

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
STAFF REPORT

**BOARD MEETING:** May 04, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Monthly Staff Report

**PRESENTER:** Rafael Payan, General Manager

**REPORT:** The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) Staff undertook from mid-March 2022 through mid-April 2022 in addition to performing MPRPD'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. Budget:** Staff has begun preparation for fiscal year 2022-23 budget development.
- 2. Contract Review:** Staff have begun the annual review process for expiring contracts. The new ProcureNow/OpenGov e-procurement system helps project managers stay on top of expiring contracts and insurance certificates by sending out automatic notices to project manager's and vendors. Project managers receive automatic periodic notices when contracts and insurance certificates are going to expire. Contracts exceeding staff authority will be brought to the Board.
- 3. COVID-19:** Staff continued to participate in biweekly meetings with the County OES and local jurisdictions. Health departments across the nation have expanded their research and recommendations to address the new Omicron BA.2 subvariant.
- 4. Cross-country Course at the Rancho Canada Unit:** Staff continued to meet with Big Sur Marathon Foundation members to plan for the course's construction, slated for May 19, 2022. The project's groundbreaking ceremony is also scheduled for May 19 and shall be held at the Rancho Canada Unit in proximity to the park's flagpole. The event begins at 1pm.
- 5. Concerned Citizens for Fire and Fuel Load Mitigation:** Staff continues to meet with this citizen-based advisory committee. Staff informed the group that MPRPD has met with fire officials and the grant application MPRPD will be submitting will focus on fuel load and fire mitigation implementation.

6. **FEMA Funding for Carmel Fire:** Operations staff completed the rebuilding of the fence that was burned during the Carmel Fire. Admin. staff began submitting the required paperwork to close out this project and receive any remaining funds available for this award. The contracted bid for the project was \$78,000. The District received an insurance reimbursement from the CJPIA in the amount of \$35,729 and funds from FEMA and CalOES totaling \$40,977.
7. **Interpretive Exhibits:** Staff continued to make progress on several force account-based interpretive exhibits. The goal is to complete these projects by this summer. As previously reported, these projects include:
  - A. **Condor Wingspan:** The exhibit wall was framed-in, providing much-needed space for this exhibit. This exhibit allows visitors to compare their “wingspan” with that of an adult California Condor’s up to 10’ wingspan.
  - B. **Jade:** This exhibit will feature a specimen(s) of Big Sur Jade, feature the geological facts that have facilitated this gem’s formation and other information.
  - C. **Ruk (Rumsen House):** Staff continues to work with the Rumsen Tribe planning, designing, and subsequently constructing the ruk (pronounced: rook) within the Palo Corona Regional Park’s Discovery Center at the Rancho Canada Unit.
  - D. **Tule Boat:** The exhibit’s base is nearing completion. Additional items for this exhibit will include a Rumsen fish trap, cordage fishing nets, baskets with abalone, mussel shells and other ocean-based foodstuffs, etc. Interpretive panels will describe these items and shall also provide information on the Kelp Highway – a theory that posits that the Americas’ first settlers utilized watercraft to travel from Asia to the Americas along the Pacific coast.



**Tule Boat Exhibit Under Construction**

## **8. Personnel Recruitment:**

**A. Recruitment Process for Vacant Positions:** The recruitment and selection processes continued for the Ranger, Environmental Education Specialist, and Accounting Tech positions. Applications continue to trickle in.

**B. Planning and Conservation Program Position:** Interviews for the Planning and Conservation Program position were conducted. Four (4) highly qualified candidates were interviewed. After careful consideration, the selected candidate was Jacob Smith. His start date with the District will be May 16, 2022.

**C. Accounting Technician:** Rebecca Smith, who has been working with the District through a staffing agency since late last year will soon be joining the District team in this new Board-approved role. Her official hire date is to be determined.

- 9. Project B:** The Rancho Canada Unit's Project B restroom facility, bus landing, and shade structures construction is expected to begin with fencing of the construction area on May 9, 2022. This project's contract was awarded to Avila Construction Company and construction management services are being provided by Ausonio, Inc.

Construction is expected to be completed by the end of November 2022, if not sooner. The main trail entrance, normally located near the flagpole area west of the park's headquarters building is being temporarily relocated to the north of the pond by Operations staff. Signage will be going up to assist park users find their way during this construction phase. Signage will also be installed to acknowledge the two grants that were obtained to assist with funding for this project. The porta-potties will be relocated to the temporary new northern entrance and will be removed from the site once the permanent restroom building has been constructed and is operational.

- 10. Riparian Habitat Restoration Plan:** Staff continued to meet with the State Coastal Conservancy and McBain Associates (the project's project designers) and other parties to advance the project's planning and design. More information shall be presented to the Board as this project moves forward.

Careful consideration is being taken to ensure a responsible balance between habitat and cultural conservation/restoration, accessibility, recreation, and education.

- 11. Training:** Staff participated in several sessions:

**A. CalPERS System Administration and Zoom Smart Gallery meetings**

**B. The Art of Writing the Performance Evaluation, Reserve Policies for Special Districts, Prevailing Wage Basics and Beyond**

**12. Wildlife Bridges:** Staff continues to meet with several parties to discuss potential construction of wildlife bridges in the region to reduce the number of animals killed when crossing high-speed highways. This is in the early exploratory stage and shall require substantial research to identify the most suitable locations – which may or may not be at an MPRPD site(s). Multijurisdictional and public outreach coordination effort will also be required. In summary, as previously reported, staff will seek:

**A. \$350 Million Grant for the Federal Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program:** MPRPD is interested in developing mitigation solutions that reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity. We have identified funds that are available for this purpose, including the new \$350 million grant for the federal Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program that encourages states to adopt “wildlife- vehicle collision safety counter-measures”;

**B. California Assembly Bill 2344:** The proposed California Assembly Bill 2344 submitted for Governor Newsom’s signature that requires CalTrans to develop a comprehensive plan and to build projects every year to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve the habitat connectivity for wildlife.

**C. California Senate Bill 790:** The recent passage of California Senate Bill 790 that allows the California Wildlife and Fisheries Department and CalTrans to use mitigation credits to modify roadways or plan new projects to improve wildlife connectivity to their habitats; and,

**D. Wildlife Expert’s Research Needed:** MPRPD will seek the services of a wildlife expert to help MPRPD vet its properties to determine which, if any, are recommended for a wildlife crossing.



**Sample Wildlife Bridge**

## EECO DIVISION

### 1. Community Outreach:

#### A. Earth Day Locke-Paddon Wetland Preserve:



“Every Day is Earth Day!” resonates, as demonstrated by the year-round efforts at the Oak Woodland and Community Garden at Locke-Paddon Community Wetland Park, in Marina.

This year, volunteer Ms. Marina Hernandez, in consultation with local Native American leader Linda Yamane, designed a logo for the garden shed at this Preserve. The mural was completed with community support at the 16th annual Earth Day event on April 23, 2022.

In support of the project, MPRPD’s General Manager, Rafael Payan told event organizers “parks have the potential of being utilized as ‘canvasses’ for artistic expression and inspiration. This aligns with the tradition of adorning public and private spaces with art, whether it be sculpture, fountains, murals, tile work, or “parkitecture” in general (architectural/landscape architectural design) – as has been done in Asia and Europe for well over 1000-years, and in parts of the USA in relatively more recent times.”

<p align="center"><b>16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Earth Day Marina</b> Saturday, April 23 • 9am - 1pm</p>  <p align="center"><i>Celebrate our planet and our city by working together on fun environmental service projects.</i> - <b>Grow the Flower</b></p> <p align="center"><b>FREE Family Friendly Community Event</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Live Music Games, Prizes &amp; Kids Activities Face Painting • Service Projects Bird Watching</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park</b> 190 Seaside Circle, Marina (next to the Marina Library Playground)</p> <p>Volunteers for service projects are encouraged to arrive between 8:30 – 9am to choose your project and register to receive a free "thank you" lunch.</p> <p align="center">Contact <b>Bruce Delgado</b> (831) 277-7690 • bdelgado62@gmail.com</p>	 <p align="right"><b>FRIDAY APRIL 22, 2022</b></p> <p><b>North Fremont Business District of Monterey to hold 5th Annual Earth Day clean up event</b></p> <p>The community is invited to join the North Fremont Business District of Monterey at its 3rd Annual Earth Day Clean Up on North Fremont Street on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 from 9:00 am - 11:00 am.</p> <p>Volunteer participants should meet at Monterey Lanes, 2161 North Fremont Street, at 9:00 a.m. Complimentary coffee and Monterey Donuts will be served prior to walking the North Fremont District of Monterey to pick up litter to help beautify the area. RSVP's are appreciated to volunteer and participate in the Earth Day Clean Up on North Fremont Street by signing up at <a href="http://www.signuggenius.com/go/20F054BA9A62AA3FD0-north">www.signuggenius.com/go/20F054BA9A62AA3FD0-north</a> or by calling (831) 594-1500 or emailing <a href="mailto:brickman@brickmanmarketing.com">brickman@brickmanmarketing.com</a>.</p> <p>A big Thank You to the City of Monterey, Monterey County Fair &amp; Event Center, Monterey Lanes, Foolish Times, 2nd Chance Thrift Store, 2nd Chance Ministry, Monterey Lanes &amp; the North Fremont Business District Board of Directors.</p> <p>Although there will not be an e-Waste drop off at the event this year, the community is urged to bring their e-waste to the Monterey Peninsula Regional Waste Management District in Marina (<a href="http://www.mrwmd.org/">http://www.mrwmd.org/</a>)</p>
<p align="center"><b>Seaside's First Green Certified Business</b></p> <p align="center">Doing our part to protect the Monterey Bay &amp; the Planet</p>  <p><b>Mike Brooks Tracy Brooks Phill Northrup</b></p>  <p align="center"><b>Hans AUTO REPAIR</b></p> <p align="center"><b>HONEST. QUALITY SERVICE AT A FAIR PRICE</b></p> <p align="center">284 Olympia Ave. • Seaside OPEN MONDAY - FRIDAY 8:30AM-5PM (831) 583-9820 <a href="http://www.hansautorepair.com">www.hansautorepair.com</a></p>	 <p align="center"><b>Monterey Bay Air Resources District</b> <i>Working Monterey San Geronimo &amp; Santa Lucia Counties</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Happy Earth Day</b></p> <p>Check out our programs to reduce pollution and keep our air clean at <a href="http://mbard.org">mbard.org</a></p>  

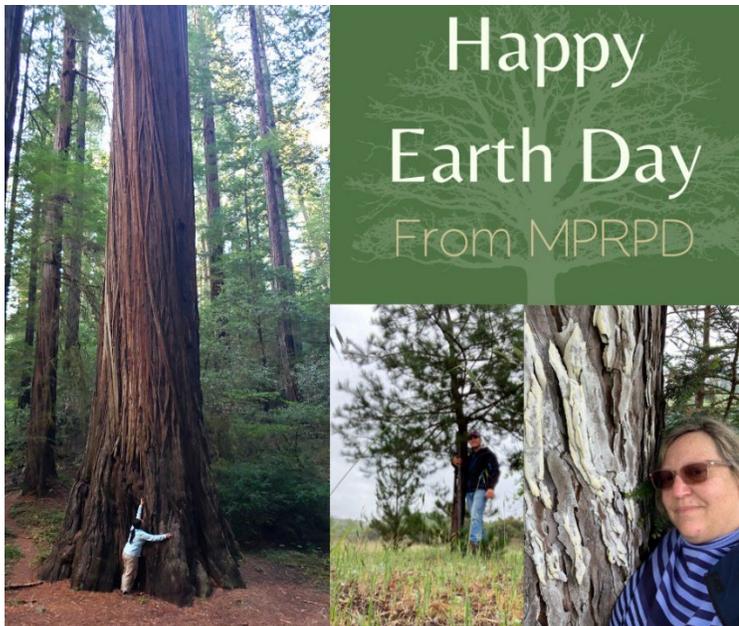
Bruce Delgado, the City of Marina’s Mayor and Earth Day event organizer commented on the beautiful ad and stated, “This means the world to us because so much work is going into this free event to be special for all ages -- but with COVID, we really don't know if folks are ready yet for congregating outdoors.”

**B. Big Sur Marathon Foundation Cross Country Course Groundbreaking:** Ceremony was rescheduled to Thursday, May 19 at 1 pm due to this April's inclement weather.

Board and staff are invited to join this media event. For more information visit [www.palocoronatrails.org](http://www.palocoronatrails.org)



**C. Social Media Posts:**



Happy Earth Day from the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District!

This year, as a show of appreciation for our outdoors, MPRPD staff are participating in the Sempervirens Fund #HugATreeChallenge to support reforestation in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

For this reporting period, posts consisted of highlighting park happenings and educational content related to "Spring and Summer at the Parks." MPRPD used social media for relaying safety tips in tick habitat, recap the 2022 California Wildlife Day, and uplift local partner organization events including the California Native Plant Society's Spring Wildflower Show. MPRPD social media accounts saw consistent growth from both Facebook and Instagram platforms in Mar-Apr.

- i. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:
  1. April 14 follower count: 1,786

2. Facebook Page Reach: 2,090 (↑ 24%)
3. Top three most popular posts: March 15 – April 14
  - a. 4/6 Tick Warning (1,066 views)
  - b. 3/16 CWD Registration (559 views)
  - c. 4/1 LGO! Spring/Summer Announcement (434 views)

- ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd\_lgo:
  1. March 16 follower count: 747
  2. Instagram Page Reach: 552 (↑ 4.2%)
  3. Top three most popular posts: March 15 – April 14
    - a. 3/25 CWD Recap (287 views)
    - b. 3/30 Winter LGO! Recap (249 views)
    - c. 4/9 CNPS Spring Wildflower Show Announcement (210 views)

**2. Consulting Services:** Staff posted requests for proposals and quotes for a Graphic Designer to assist staff with the layout for the Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan. These projects are currently being advertised on the ProcureNow portal.

### **3. Education:**

#### **A. K-12 Education Programs**

- i. Staff will lead a natural science-based walk for Carmel Middle School's 7<sup>th</sup> graders in May. This walk and activity will be to Inspiration Point at Palo Corona. A total of 180-students are expected to participate over the course of three (3) days at the end of May. New site-specific curriculum and resources will be piloted to inform future middle school visits and programs.

The walk is a part of the Monterey Bay Outdoor Education (MBOE) program. MBOE is an outdoor education collective between local organizations and locations that provide a comprehensive learning experience for the Carmel Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Learning topics are varied, consisting of science, poetry, history, and art related to the natural world that is captured at locations such as Palo Corona Regional Park, Point Lobos State Park, and Hastings Reserve.

- ii. Staff continues communication with Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) program coordinator to expand, enhance, or add to school programming through our resources at Palo Corona Regional Park with hope to begin programming in the 2022/2023 school year.

#### **B. Service Learning – CSU Monterey Bay:**

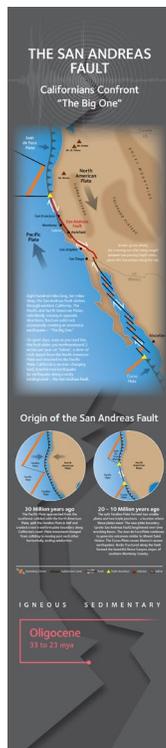
- i. CSUMB Service Learners, working with MPRPD staff, are updating the Virtual Wildflower Show website in preparation for the hybrid event online and June 11 & 12, 2022 at Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center.

- ii. Service Learners continue to beautify the arboretum and garden for the June event.

**4. Exhibits:**

- A. Tule Boat and Cultural Exhibits:** Staff met with Linda Yamane to discuss the steps to create additional exhibit pieces depicting Indigenous cultures, for the Palo Corona Discovery Center.
- B. Visitor Education Guide App:** MPRPD and US National Park Service staff met with Green Infrastructure Design to review the manual for the Visitor Education Guide (VEG) App which is an interactive app highlighting points of interest throughout all of Palo Corona Regional Park. The app is designed to be beta tested by staff with the goal of releasing the app for public use soon.
- C. Watershed Terrain Map:** Staff is in the review stage for the Carmel River 3-D Watershed Terrain Map. Similar in style to the terrain map at Garland Ranch Regional Park, this 6'x7' map will highlight features of the entire Carmel River Watershed. Installation at the PCRPD Discovery Center is scheduled for late June 2022.
- D. Geology Exhibit Update:** Staff is preparing and updating the PCRPD Discovery Center exhibits in anticipation of the CA Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL) conference (May 10-13, 2022), and the re-opening of the centers at Palo Corona and Garland Ranch.

In addition to panel redesigns, new touchable display items are being added including Big Sur jade specimens.



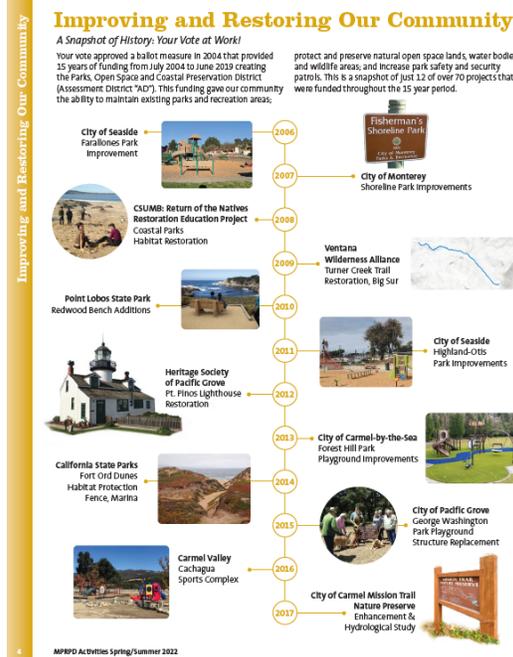
## 5. Let's Go Outdoors! (LGO!) Guide and Programs:

**A. Spring/Summer 2022 Guide:** The guide was mailed to the public the week of April 10 and inserted in the Monterey County Weekly on April 21, 2022.

Staff created many new features including a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary page showcasing the MPRPD grant program's accomplishments from 2004-2019; QR code for registration; and, program key for each activity.

Programs began April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The guide is available online. Registration begins one (1) calendar month before an activity's start date, at mid-night. Printed catalog are available.

**B. Volunteer Support:** The high interest and demand for participation in programs, especially on MPRPD properties, re-enforces the need to develop a "return to service" for volunteer instructors and facilitators. Admin and EECO staff continue to plan for this return to service and shall soon provide the Board a date for such.



## 6. Personnel Recruitment:

**A. Environmental Education Specialist Position:** Interviews for the Environmental Education Specialist position were conducted. It is anticipated that the position shall soon be filled.

7. **The California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL):** Originally planned to be held at Palo Corona Regional Park through Wedgewood Weddings in May 2020, SERCAL is holding its annual conference the week of May 10-13, 2022. Themed, "Think Big, Start Small, Restore Now," MPRPD will spotlight many of its ecological accomplishments as staff participates in the opening welcome, plenary discussions, presentations, and a guided hike along San Jose Creek.
8. **Special Use Permits:** The following special use permits (SUP) were issued during this reporting period:

**A. Big Sur Land Trust Race for Open Space (ROS) 2022** to access the back country of PCRP.

The month of April ROS is a campaign and fundraising effort to "Move for the Lands You Love."

The BSLT offered a weekend of "Adventure Courses" for runners and hikers to experience firsthand the habitat connectivity that conservation organizations have made possible in the area. The ROS included 9-mile roundtrip course option from the Discovery Center to the third bridge on the San Jose Creek Trail and back; 21-mile roundtrip course to Mitteldorf Preserve; and new a 12-mile one-way shuttle-trip course from Mitteldorf Preserve the PCRP main parking lot and event start area.

HADLEY HARGREAVE

RECEIVED  
APR 18 2022

Carla  
Todd

Jenny

Kate

Ashley

Patrick  
Abnerne

Nikki

Sharon W

Dear Jackie, Caine, Rafael!

*Thank you for helping us make the Race for Open Space Adventure Course weekend possible. The event was a wonderful success, with countless participants expressing pure joy about being able to experience these magnificent lands. We are so grateful for your partnership!*

With gratitude,  
The team at Big Sur Land Trust

*p.s Please save May 5<sup>th</sup> from 5-6PM for our Race for Open Space after-party! We'll email details soon.*

- B. California Native Plant Society (CNPS)** was issued a SUP to collect flowers to highlight flowers blooming in the wild areas throughout Monterey County at the annual Wildflower Show held for the first time at the Carmel Woman's Club.

CNPS is a strong partner and contributor at the MPRPD summer wildflower show.

- C. Carmel Unified School District Carmel High School** seniors and juniors prepare annually for the spring break "Desert Trip." Traditionally hiking the pinnacles, this year's student and teachers kept it local. Meeting at the PCRPP main parking lot the group was transported, via school bus, to the Highway 1 CA State Parks gate entrance across Monastery Beach.

Under permits issued by CA State Parks and MPRPD, participants hiked the road to the San Jose Creek Trailhead. They then hiked the trail to Animas Pond and back to the PCPR parking area.

- D. Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR):** ESNEER staff were provided access to sample MPRPD ponds in publicly accessible open spaces and closed areas.

Working on a collaborative project with USFWS, CDFW, and Washington State University, the project is intended to identify sites that host (or may host) Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS), California tiger salamander (CTS), and California red-legged frog (CRLF) by detecting DNA from these listed amphibians in water samples. The effort involves sampling up to 200-ponds in Santa Cruz and North Monterey Counties in 2022. All three species are facing grave threats due to intensive agricultural and residential development, introduced bullfrogs and fish, chytridiomycosis, and drought. Better information on the distribution of breeding sites is needed for the protection of these species.

Ponds sampled were located at: Palo Corona Regional Park, Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, and Garland Ranch Regional Park.

- E. Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz sponsored by University of CA Berkley:** A citizen science style program, the SOD Blitz informs and educates the community about Sudden Oak Death, gets locals involved in collecting samples and detecting the disease, and produces detailed local maps of disease distribution. The map can then be used to identify those areas where the infestation may be mild enough to justify proactive management.

The PCPR Discovery Center foyer was the Collection Site Staging Area (Station) for community participants to receive instructions to properly collect samples and return packets to be tested. The 2022 Monterey County SOD Blitz ran Friday, April 22 through Monday, April 25.

**F. Santa Lucia Conservancy (SLC):** The Conservancy was issued an annual permit approving staff, contractors, etc., to access Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District's (MPRPD) Palo Corona Regional Park along SLC and MPPRD property boundaries, and at various locations for the purposes associated with SLC work including, but not limited to, inventory surveys; invasive spp. mapping/removal; fire management planning; pond research; etc. This special use permit may include access to other MPRPD locations as approved on a case-by-case basis.

**G. Department of Defense Naval Post Graduate School:** Naval Support Activity staff are hosting a nature walk along the Carmel River Trail and Front Ranch of PCRPD for 15-international adult students attending a two-week course at the Institute for Security Governance (ISG on the NPS campus). Students came from Nigeria, Nepal, Mexico, Guyana, and Sierra Leone, and 5-course facilitators from the United Nations, NPS faculty, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, and ISG.

## 9. Volunteers:

**A. Volunteer Enrichment:** Bruce Delgado, botanist at the Bureau of Land Management, gave an informative talk to MPRPD's volunteers entitled "Flora, Fauna, and Recreation at Fort Ord" at their monthly virtual meeting.

**B. Wildflower Show:** Volunteers and staff are preparing for the 2022 Summer Wildflower Show. This in-person event will be held the weekend of June 11-12, 2022, at Garland Ranch Regional Park.

## OPERATIONS DIVISION

**1. Cooper Well Improvements:** Dougherty Pump & Drilling replaced the wellhead on the Cooper system at Garland Ranch Regional Park. They also made some electrical improvements and continue to monitor the chlorinator pump monthly for proper operation and compliance.



**Cooper Well w/ New Head and Electrical Wiring**

- 2. GRRP Visitor Center Restrooms Improvements:** Rangers are completing improvements to the Visitor Center restrooms at Garland Ranch Regional Park with the intent of reopening them to the public soon. Improvements include painting walls, resurfacing floors, updating plumbing, and installing new doors.



**Ranger Hatton Painting VC Restroom Walls**

- 3. Salmonid Restoration Federation Conference Site Tour:** The Salmonid Restoration Federation annual conference, held in Santa Cruz, CA, offered a field trip to Palo Corona Regional Park to highlight the Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project. Admin. and Operations staff spoke to conference participants about the history and benefits of the park's acquisitions and provided logistical support to conference organizers.



**MPRPD General Manager Payan Speaking to SRF Conference Participants**

- 4. Seasonal Mowing and Brushing:** Rangers started seasonal mowing and brushing of District open spaces, preserves, and trails. Again, this year, Rangers invited the

California Native Plant Society to identify and mark wildflowers of interest for avoidance. Given the late April rains, Rangers may determine if a second round of mowing and brushing is necessary. This work is performed using a combination of ride-on as well as hand-held equipment, all of which is mechanically driven. Rangers were also supplemented by the services of People Ready, the District's temporary labor force provider.

- 5. SLC Environmental Education Easement:** The Santa Lucia Conservancy performed minor tree maintenance within the environmental education easement at PCRCP's Rancho Canada Unit. This included removing dead overhanging branches and brushing along the access route leading to their outdoor classroom.



**Lopez Tree Service at Rancho Canada Unit**

- 6. Trees Down at GRRP and RCU:** Rangers and Gabilan inmate crews cleared several large trees that fell during multiple small storm events at Garland Ranch Regional Park and Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit.



**Rangers Clearing Downed Tree at Lazy Oaks Trailhead**



**Large, Downed Cottonwood at RCU Cleared by Gabilan Inmate Crew**