

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
STAFF REPORT**

**BOARD MEETING:** October 4, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Monthly Staff Report

**PRESENTER:** Rafael Payan, PhD, 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-August through mid-September 2023 in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

**ADMINISTRATION DIVISION**

**1. Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration**

The City of Marina held a celebration at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park honoring the late Dr. King and his many contributions to the United States and world. The celebration was enjoyed by an estimated 500 – 700 participants, ranging from newborns to the elderly, representing many socio-economic, ethnic, and racial populations. Presentations highlighted African American traditions, and included the bust's artist, and the monument's and plaza's landscape architect, among others. The event culminated with the unveiling of the bust and monument honoring Dr. King.

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**

*Sculpture Garden Unveiling & Dedication*

Saturday, September 9, 2023  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Marina Library  
190 Seaside Circle, Marina CA 93933

- Dedication & Unveiling (11 am - Noon)
- Music
- **FREE** - Southern Food Buffet by Kona Jerry
- **FREE** - Entertainment for the entire family (pony rides, face painting, balloons, petting zoo, art project and much more)

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his contributions to civil rights. Be part of history as we reveal this beautiful sculpture that commemorates his inspiring life.

**FREE COMMUNITY EVENT**

RSVP BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



**Celebration of a Great American Hero – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

## **2. FEMA – Winter 2023 Storm Damage Compilation**

Administration and Operations Divisions' staff continue working on FEMA damages reporting requirements. Staff generally meet weekly with FEMA staff to review progress and answer any questions FEMA may have.

Administration and Operations Divisions' staff prepared three Request for Proposals for work at San Clemente Blue-Rock Open Space, deDampierre ball fields, and Palo Corona backcountry. The proposals have been released to heavy equipment operators/contractors. Agreements for services are expected to be presented to the Board at the October 4 Board Meeting.

## **3. Training**

Administration and EECO Divisions' staff participated in the annual CSDA Conference held at the Monterey Conference Center. The conference name and focus were Interpreting and Communicating the New CalPERS Actuarial Report.

## **4. Policy Creation/Updates Project**

Administration Division staff are working on various policies and updates which will be presented for Board approval in the coming months.

## **5. Year End Audit**

Staff are reviewing FY22-23 activity and preparing documents for the annual financial audit and preparation of the Financial Statements. The bulk of audit activities generally run from July through December/January, annually. The Audit Entrance Conference, with the Finance Committee, took place on September 8, 2023.

In addition to the annual financial audit, the District was notified on September 21, 2023 that the California Department of Finance's Office of State Audits and Evaluations, will be conducting agreed-upon procedures for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District's COVID-19 Fiscal Relief Certified Application. This audit began on September 28, 2023 and will run concurrently with the Annual Audit. The District received \$1,059,975 in COVID relief funds in February 2022.

## **6. Wedgewood Tenant Improvements**

Staff continue to meet with Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets (tenant) regarding tenant improvements. Projects currently being considered and planned are parking lot resurfacing, security lighting, and landscape improvements.

Tenant has recently completed numerous electrical upgrades so that new LED lighting in the ballrooms is compatible with electrical circuitry. Plumbing upgrades to old cast iron pipes that have been causing frequent backups in the ballroom restrooms. These are also being upgraded.

## **7. Pre-qualified Consultants and Contractors**

Administration Division continued to assist MPRPD's staff in developing an expanded list of pre-qualified consultants and contractors.

MPPRPD developed a list of pre-qualified architects, landscape architects, and engineers 5-years ago. This list of pre-qualified professional consultants has served the District very beneficially over the past five years. With the anticipated RCU Floodplain and Upland Restoration Project and other projects approaching, additional consultants with experience in environmental consulting will be added to the existing pre-qualified consultant list.

The District’s online e-procurement tool, known as **OpenGov Procurement**, shall be used by all MPPRPD divisions to pre-qualify consultants. After the consultants are ranked on their qualifications and narrowed into a small pool to select from, staff from the appropriate Division will present the Board their respective proposed professional service agreements for the specific services required.

**8. Palo Corona’s Project-B Construction in General**

Rework on the Multi-Purpose Pad began August 22, 2023. The pads surface was not sufficiently compacted and began unraveling. The entire pad was removed and replaced. Additional work is still expected to address areas of the re-work. Silt fencing remains around the project to both protect the California Red-Legged Frog from entering the project and work path area and to encourage park users to stay off of the pad during the 28-day curing period.

The next phase of permanent power service work will be performed by PG&E. Construction preparation and installation dates have been revised. This work is currently scheduled for October 23 for staging and construction to take place on October 30.

SWCA continues to provide biological monitoring services for the project.



**Placement of the Multi-Purpose Event Pad**

## **9. Interpretive Exhibits**

Administration and EECO divisions staff met to embark on the design and fabrication of PCRPD Discovery Center's latest interpretive exhibits. These include construction of the ruk (a Rumsien tule house replica), updated mountain lion exhibit, trees are essential exhibit, then and now exhibit which will highlight traditional indigenous tools and appliances juxtaposed against their modern cohorts, and other exhibits.

## **10. Planning MPRPD's Future**

Administration staff met and will continue to meet with MPRPD's Board members, stakeholders, partners, and staff to plan the agency's future.

## **11. Asian American Garden at Locke Paddon Wetland Community Park**

The City of Marina's elected officials and staff visited the Shinzen Friendship Garden in Fresno, CA. These parties met with Mr. Paul Saito, the acclaimed landscape architect who designed the magnificent Shinzen Garden.

The Asian American Garden will be constructed at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park. This garden will be smaller than the Shinzen Friendship Garden but will include culturally significant components. Careful selection of landscape and construction materials, and their placement, will be vital factors in blending cultural awareness and resource conservation while achieving low maintenance.

The Asian American Garden will celebrate the many, many accomplishments and contributions made by the Central Coast's and California's Asian Communities.



**Shinzen Friendship Garden, Fresno, CA  
(note: Koi will not be used at the Asian American Garden)**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EECO)**

### **1. Community Outreach**

#### **A. Martin Luther King Ceremony at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park**

EECO personnel and volunteers staffed an outreach booth on Saturday, August 9 at this Park. All actively recruited volunteers promoted new and vacant positions for hiring, and marketed LGO! programs while answering questions about our parks. Fun activities for all ages were available during the ceremony.

#### **B. Transportation Grant**

Released in August 2023, two organizations have already been awarded Transportation Grant funding to visit MPRPD lands. As part of the award process, the grantees must complete a special use permit (SUP) application or be a partner organization that has an active MOU with MPRPD.

The Transportation Grant was advertised at the Pacific Grove Museum's teacher open house on Saturday, September 23. Teachers from Monterey County are invited to see what the community has to offer for environmental education programming, resources, and other related opportunities.

#### **C. Social Media Posts (August 16-September 15, 2023)**

For this reporting period, posts consisted of district news, promotion of upcoming LGO! programming, MLK Sculpture Garden Dedication event promotion, volunteer outreach, hiring recruitment for multiple positions, the snowy plover video release, California Biodiversity week, and educational content about the flora and fauna of MPRPD parks.

The following of MPRPD social media accounts grew in August-September.

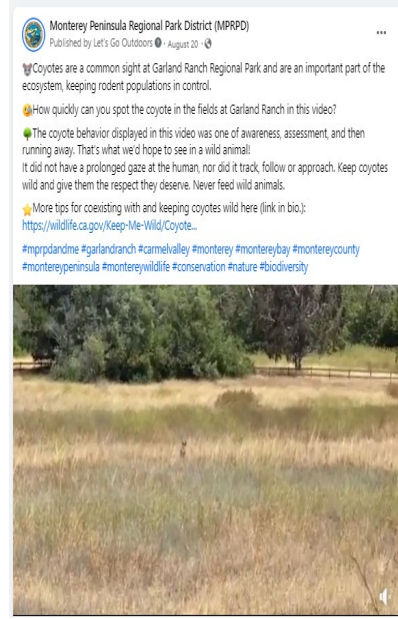
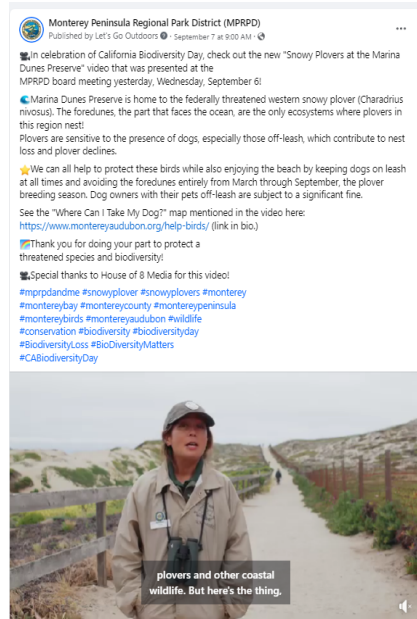
##### **i. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict ([1](#)) [Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District \(MPRPD\) | Carmel CA | Facebook](#)**

1. September 15 Follower Count: 2,272 (+20)
2. Facebook Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 9,222 (↑ 23.1%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (August 16-September 15):
  - a. September 3: Rattlesnake GRRP (4,000 reach) (84 likes/reactions)
  - b. September 13: Red-tailed hawk/program update (1,800 reach) (42 likes/reactions)
  - c. August 20: Coyotes at GRRP (1,200 reach) (42 likes/reactions)

##### **ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd\_lgo: [Monterey Peninsula Parks \(@mprpd\\_lgo\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)**

1. September 15 Follower Count: 1,332 (+30)

2. Instagram Page Reach (number of accounts that viewed a piece of content at least once): 1,412 (↓ 10.6%)
3. Top 3 posts for likes/reactions (August 16-September 15):
  - a. September 7: “Snowy Plovers at the Marina Dunes Preserve” video release (511 reach) (61 likes/reactions)
  - b. September 3: Rattlesnake GRRP (433 reach) (46 likes/reactions)
  - c. September 10: California Biodiversity Hotspot info. (281 reach) (39 likes/reactions)



**D. Trail Signage**

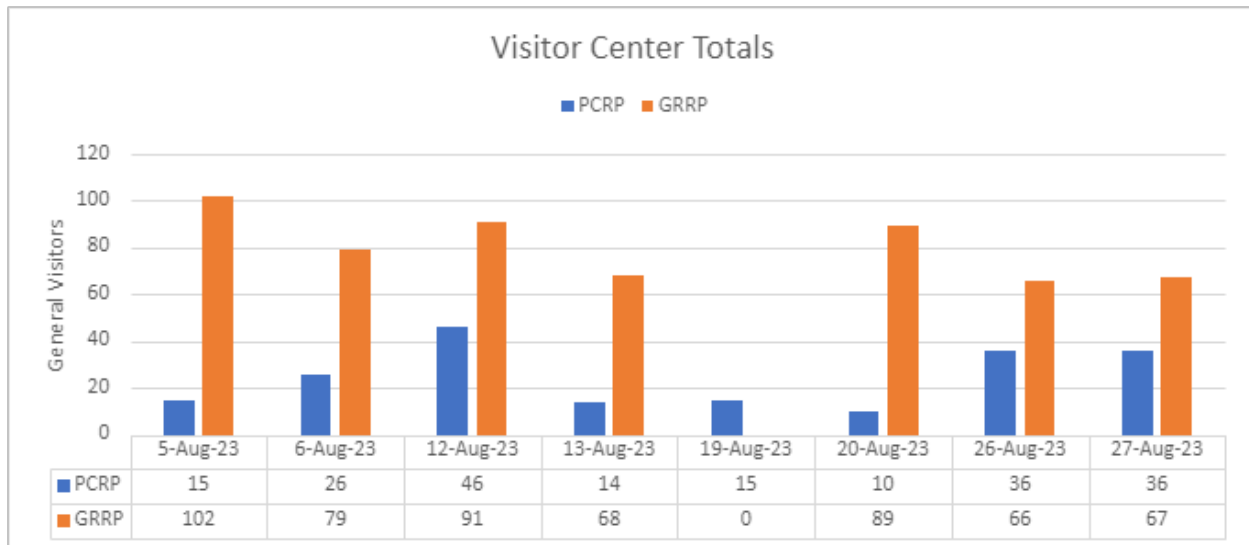
A single sign can go a long way. A park visitor recently commented favorably on the temporary sign placed at the PCRP entrance plaza trailhead. The sign clarified the trail’s western access along the Southbank Trail to Inspiration Point and the Front Ranch.



**Signage was Greatly Appreciated**

**E. Visitor Center Totals**

In FY 2023-24, staff will continue tallying visitor contacts during weekends, 10am-4pm, at both the PCRP Discovery Center (DC) and the GRRP Visitor Center (VC). The chart below summarizes weekend visitor contacts with staff or volunteers this August. NOTE: Dates with zero contacts recorded (8/19 for the VC due to unforeseen circumstances) indicate that the center remained closed.

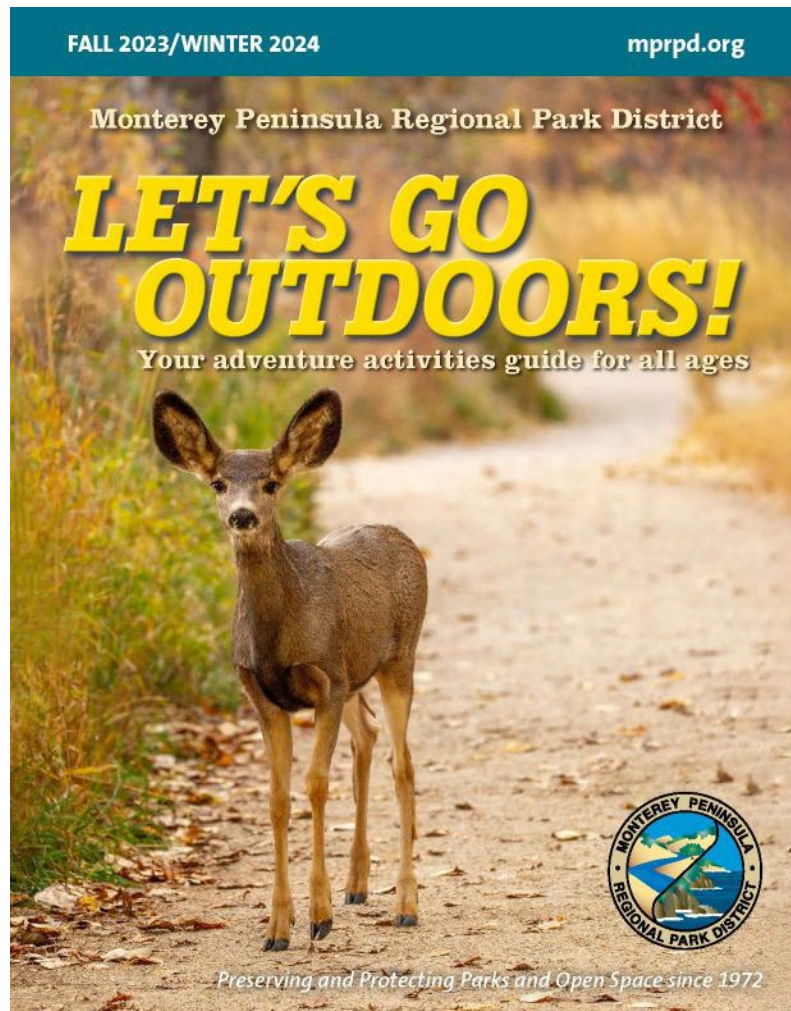


**Visitor contacts in August 2023**

**2. Let's Go Outdoors! Guide and Programs -- Fall 2023/Winter 2024**

The Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Guide featuring a mule deer on its cover was published and sent to district resident's mailboxes, and are being distributed to Monterey County free libraries along with the Monterey Library, Pacific Grove Library, cities' visitor centers, environmental education partners, MPRPD Visitor and Discovery Centers, and at special events.

This season's guide features 38 different programs that provide over 100 sessions for community members to participate in. Plus, the Community Happenings section features 17 community organizations who offer free opportunities to get folks involved and connected with the outdoors.



**5. Special Use Permits (SUP)**

Staff prepared the following SUPs which were issued during this reporting period.

SUP's for access to PCPR now include special conditions and language informing patrons about the park's species of concern. Working with staff, the permittee must be trained in how to conduct visual sweeps, avoid disturbance of wildlife, and use



precautions when setting up, relocating, and removing event-related equipment.

**A. Big Sur Marathon Foundation (BSMF) Trail Run Permit**

A total of seven middle and high school, and collegiate cross-country meets were scheduled for September and October 2023. Four meets were held in the month of September with the first meet taking place on September 9. The final event for this season is scheduled for October 28.

MPPRPD staff complimented the BSMF team on their successful execution of event organization and communications practices, and implementation of best practices for wildlife avoidance during the 2023 season.

**B. California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Fire Risk Mapping and Fuel Moisture Research**

Researchers are expanding their sampling to include collection of live fuel moisture samples at various MPPRPD parks. This will help support Fire Risk mapping accuracy assessment in Monterey County, CA. Data from MPPRPD properties will help to validate satellite-based estimates of live fuel moisture.

NASA is funding the project in coordination with CSUMB. The project will support CAL FIRE's and MPPRPD's pre-fire and long-term fuel management projects. Live fuel moisture sampling involves clipping twigs or branches from living vegetation.

**C. "Wonderwoman Walk" at PCRP's Multi-Benefit Community Trail**

The 3rd Annual "Wonderwoman Walk" gathered an estimated 60 people to create a sense of community as they shared in the life and memories of the late Lorna Monroe. Lorna was a longtime proponent for science and math guiding our societies and communities – especially favorably influencing our schools and students. The approximately 3.5-mile walk took place on PCRP's Multi-Benefit Community Trail.

**6. Volunteers**

**A. Volunteer Enrichments**

Volunteers met at the Garland Visitor Center and Palo Corona Discovery Center for updates on construction of the outdoor classroom in the Garland Arboretum, new exhibits in both centers, and upcoming programs and events. Volunteers also participated in discussion of new volunteer programming such as working in teams in the parks, in the centers, and on the newsletter.

**B. Enrichment and training**

Staff attended Big Sur Land Trust's virtual volunteer orientation in September to enrich knowledge of our partnering organizations and virtual volunteer recruitment.

**C. Service Learners**

Staff recruited three new Service Learners at the CSUMB Virtual Partner Fair.

The students are going through orientation and will be working with staff and volunteers at the Garland Visitor Center and the Palo Corona Discovery Center during the Fall Semester.

#### **D. Facilitating Programs and Staffing Outreach Booths**

During this reporting period, volunteers facilitated two LGO! programs for 18 participants, and staffed a booth at the MLK event at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park.



**LGO! Partnered Program with CA State Parks for the Discover San Jose Creek and Ishxenta State Park Walk**

### **OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION**

#### **1. Big Sur International Marathon Foundation Cross Country Event at Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit**

Now that repairs to the Multi-Benefit Community Trail have been completed, cross-country events have resumed for the 2023 season. The first event was held on September 9, followed by 3 events the following week. Mowing of the 'starting line' and the pathway's edges made the trail much more functional and accessible. The final event for this season is scheduled for October 28.

These events align with MPRPD's mission to expand services to often under-served populations, and most importantly, to provide access and opportunities for youth to engage in healthy outdoor activities. These youth are our future environmental champions.

This park has provided, and continues to provide, an array of youth-focused activities and events. These include previous youth-based golf tournaments. Now, other running events like the Big Sur Land Trusts' Race for Open Space are also

hosted at this park. Memorial walks, such as the “Wunderwoman Walk” are welcomed additions to this park and its public use. Organized environmental education opportunities are also offered by MPRPD, the Santa Lucia Conservancy, and other partners.

Many coaches, athletes, and families participating in the cross-country meets have marveled at Palo Corona’s beauty and are eager to return to this park.



**Start of the Women’s Cross-Country Race**



**Start of the Men’s Cross-Country Race**

## **2. Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council**

Operations Division staff recently represented MPRPD at the quarterly meeting of the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council in Big Sur, CA. Held at the Big Sur

Lodge at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, these meetings bring together local, state, and federal representatives to discuss issues relevant to Big Sur and the immediate region.

**3. FEMA-funded Storm Damages**

Staff continues to coordinate with our FEMA Program Delivery Manager toward addressing damages, effecting repairs, and recovering as many costs associated with the winter storm events as possible. Staff released a Request for Proposals for the final repairs following Board approval of the RFP at the August meeting. On August 31, Rangers facilitated a mandatory site visit for perspective contractors. Proposal due date was September 15. Staff will request Board approval on October 4, to initiate agreements with the most responsive contractors.

**4. Frog Pond Puncheon Replacement**

Rangers recently replaced a puncheon at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. The previous puncheon was aged and beginning to sag due to wood stringer failure. Redwood timbers and decking were used for construction.



**Removal of Old Puncheon**



**Construction of New Puncheon**

**5. Hazard Tree on River Trail**

With the assistance of a Gabilan Inmate Crew, Rangers removed a large dead oak tree overhanging River Trail at Garland Ranch Regional Park.



**Gabilan Inmate Crew Removing Hazard Tree**

**6. High-limbing at GRRP**

Rangers have been busy high-limbing popular equestrian trails to meet clearance standards, including River Trail, Mesa Trail, and lower Saddle Trail. This work will help accommodate riders on horseback that require 12 feet of 'head clearance' -- particularly when fellow trail users are encountered.

**7. Solar Lights at GRRP**

Rangers recently received multiple reports of "lights" coming from Gabilan Trail overnight at Garland Ranch Regional Park. After further investigation, it was discovered the lights were solar-powered and placed illegally along an abandoned alignment between Saddle and Gabilan Trails. Rangers had to scramble up a rock outcropping in order to remove the 3 solar lights.



**Solar Lights (circled in yellow)**

**8. Tree Down at PCRP Inspiration Point**

A very large pine tree fell near Inspiration Point at Palo Corona Regional Park, bringing down with it several other large branches from adjacent trees.

Rangers used District equipment to clear debris, chip brush, and haul rounds to the RCU staging area.



**Rangers Jake and Ira Gearing Up**



**Ranger Jeff loading Pine Rounds into Dumptruck**

**9. Vehicle Break-in at GRRP**

Rangers received a report of a vehicle break-in at the Garza's Road Trailhead at Garland Ranch Regional Park. The reporting party had already contacted the Monterey County Sherriff's Office to file a report, which Rangers received a copy of for inclusion in an Incident Report. Fortunately, the only item the suspects were able to steal was a diaper bag.

**PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION**

**1. Garland Ranch Regional Park Fuel Mitigation Projects**

MPPRD staff continue to work with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) and Denise Duffy & Associates (DDA) on environmental review and permitting for Cal Fire-funded fuel breaks and Coastal Conservancy funded projects at Garland Ranch Regional Park, including thinning of the eucalyptus grove near the Rancho Loop Trail and a shaded fuel break along East Garzas Road.

**2. The Multi-Benefit Community Trail**

Staff continue to work with resource agencies and grant funders to develop a plan for realignment of some portions and sections of the Multi-Benefit Community Trail.

**3. Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project**

The project team continues to work on bringing project designs from 65% to bid ready documents. The project team also continues to apply for grant funding and remains in discussion

with potential funders regarding recently submitted grant applications.

**4. Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park**

Staff held a kick-off meeting with SWCA Consultants for development of a Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the park. SWCA is now in the process of reviewing park plans and reference documents and developing a detailed project schedule.

**(end of report)**