

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT**

BOARD MEETING: September 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Mill Creek Redwood Preserve Update

PRESENTER: Caine Camarillo, Supervising Ranger

REPORT: Currently, the District's Mill Creek Redwood Preserve located in Palo Colorado Canyon remains closed to public access due to several factors:

- 1) Lack of access: Palo Colorado Road remains closed at "The Hoist", which marks the turnoff to the last residential area along Palo Colorado Road. Beyond that, the road only serves 3 properties (Jal Palo, MCP, and the Pico Blanco Boy Scout Camp). According to Monterey County public works officials, the road beyond the Hoist is estimated to cost eight million dollars to repair, money which Monterey County does not have. The County has applied for funding assistance from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), but the project has not yet been approved. At this time, there is no timeline for reopening that section of Palo Colorado Road to the public.
- 2) Fire/Storm Damage: During the Soberanes Fire, the trail through Mill Creek Redwood Preserve was severely damaged. Almost every wooden retaining wall, bridge, puncheon, handrail, and bench was destroyed. Slough has obscured the trail in many places, along with many, many downed trees as a result of two significant winters we've experienced since Soberanes. To reconstruct the MCP Trail would require significant resources, including trail crews, additional staff, and materials.
- 3) Lack of Caretaker: Our long-time caretaker Larry Born recently retired and no longer serves as MCP Caretaker. The District has not yet found a replacement, but continues to inspect the property twice a month to monitor for illegal activity. Having a Caretaker on-site is extremely beneficial considering the remote nature of Mill Creek Preserve. Typical Caretaker responsibilities include monitoring/issuing permits, reporting vandalism,

and being an on-site presence to prevent trespassing, camping, and squatting.

Bottcher's Gap, the USFS campground beyond MCP, remains closed to vehicular access, but open to visitors accessing the area from USFS trails. However, according to USFS officials, to access Bottcher's Gap from the Ventana Wilderness would be a "bushwhack".

FISCAL IMPACT:	N/A
FUNDING SOURCE:	N/A
FUNDING BALANCE:	N/A
RECOMMENDATION:	For Information Only