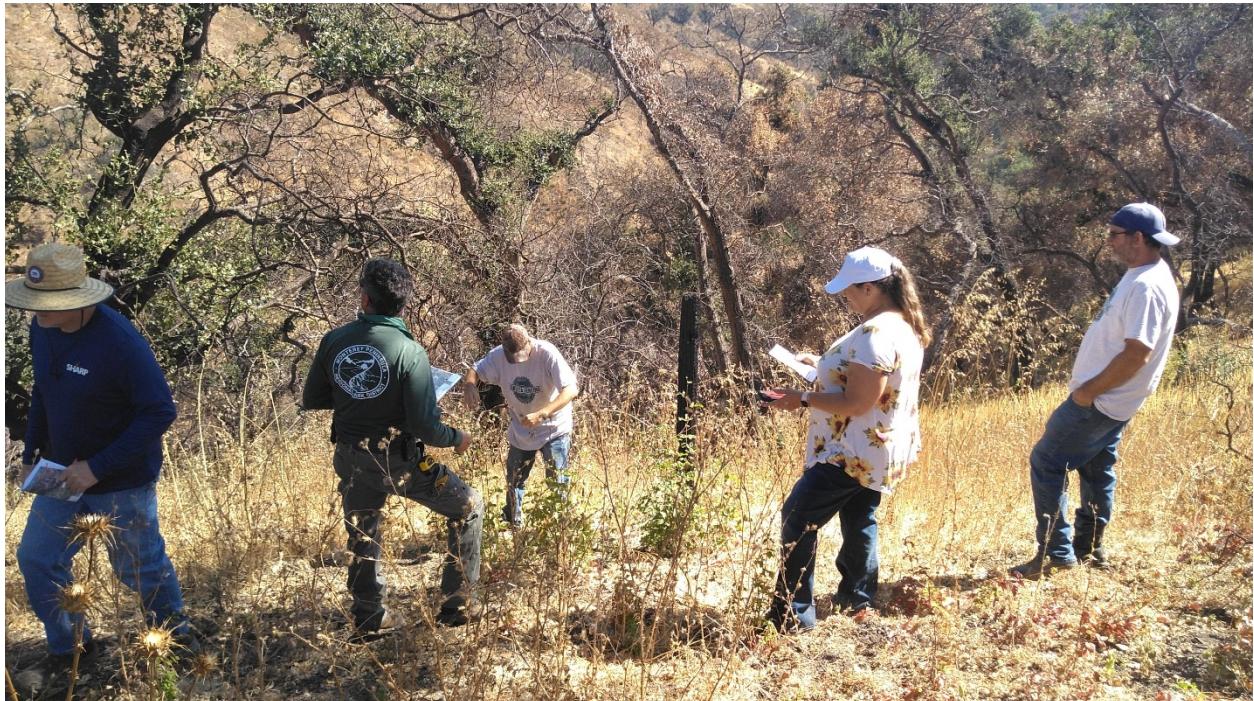


A newly constructed 30' fuel break along the Rancho Loop Trail



**Gabilan Conservation Camp inmate crew chipping
brush and raking along the Rancho Loop Trail**

- 5. San Clemente-Blue Rock Fence Project:** Following Board approval at the September meeting, staff issued a Request for Bids via the District's ProcureNow on-line bidding platform. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was conducted on 15 September and was attended by four licensed fencing contractors. The bid opening date was held on 23 September 2021. Staff will request approval to enter an agreement with the lowest most responsive, responsible bidder at the 06 October 2021 MPRPD Board meeting to move forward with the project's construction.



Ranger Joe explaining project scope and specifications to prospective bidders