

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

DATE: August 5, 2020
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Jackie Nelson, Environmental Education Supervisor
REVIEWED BY: Rafael Payan, General Manager
SUBJECT: Approval of Education and Native Plant Collection Memorandum of Understanding with MEarth, Inc.

SUMMARY:

Staff respectfully recommends the Board approve entering into a partnership agreement with MEarth, Inc., and direct staff to execute said Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (**ATTACHMENT 1**) in substantially the form and content submitted for the purpose to promote environmental education experiences for school-aged youth and adults in general, and propagate native plant species that may help advance watershed and habitat restoration initiatives.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact anticipated at this time.

FUNDING SOURCE:

Not Applicable.

FUNDING BALANCE:

Not Applicable.

DISCUSSION:

MPPRPD has a unique opportunity to collaborate with its neighbor, MEarth, enhancing Carmel River Watershed-based education and habitat restoration activities for the community, school children and their families. The MOU also authorizes development and implementation of protocols allowing MEarth to collect specified plant samples, seeds, and cuttings in order to propagate a broader diversity of species and greater number of plants that maintain the genotypical integrity of the area, in the jointly-owned MEarth and California Native Plant (CNPS) nursery on the Hilton Bialek Habitat property.

For the past four years, MPPRPD has partnered with the Carmel Unified School District (CUSD) and MEarth to host all Carmel Middle School seventh graders -- approximately 210 students in number, over the three-day Monterey Bay Outdoor Education (MBOE) Watershed Education Program. Hiking to Inspiration Point and Animas Pond, the students learned about natural habitats, the watershed's history, and regional conservation efforts. The interactive hours spent with the students, sharing the importance of Palo Corona Regional Park, its habitats and connectivity a larger landscape is greatly enhanced through this partnership.

Due to its numerically limited staff, MPRPD has adopted a model of collaboration with organizations respected in the community and having positive records, like MEarth, to reach a broader, more diverse group of people to share action-based, stewardship and conservation messaging while supporting the MPRPD Strategic Plan 2016-2020 Goal II of “*Engaging People with Nature.*” MEarth serves more than 2,500 students annually from Monterey County and 6,000+ community members through various youth and community programs. Although 32% of the youth served are within the CUSD, MEarth prioritizes reaching underserved, socio-economically challenged (Title 1) school children and provides scholarships to families who exhibit financial need.

This MOU provides access to natural open spaces and protected lands for MEarth school field trips, summer camp programs, enrichment activities, and stewardship events.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

MPRPD staff respectfully requests the Board of Directors approve entering into five-year MOU agreement with the MEarth, Inc., to promote environmental education experiences for school-aged youth, and adults in general, propagate native plant species that may help advance watershed and habitat restoration initiatives, and authorize the General Manager to execute said agreement.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Education Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) Between Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District and MEarth, Inc.](#)