

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: January 06, 2021

SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report

PRESENTER: Rafael Payan, General Manager

REPORT: The following briefly summarizes some of the key tasks and projects MPRPD's Staff undertook from mid-November through Mid-December 2020 in addition to performing the District's regular business. This work was accomplished in compliance with the CDC's recommendations and the State's and County's shelter-in-place orders.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. COVID-related Orders, Meetings, and Updates:

- a. **CJPIA and LCW:** Staff consulted with CJPIA, MPRPD's insurance carrier, and Liebert Cassidy Whitmore to obtain their perspective on the latest recommendations and orders.
- b. **County OES:** Staff continued to participate in regular meetings held by the County Health Officer to ensure we have the latest information, and that planning, and implementation practices align MPRPD with the CDC's, State's, and County's latest guidelines and recommendations. The County's weekly meetings may soon change to biweekly.

2. E-Procurement with *ProcureNow*: Staff entered a contract with *ProcureNow* to utilize an online source of soliciting vendors who are interested in working with the District. Staff participated in the first ever *ProcureNow Community Users Group E-Procurement Camp* and learned among many things, about new partnerships being incorporated in the program, as well as sessions on using the program to develop solicitations (RFP's, RFQ's, RFB's, etc.), advertise those solicitations, and manage related contracts.

3. FEMA – Carmel Fire: Staff continued to work with FEMA, CalOES and MPRPD's Operations Division to gather data, preliminary cost estimates, and insurance information to complete the application.

4. **Human Resources:** Staff continued to work on personnel issues, welfare benefits, Open Enrollment for employee insurance coverage/benefits, and recruitment for a vacant EECO position.
5. **Project B – Restroom, tent pad, entrance plaza, and bus drop-off:** Staff continued to work with Page & Turnbull to develop plans for these amenities. The project is on target to have bid documents ready by late May.
6. **Rancho Canada Unit Habitat Conservation Plan:** The California Coastal Conservancy (SCC) has released the request for services for this floodplain restoration project, on MPRPD’s behalf (<https://scc.ca.gov/2020/12/01/request-for-services-to-support-carmel-river-floodplain-restoration/>). The due date for qualified firms to submit proposals is 01/04/2021. Additional information will be provided to the Board as it becomes available.
7. **Roof and HVAC replacement:** Staff continued to work with consultants to develop plans to bid the roof and HVAC replacement. MPRPD recently entered a professional services agreement with Thomas Electrical Engineering to provide electrical engineering services related to the HVAC replacement.
8. **Training:**
 - a. **California Revenue Update - Preparing for the Coming Fiscal Year:** Staff participated in a California Society of Municipal Finance Officers webinar entitled “California Revenue Update - Preparing for the Coming Fiscal Year (and beyond).” Michael Coleman, a leading expert on California local government revenues, spending, and financing, discussed property tax revenues. His overall discussion indicated that COVID-19 impacts on property tax revenue, if anything, will not show up for another year or so. Another panel expert advised that PROP-19 property tax base portability will likely not be huge nor felt until 2022 and will only show up in the supplemental rolls.
 - b. **Historic Preservation:** Staff participated in Historic Preservation Training for Open Space Organizations provided by Project-B Architect’s Page & Turnbull.

Organizations such as MPRPD often have cultural resources that tell the history of the land, what has been built upon it, and by whom. Since 1973, Page & Turnbull’s historians, cultural resources planners, and architects have worked with over 30 different parks and open space clients. In this training, they shared what they have learned about the “what, why, and how” of identifying, evaluating, and managing historic human build structures, communities, and landscapes. This 1.5-hour virtual training session provided an overview of Tribal, federal, California State, and local regulatory frameworks, and served as a primer for addressing cultural preservation issues specific to parks and open space organizations.

c. Human Resources:

- i. The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM): Various human resource-based webinars;
- ii. California Public Employers Labor Relations Association (CALPELRA): Annual HR conference; and,
- iii. Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW): COVID-19 and Human Resources webinars.

EECO DIVISION

1. **Audubon Christmas Bird Count:** There were 25 sites when the first Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on December 25, 1900. One of those sites was Pacific Grove, CA. Established by the Audubon Society as a new holiday tradition that would count birds rather than hunt them, this event now has tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas uniting to collect data that assesses the health of bird populations and guides conservation actions.

Rich in diversity of habitat and wildlife, Palo Corona Regional Park has been selected as a site for the CBC since 2011. In addition to supporting the nation's longest running wildlife census, the data collected provides MPRPD a summary of birds that may be found at this park.

2. **California Wildlife Day (CWD):** The Annual CWD celebration will be held as a two-day virtual event during March 20-21, 2021.

MPRPD's EECO staff is working with the Carmel River Watershed Conservancy (CRWC) on this co-sponsored event. CRWC hired local photographer, biologist, and story map designer Lucianne Coletti to create a Carmel River Watershed story map.

The story map will be developed in sections which include: (a) the headwaters of the Carmel River in proximity to the Los Padres Dam site; (b) the watershed's various natural habitats, focusing on Garland Ranch and Palo Corona Regional Parks; and (c) the river's mouth at the Carmel River Lagoon at Carmel River State Beach.

3. **Exhibits and Interpretation:** The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History has permanently loaned MPRPD their 2016 hummingbird exhibit designed by local artist and exhibit expert, David McCornack. The exhibit will be on display at Palo Corona Regional Park's Discovery Center.

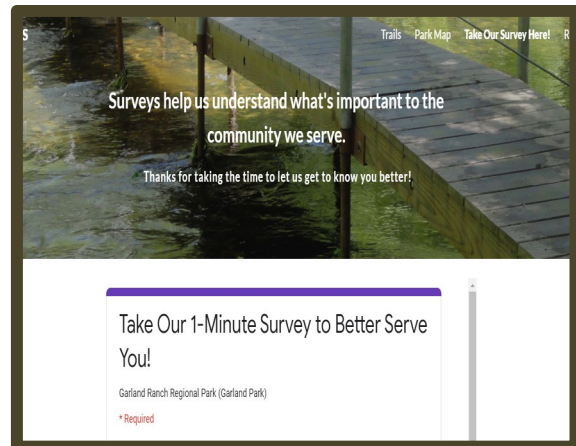
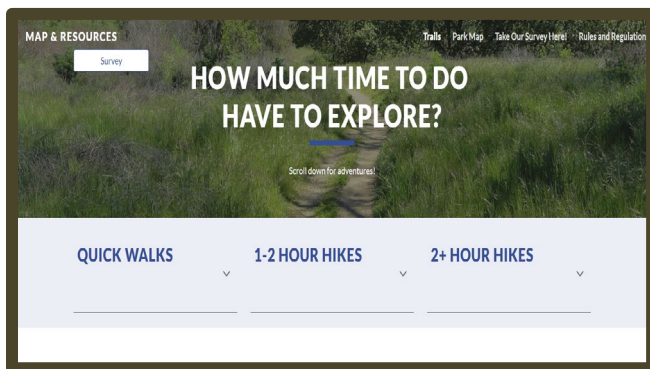


Hummingbird exhibit on permanent loan courtesy of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

- 4. Public's Appreciation for Keeping MPRPD Properties Open:** Carmel Valley resident, Rosemary Luke acknowledged a story in MPRPD's recent *LGO!* publication. She cited the article about MPRPD staying open while others shuttered. Her kind and encouraging words were included in her greeting card saying, "What you have written is so well worded. What you have done & are doing is immeasurably wonderful. I am so grateful. Thank you with my whole heart."
- 5. Service Learning at CA State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB):** MPRPD's Staff hosted four CSUMB Service Learners during the Fall 2020 semester. COVID-related safety measures were practiced. Working remotely and virtually, the two groups, composed of two participants each, developed: (a) a Maps and Resources Webpage with a survey and links that connect to online resources; and (b) Sustainability/Carbon Footprint interpretive signage for climate-change messaging.
- 6. Maps, QR Code, and User Surveys at Garland Ranch Regional Park (GRRP):** MPRPD's Staff and CSUMB's Service Learners developed a QR code to direct park users to the GRRP trail map, suggested hikes, and a survey to better understand our visitors' experiences and needs. The QR code will be posted at the GRRP Visitor Center and on bulletin boards in proximity to the park's Carmel River bridge(s).

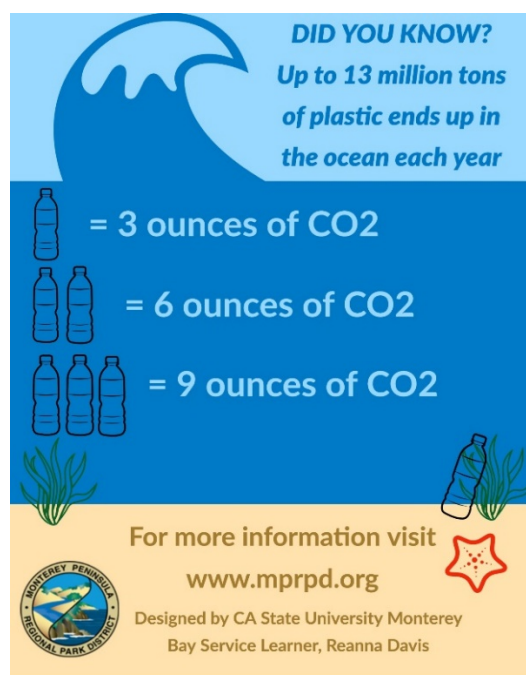


QR Code: <https://sites.google.com/csumb.edu/grrpmapandresources/trails>



Survey: <https://sites.google.com/csumb.edu/grrpmapandresources/take-our-survey-here?authuser=0>

7. **Sustainability/Carbon Footprint Interpretive Signage:** CSUMB's Service Learners created graphic signage that will be posted at MPRPD's parks starting with Garland Ranch and Palo Corona regional parks.








Carbon emissions continue to rise. Transportation is a primary factor.

In the United States, a staggering 28% of carbon emissions is from transportation.

Even though numbers are slowly decreasing, cars and other transportation continue to emit carbon dioxide. We can make a difference by lowering emissions step by step.

Ride bikes and walk more often. Consider taking the subway or bus. Limit your car mileage. Consider carpooling with your family or friends.

As individuals, we have a chance to benefit the world for better by adjusting our transportation uses. We have that power to change things and it starts right here.








For more information about MPRPD, visit: www.mprpd.org

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

Designed by CA State University Monterey Bay Service Learner, Christopher Beans

Did you know?



Motor vehicles are responsible for around 51% of carbon monoxide pollution


5 miles emits 2,020 grams of carbon dioxide

25 miles emits 10,100 grams of carbon dioxide

100 miles emits 40,400 grams of carbon dioxide

For more information about MPRPD visit www.mprpd.org

Designed by CA State University Monterey Bay Service Learner, Reanna Davis



WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT AT HOME



- 1. DRIVE LESS** 
- 2. OPT FOR REUSABLE** 
- 3. REDUCE WASTE** 
- 4. BUY LOCAL & EAT LESS RED MEAT** 
- 5. SWITCH TO RENEWABLE ENERGY** 



For more information visit www.mprpd.com

Designed by CA State University Monterey Bay Service Learner, Reanna Davis



- 8. Special Use Permits:** MPRPD continued to build and sustain productive, supportive, amicable coalitions with various civic organizations and other not-for-profit organizations, and the region's numerous jurisdictions. Special Use Permits will be issued for events, programs, and projects that benefit the public or help MPRPD research potential impacts of uses at our parks.
- 9. Public Outreach/Social media:** Staff continues to post park updates, recent sightings, PSAs, and research findings to connect the public and volunteers to parks and open spaces.

a. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

- December 14 follower count: 1385 ▼
- New followers since November 13: 0
- Post reach: People reached at least once
 - October 14 – November 12 average: 117 views per post
 - November 13 – December 14 average: 83 ▼ views per post

b. Reactions, Comments, Shares

Reactions:

- October 14 – November 12 average: 6 reactions per post
- November 13 – December 14 average: 5 ▼ reactions per post

Comments:

- October 14 – November 12 average: 0 comments per post
- November 13 – December 14 average: 0 comments per post

Shares

- October 14 – November 12 average: 1 shares per post
- November 13 – December 14 average: 1 shares per post
- Top 3 most popular posts: November 13 – December 14
 - 11/17 National hike day (623 views)
 - 11/16 Bring your dog to GRRP (500 views)
 - 11/23 Doug Smith survey (406 views)

- 10. Volunteers:** On Thursday, December 17, 2020, MPRPD volunteers and staff joined for an end-of-year Zoom social. The event afforded volunteers and staff the opportunity to reconnect by sharing photos, poetry, and short stories focused on park and nature-related topics, or just to say, "Hi."

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- 1. Animas Pond:** With the dredging of Animas Pond complete, Rangers seeded disturbed areas with a native grass and wildflower seed mix. The onset of winter rains is perfect for these seeds to germinate and establish themselves, providing a root system that will help minimize soil migration.
- 2. Boundary Fence with Santa Lucia Preserve:** MPRPD's Rangers and the Santa Lucia Conservancy's (SLC) personnel discussed options for replacement of the deteriorated property boundary fence between these two organizations' properties. SLC is a valuable partner and will assist with funding and project management. Approximately 4.5 miles of fence-line is beyond repair thus requiring replacement.
- 3. Carmel Fire Damage:** Operations and Admin divisions continued to work with FEMA and Cal OES on public assistance funding to reconstruct the fence-line at the San Clemente-Blue Rock property that was damaged during the recent Carmel Fire. Rangers continued to monitor the property for erosion, addressing problem areas.
- 4. Essential Workers:** The Operations Division wishes to thank EECO staff for the article in the recent *LGO!* publication recognizing our Rangers for their hard work and dedication through the pandemic.
- 5. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve Sign (Monument):** Rangers applied the finishing touches to the monument, including installation of a fabric weed barrier, perimeter border, and backfilling with wood chips.



Ranger Hatton puts the finishing touches on the Joyce Steven Monterey Pine Preserve Monument

- 6. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve (Preserve or JSMPP) and Jacks Peak Trail Network:** Trails that are presently available to the public are limited to those that exist within Jacks Peak County Park. MPRPD has not yet developed a trail network at the JSMPP.

UPDATE:

- a. MPRPD previously designed a preliminary trail network that potentially links the Preserve's and County's trails.
- b. MPRPD will solicit the County Parks Department's input as the District reinitiates the planning of various trails and other site improvements at the Preserve.
- c. The County and MPRPD have discussed the possible construction of additional monuments/signs at the park's entrance gate -- like those at the PCRPD RCU's gates. The County/MPRPD partnership would be highlighted through the construction of vertical stucco-finished columnar monuments that complement the recently completed JSMPP sign. The County's logo will be adhered to one column, MPRPD's on the other.
- d. MPRPD will design and construct a trailhead and parking/staging area on Preserve property, about 1/8 mile from the Jacks Peak County Park's entrance gate on the left side of the road as you drive into the park and Preserve. MPRPD will work in consultation with local Tribes, the County, and State to ensure the proposed staging area, trails, and site improvements align with cultural preservation acts.
- e. In consultation with the County, MPRPD will design and construct a trail network that connects to the County's trails. Ideally, as a potential section of the California Coastal Trail network, the proposed trail plan may also identify potential trail routes and wildlife corridors that connect Jacks Peak County Park and the JSMPP with Palo Corona Regional Park to the south and Fort Ord/FORTAG/Frog Pond Wetland Preserve to the north.
- f. MPRPD will work with the County re: the design, development, and placement of interpretive exhibit panels that showcase Jacks Peak County Park and the JSMPP, the region's cultural history, and the Monterey Bay area's natural resources (biology/hydrology/geomorphology/micro-climatic variability/etc.). The County has approved these proposed panels.
- g. MPRPD will continue exploring the possibility of entering agreements with CA's colleges and universities to conduct long-term scientific research and monitoring of the Preserve, including identification of practices that may be implemented to re-establish this forest's health.

7. **Marina Dunes Preserve:** Rangers recently repaired a 60' section of fence-line at the Preserve's south entrance. The fence-line was dismantled and damaged by vandals. Rangers continue to monitor for trespass and illegal activity.



8. **New Ford F-350 Dump Truck:** MPRPD took delivery of a new dump truck that will be assigned to Palo Corona Regional Park. This vehicle replaces the aged 2008 Ford dump truck, which will be sent to auction. The District currently owns 2 dump trucks which are invaluable for hauling bulk materials in small quantities to project sites, towing equipment, and much more.



9. **Palo Corona Mowing:** Annual mowing of the San Jose Creek Unit at Palo Corona Regional Park commenced on Monday, December 7, 2020. In

conjunction with the judicious application of herbicide, this mowing slows the spread of invasive weeds and provides cattle an opportunity to graze native grasses. This effort will hopefully help re-establish the area's native grasslands.

10. Resource Conservation District (RCD) Fuel-break Meeting: Rangers met with RCD staff at the San Clemente-Blue Rock Property to discuss fuel-break linkages that will benefit the Carmel Valley Strategic Fuel-break Project, coordinated by the RCD for Monterey County. Maintenance of the identified fuel-breaks will be incorporated into a grant application that will be submitted by MPRPD to Cal Fire in 2021.

11. Winter Preparation re: Trees: Rangers have been preparing in anticipation of winter rains, including clearing rain gutters and downspouts, culverts, and settling ponds. Downed trees will be especially challenging to quickly address this year due to safety precautions related to the pandemic. Even so, Rangers will remain on-call and will be dispatched as needed to address public safety hazards.