

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: June 01, 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-April 2022 through mid-May 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 completed the draft FY2022-23 budget included in this month's packet for Board review and approval.
- 2. CalTRUST Market & Strategy Update:** Staff participated in a shareholder call with CalTRUST's Investment Management team at BlackRock to discuss the current market environment, rising interest rates, and the impact on CalTRUST funds. The team discussed their strategy for each CalTRUST fund and, specifically to floating net asset value (NAV) Short- and Medium-Term Funds, and how they foresee potential NAV movement.
- 3. COVID-19:** District offices and Discovery and Visitor centers will be reopened to the public beginning the week of June 6, 2022.
- 4. Personnel Recruitment:** The recruitment and selection process continued for a Ranger and an Environmental Education Specialist. Interviews were held and a candidate of choice has been selected for the Ranger position. We anticipate an early June start date.
- 5. Project B – Restroom, Multi-Purpose Event Pad, Bus Landing:** On May 9, 2022, Avila Construction mobilized and began to prepare the site for the coming work. Site fencing was installed, and signage was placed throughout the parking lot directing the public to the new access point for the Palo Corona Regional Park's trailhead and trails. Restroom pad excavation and multipurpose pad layout also began. The excess fill from the restroom pad is being used to fill-in selected former golf bunkers

and enhance the trail entry area. Rangers and the Ausonio construction management team are preparing progress reports. In compliance with the District's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program a tribal monitor has been retained to observe the site during excavation.



Fencing and Signage Installation



Restroom Pad Excavation



Project Grant Funding Acknowledgement Banner

6. **SERCAL Conference:** Admin. staff delivered lunches to SERCAL hikers at Inspiration Point during their recent conference at Palo Corona Regional Park.
7. **Tower Window Replacement Maintenance:** The Rancho Canada Unit's Discovery Center's tower windows that were leaking were replaced by Dilbeck & Sons. This project was expected to be completed by Wednesday, May 25, 2022. Maintenance of these windows needed to take place prior to any roofing repairs to prevent damage to new roof with scaffolding and walking on the clay tile roofing material.



New Window Installation

8. Training: Capital Assets: Common Questions and Best Practices

9. Traffic Control during Construction: Admin staff helped a lost driver, looking for park exit.



“...back up away from the trailhead and out of the construction zone”

EECO DIVISION

1. Community Outreach:

A. Big Sur Marathon Foundation (BSMF) Community Trail Groundbreaking Ceremony: On May 19, the BSMF held a groundbreaking event to celebrate the

construction of this community asset. An estimated fifty folks attended the ceremony, celebrating the permeable decomposed granite surfaced trail.

MPRPD's President Potter acknowledged the important work the BSMF does within our region and beyond, including the many inclusionary physical and mental health benefits the trail will offer to communities' residents and the region's visitors. As has been reported by local press, this trail will serve as a cross-country meet venue a few times per year. This trail aligns with MPRPD's mission to be an inclusionary organization that provides opportunities for underserved and under-represented segments of society.



Initial discing of the 2-kilometer loop portion of the course began before the ceremony. Several event participants enjoyed walking the entire trail route, viewing the spectacular features and vistas the trail's thoughtful design provides.

MPRPD is thankful for the strong coalition the BSMF and MPRPD continue to foster. The District especially wants to congratulate the BSMF for its vision, hard work, and extraordinarily successful fundraising campaign that took

approximately four months to generate the funds for this trail's construction, thereby reinforcing our communities' interest and support for this facility.

B. Marina Earth Day Event: EECO Staff and CSUMB Service Learners assisted with the 2022 Earth Day Celebration at Locke-Paddon Community Park. The Citizens for Sustainable Marina (CS4M) and the City of Marina sponsored this event. MPRPD supported the event by registering volunteers and public for restoration activities and community service at the wetland park. There were an estimated 180-people who attended the event.



C. MEarth Day: EECO Staff and CSUMB Service Learners attended the 2022 MEarth Day Celebration at Carmel Valley Middle School. MPRPD hosted an arts and crafts table alongside an interpretive exhibit of animal furs in support of the event. This event, focusing on youth outreach, was an excellent opportunity for MPRPD to support our coalition organization, MEarth Carmel. Let's Go Outdoors Programing, habitat conservation, and open spaces such as the nearby Palo Corona Regional Park and its Rancho Canada Unit were main topics of interest and conversation with the public.

D. Social Media Posts: 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 relevant trail closures, celebrating Earth Day, and advertise Let's Go Outdoors programs. MPRPD social media accounts saw consistent growth from both Facebook and Instagram platforms during the months of April and May, this year.



Statistics include:

i. Facebook - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

- a. April 14 follower count: 1,798
- b. Facebook Page Reach: 4,560 (↑ 118.4%)
- c. Top three most popular posts: April 15 – May 14

1. 4/15 Marina Earth Day Poster (1,277 views)
2. 5/4 Marina Dunes Trail Closure (855 views)
3. 4/18 Seasonal Bridges Update (624 views)

ii. Instagram - @mprpd_lgo:

- a. March 16 follower count: 771
- b. Instagram Page Reach: 453 (↓ 17.8%)
- c. Top three most popular posts: April 15 – May 14
 1. 4/18 Seasonal Bridges (251 views)
 2. 4/15 Marina Earth Day Poster (182 views)
 3. 4/20 Salmonid Conference Field Trip (160 views)



The “Wonderful World of Nature Tech” is engaging and informative for all ages.



Caine Camarillo, Supervising Ranger and Rafael Payan, General Manager present at the 39th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference. The day-long field event highlighted Carmel River’s restoration project and concept plans for Palo Corona Regional Park.

2. Consultant Services:

A. Graphic Designer Request for Proposals (RFP): Staff completed the Graphic Designer RFP and contracted with Tracy Hopper of Hopperpolis, to provide illustrations, concept designs, and layout for the Visitor Interpretive Education Plan (VIEP). The VIEP is scheduled to be completed and presented to the Board of Directors by December 2022.

3. Education:

A. K-12 Education Programs:

i. Staff prepared the natural science-based walk for Carmel Middle School’s 7th graders, held the week of May 24-26, 2022. The 180-students walked to Palo Corona Regional Park’s Inspiration, and participated in newly designed, site-specific programs and activities, including exploring the remodeled Discovery Center.

- ii. Staff has identified program timeframes with Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) program coordinator and Seaside Middle School Teachers to enhance and reinforce current life science curriculum (STEM Scopes) through our resources at Palo Corona. Programming is projected to occur in spring of the 2022/2023 school year for nearly three hundred, seventh grade students.

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 that goes online June 11 & 12, 2022, to be broadcast from Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center.

CSUMB Service Learners, Jose Alvarez, and Scott Pearce, completed their service time for the Spring 2022 semester. The team researched and added technical and fun facts and activities to the Virtual Wildflower Show website creating a more seamless experience for remote platform visitors.

- ii. Service Learners continue to beautify the Garland Ranch Regional Park Arboretum and Garden for the June event.

- 4. **Exhibits – Our Night Skies:** Staff met with members from the Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy (MIRA) to begin designs of a new exhibit Night Sky Exhibit highlighting the impacts of climate change and light on our planet.

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

- A. **Spring/Summer 2022 Guide:** Programs began with night hikes on April 23rd and continue to be offered nearly every weekend and periodically during the week. The guide is available online. Online registration begins one calendar month before the activity's start date, at mid-night. A printed catalog is also available.

- B. **Community Happenings – Mid Season Advertisement:** Announcement for additional Community Happenings was advertised through MPRPD's email listserv. The latest announcement incorporates new programs, remind folks about community offerings, and draws attention to MPRPD's summer programs.

- 6. **The California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL):** After two-plus years of planning, SERCAL hosted its long awaited in person conference at Palo Corona Regional Park the week of May 10-13. MPRPD Staff along with Big Sur Land Trust and Carmel River Watershed Conservancy personnel opened the conference with various presentations, followed by a Plenary Panel Q & A session. This year's theme: "Think Big, Start Small, Restore Now" was highlighted by the work planned for, or being completed at, several MPRPD properties.

EECO staff highlighted benefits of planning and partnerships during the joint presentation with Burleson Consulting - A Terracon Company, and Pacific Gas & Electric on the ecological restoration of Marina Dunes Preserve.

With the support of the MPRPD rangers, EECO staff led an interpretive hike/field trip at San Jose Creek Trail for approximately 27-SERCAL participants.



7. **Special Use Permits:** The following special use permits (SUP) were issued during this reporting period:

A. Big Sur Land Trust: Two hikes accessing Palo Corona Regional Park's backcountry. Other hikes are also planned for the month of June 2022.

B. Dawn Reis and Ecological Studies: CA red-legged frog (CRLF) tadpole rescue and relocation project in the Carmel River along PCRP was initiated. Dawn Reis and her team are approved to conduct this work under contract to California-American Water and with permit approvals from United States Fish and Wildlife Service and CA Department of Fish and Wildlife.

C. Monterey Peninsula College Astronomy Program: Instructor Tim McKnew, MPC Astronomy/Physics Lab Manager, shared with MPRPD staff the following "Thank you so much for your help with this! We have faced a difficult semester in terms of scheduling due to the transition back from remote occurring mid-semester for this course, as well as the usual delays and rescheduled activities due to weather. Your help and a chance to run our program at GRRP is really appreciated!"



May 18, 2022: MPC Students and professor view night sky at GRRP as a culmination of studies and end of the Spring 2022 semester.

D. Quail Meadows Homeowners Association: Collaborating with Supervising Ranger Caine Camarillo, the Quail Meadows HOA hired a sub-contractor to clear Animas Road with mechanical equipment to maintain fire break conditions and to

upgrade the road to serve as a distinguished fire road for the Cypress Fire Protection District.

8. 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" during their monthly virtual meeting.

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

- i. Volunteer, Mary Dainton gave a wildflower collecting tutorial to volunteer wildflower collectors.
- ii. Volunteers and staff will be collecting and identifying wildflowers from multiple MPRPD lands starting June 9 through June 11, to be displayed at the event.

C. Volunteers Return to In Person Services: Staff has begun providing orientation to volunteers in preparation to returning to their in-person duties in June 2022.

OPERATIONS DIVISION

1. **CalFire Grading Roads at Palo Corona Regional Park:** CalFire's Monterey-San Benito Unit personnel have been grading roads in the Palo Corona Regional Park's backcountry in preparation of this year's wildfire season. This comes at no charge to the District and will better prepare CalFire firefighters and heavy equipment operators with initial attack strategies if and when an incident occurs.



Cal Fire Grader on Rocky Ridge

- 2. Frog Pond Wetland Preserve Weir Dam:** Rangers replaced the weir dam at the Frog Pond, which helps retain pond water later into the summer months. This required the replacement of the attached puncheon and spillway as part of the project.



Ranger Vandervort Finishing Concrete Spillway

- 3. GRRP Visitor Center Restrooms Improvements:** Rangers are completing improvements to the Garland Ranch Regional Park Visitor Center's restrooms with the intent of reopening these restrooms and Garland Park Visitor Center on June 6, 2022. The portables restrooms will be removed upon the restroom's reopening.
- 4. Marina Dunes Preserve Snowy Plover Fencing:** The snowy plover symbolic fencing at Marina Dunes Preserve has been relocated in advance of the nesting season. Each year Rangers work with Point Blue Conservancy to move the fence towards or away from the foredune to avoid being impacted by high tides.



Symbolic Snowy Plover Fencing

5. **Palo Corona Community Trail:** Big Sur Marathon Foundation has hired Don Chapin Company to construct the community trail at Palo Corona Regional Park. Don Chapin Company expected to complete the project by late May.



Contractor Prepping Trail Alignment by Removing Turf Grass



Permeable Decomposed Granite Being Laid and Compacted



Big Sur Marathon Foundation's Groundbreaking Ceremony on May 19, 2022

6. **Seasonal Mowing and Brushing:** Seasonal maintenance at all District properties continues. Rangers started seasonal mowing and brushing of District open spaces, preserves, and trails on May 9, 2022. Again, this year Rangers invited the California Native Plant Society to identify and mark wildflowers of interest for avoidance.
7. **Trees Down at GRRP and RCU:** An exceptionally large oak tree fell at the Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit recently for unknown reasons. This tree unfortunately crushed a section of split-rail fence that will need to be replaced following removal the tree's removal. Rangers will utilize the assistance of a Gabilan inmate crew to remove the brush and wood associated with this tree's removal.



Large Oak Tree at RCU Fell on May 20, 2022

8. **Window replacement at Rancho Canada Unit:** As mentioned in the Admin. Division's report, Dilbeck & Sons were hired to replace the tower windows at the Palo Corona Regional Park Rancho Canada Unit's Discovery Center. The contractor was assigned a temporary code and key to access the building and grounds during the project.

PLANNING & CONSERVATION

1. **Planning and Conservation Program Lead Position:** Jake Smith officially started serving as the District's Planning and Conservation Program lead on May 16, 2022.

Prior to his new role with the District, Jake served for nearly a decade as the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's Conservation and GIS Program Manager. Jake is extremely excited to join the District's team and looks forward to growing the District's Planning and Conservation programs to increase the pace and scale of work that supports the District's staff and Strategic Plan.

Jake has begun his orientation, including:

- A.** Going through the "onboarding process" and becoming familiar with MPRPD's protocols, and policies, and procedures, Strategic Plan and proposed Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget;
- B.** Has met with MPRPD's Legal Counsel and staff, and has begun touring District lands in the company of MPRPD personnel, to understand how the District operations, programs, and projects connect with our natural and cultural resources, our partners, and community needs;
- C.** Is especially currently focused on getting up to speed to lead priority projects and programs including the construction and integration of the Rancho Canada Unit's multi-use trail and the site's Floodplain, Riparian and Upland Transition Habitat Restoration Project, the District's GIS Program, and many more assignments;
- D.** Will continue to be introduced to MPRPD's many partners and neighbors, including CalFire and County of Monterey Office of Emergency Services, the TAMC, FORTAG, *ParkIT!*, and California Coastal Trail initiative members, university research colleagues, Wedgewood Weddings and Banquet Team, and many other folks that play a vital role in helping and supporting the District;
- E.** Meeting with our Board of Directors and other elected officials, and key personnel in other coalition agencies; and,
- F.** A more detailed update and look ahead on planning and conservation program priorities will be provided during the next and subsequent board meeting reports.