

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

DATE: February 2, 2022
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Jackie Nelson, Environmental Education Supervisor
REVIEWED BY: Rafael Payan, General Manager
SUBJECT: Review and Approval of Agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric to Receive Smith's Blue Butterfly Mitigation Funding

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff respectfully recommends the Board approve entering into a Mitigation Support Agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) to receive funding for conservation planning and recovery efforts, or habitat enhancement and restoration for Smith's blue butterfly, Monterey spine flower, and sand gilia at Marina Dunes Preserve (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

FISCAL IMPACT:

\$624,346 in mitigation funding.

FUNDING SOURCE:

Not Applicable.

FUNDING BALANCE:

Not Applicable.

DISCUSSION:

The PG&E Mitigation Program was developed to provide conservation and compensatory mitigation planning/implementation related to discretionary permits associated to Section 7 or 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 2081 of the California Endangered Species Act, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, and Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code (Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements).

PG&E possesses programmatic Habitat Conservation Plans, which are a voluntary discretionary take authorization. The Multiple Region Habitat Conservation Plan (MRHCP) provides incidental take coverage for 24 listed animal species in the Sacramento Valley and foothills, the north coast, and the central coast of California.

The MRHCP allows PG&E activities to proceed that might result in the "incidental take" of certain endangered or threatened species by imposing requirements to minimize and offset any impacts to the potential habitat of such species. The MRHCP essentially created a mechanism to provide a streamlined process to cover take of habitat, which allows PG&E to maintain its existing infrastructure, in exchange for a substantial conservation targets.

Listed in 1976 as endangered, the Smith's blue butterfly (SBB) spends its entire life within a few hundred yards, and is completely dependent on, seaciff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*) and coast buckwheat (*Eriogonum latifolium*). Intact buckwheat and SBB sites are severely limited due to years of development and habitat encroachment. Marina Dunes Preserve (MDP) has both native buckwheat species, and as recently as June 2021, through a presence/absence survey for Smith's blue butterfly (SBB), over 40 blue butterflies were counted with 26 of them positively identified as SBB.

Marina Dunes Preserve was selected as a site for MRHCP because of the presence of SBB and the established three-year Restoration Action Plan (RAP) presented to the MPRPD Board of Directors in April 2021. The proposed mitigation project provides \$624,346.00 (\$15,117/acre) to enhance 41.5 acres of the 62-acre coastal dune Preserve. It is proposed to take eight to ten years to implement the initial restoration activities, with monitoring anticipated to extend past ten years (**ATTACHMENT 2**). Utilizing contracted staff, the project is anticipated to be managed by the Planning and Conservation Supervisor.

As part of the agreement MPRPD is committed to monitoring the site for 30 years, providing PG&E annual reports, with final annual report due between 2030-2032.

Separate from the restoration mitigation funding, PG&E has committed to pay for the fabrication and installation of three interpretive signs at Marina Dunes Preserve. These signs are being designed in concert with MPRPD and Burlison staff, and students enrolled in the California State University Monterey Bay Science Illustration Certificate Program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff respectfully recommends the Board approve entering into a Mitigation Support Agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) to receive funding for conservation planning and habitat enhancement at Marina Dunes Preserve and authorize the General Manager, Dr. Rafael Payan, to execute said agreement.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Mitigation Support Agreement](#)
2. [Conservation Concept Plan](#)