

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: March 03, 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-January 2021 through mid-February 2021 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. **All Staff Meeting:** All MPRPD divisions and personnel participated in this meeting, covering an array of important business-related topics, including:
 - A. Various District policies, procedures, and COVID-related protocol updates
 - B. *2021-2025 Strategic Plan* summary
 - C. Capital Improvement Projects and pursuit of grant and stimulus funds
 - D. Proposed habitat, cultural, and open space restoration plans and master plans
 - E. Our partners' proposed habitat restoration and capital improvement projects
2. **Budget Preparation:** All divisions drafted budget goals for Fiscal Year 2021-22.
3. **California Coastal Trail (CCT):** MRPRP is leading, coordinating, and working with CCT and the region's trail advocates to explore the development/refinement of a Regional Multi-modal Transportation Trail Master Plan. The goal of this plan is to tap into the region's recreation and multi-modal transportation experts to identify, plan, and implement the development of the peninsula's and region's trail networks from north to south, east to west.
4. **Community Development Fund (CFD) Guidelines:** MPRPD's consultant, Legal Counsel, and staff completed the refinement of the CFD Guidelines. These may be used to recruit citizens who may want to serve on the fund's advisory committee.
5. **COVID-related Orders, Meetings, and Updates:** 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, orders, and recommendations.

6. COVID Response Plan: Staff continued to refine MPRPD's COVID-Response Plan. This plan shall be presented to the Board for its consideration as soon as the 03 March 2021 meeting.

7. COVID Coordination with Wedgewood Weddings & Banquets (Wedgewood): Wedgewood and MPRPD personnel coordinated responses regarding potential COVID-exposure scenarios. This is especially important because both organizations share the same building while serving the public.

To date, no Wedgewood or MPRPD personnel have tested COVID-positive. Even so, both organizations are taking precautionary steps to protect our public, suppliers, contractors, consultants, and staff. This will be accomplished through treatment of high-touch surfaces cleaning, followed by a shockwave electrostatic disinfectant fogging. The electrostatic fogging uses an EPA List N disinfectant approved solution, which dissipates on its own within 5-hours. Staff is looking into having this application within MPRPD's HQ offices on a bi-monthly basis. Wedgewood reports it has a fogger and will also implement this treatment process.

8. Financial Grant Writer and Administrator: MPRPD is in pursuit of a grant writer and administrator to enhance the District's ability to compete for various state and federal grants, and, as applicable, stimulus funds for the advancement of the District's capital improvement projects.

9. Human Resources: Staff continued to work on personnel issues, including drafting a Request for Proposals that seeks a qualified firm to assist MPRPD in its wage, salary, and organizational structure analysis and recommendations.

10. Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Forest Preserve: Architect Stevens' contacts and MPRPD staff continued discussions related to a 2021 dedication ceremony. Ms. Stevens' team suggested that the dedication ceremony continue to be delayed until the efficacy of COVID-related vaccines and their distribution are better understood.

Architect Stevens approved the concept of having the dedication ceremony's participants help with the planting of native vegetation, possibly including a Monterey Pine, as part of the celebration thus, attendees become the Preserve's stewards.

Ms. Stevens, her team, and MPRPD desire to host the dedication ceremony as soon as safely and responsibly possible.

11. Laguna Grande Regional Park: Staff continued to work with the City of Monterey regarding the selection of a consultant to develop the park's Trail Maintenance Plan. The City is finalizing a Staff Report that it will present to the Joint Powers Authority at a meeting to be held in March 2021.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and FORTAG's proponents, continue to be in communication with MPRPD and the cities of Monterey and

Seaside in the planning of the park's trail network including FORTAG's potential connection to the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve and the Monterey Bay Coastal Trail.

- 12. League of Women Voters Presentation:** The League of Women Voters have invited MPRPD to give a Zoom presentation outlining MPRPD's great success in developing and sustaining productive partnerships that greatly enhance MPRPD's ability to achieve much, beyond its limited resources, through "smart government."
- 13. Marina Area Field Office:** With the goal of enhancing MPRPD's presence in the District's north sector, the County of Monterey's Library Department and MPRPD staff initiated and continued discussion regarding the potential use of a very small portion of the Marina Library as a field office for MPRPD's Rangers. The Marina Library is located at Locke-Paddon Wetland Preserve. This Preserve is owned by MPRPD but has been operated by the City of Marina since the late 1980s.
- 14. National Publication in NRPA Magazine:** The National Parks and Recreation Association's editorial board has requested that MPRPD write a feature story in our industry's leading monthly periodical. MPRPD's Ops Division will play an important role in this article's development which will focus on wildfires in our parks and highlight MPRPD's proposed innovative adaptive use of Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit as an Incident Command Center.
- 15. ParkIT! Initiative:** The *ParkIT!* team continued to explore options leading to the future launch of a pilot project that will strive to reduce vehicular congestion and parking along HWY 1 in proximity to the Point Lobos State Natural Reserve (Reserve). This outcome may possibly be achieved by integrating a reservation-based system and "satellite" parking areas at Marathon Flats and Palo Corona Regional Park's Rancho Canada Unit. Visitors will use this shuttle bus system to visit the Reserve and the yet-to-be-opened San Jose Creek Trail. MPRPD continues to advance capital improvement Projects A and B in support of this important initiative.
- 16. Project B – Restroom, tent pad, entrance plaza, and bus drop off:** Staff continued to work with Page & Turnbull to refine and finalize schematic designs. The next phase, which includes the development of construction plans and specifications, has begun. Bid documents may be ready by late May 2021.
- 17. Rancho Canada Unit Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan):** The California Coastal Conservancy (SCC) has informed MPRPD that they are in negotiations with the most qualified firm for this floodplain restoration project. Upon completion of the negotiation phase, SCC will enter a contract with the firm and initiate development of this Plan. It is anticipated that the planning and permitting processes may take approximately one year. Construction, leading to the Rancho Canada Unit's transformation and restoration into native habitat, may begin shortly thereafter. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

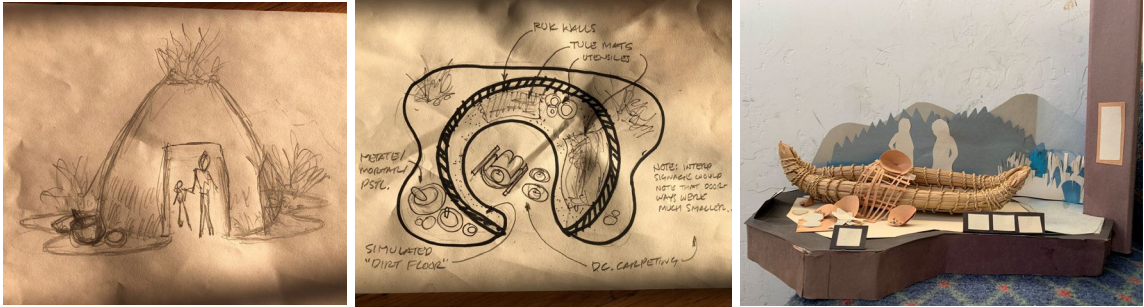
- 18. Roof and HVAC replacement:** Admin and Ops divisions continued to work with consultants in preparation for this project which is now slated to begin after this winter's seasonal rains. The reroofing project and Projects A and B will continue to be coordinated with Wedgewood Weddings and Banquets.
- 19. San Jose Creek Trail's Highway 1 Shuttle Bus Stop:** Staff visited the proposed shuttle bus stop at Highway 1 to evaluate the site's feasibility as a trail staging area. This proposed staging area is located on the highway's east shoulder, immediately across from Monastery Beach, and connects directly to a State Park service road and the San Jose Creek Trail.

EECO DIVISION

- 1. Blue Zone Project (BZP):** MPRPD's EECO and Admin staff met with local and international BZP members from the Built Environment Committee to discuss partnership opportunities, and environmental and policy-level approaches to creating healthy, livable, walkable communities.
- 2. California Wildlife Day:** Staff is heavily involved in preparing for this two-day virtual event, scheduled to take place March 20-21, 2021. Event planning and outreach includes speaker, student, and partner videos; art, poetry, and science poster submissions; partnership activities; and presentations. The "soft opening" of event registration has begun, with the event's advertisement to occur the first week of March. The Carmel River Watershed Conservancy and MPRPD staff thank the Board and community members respectively for their support and submissions.
- 3. Cachagua Community Park Graphic Master Plan and Site Modifications:** EECO and Admin staff met with the Esellen Tribe's representatives to kick-off the development of the park's Master Plan. MPRPD will also meet with the community, school district, and the Cachagua Park Board to obtain their valuable input for this plan's development.
- 4. Interpretive Exhibits at PCRP – Rumsen Culture:** EECO, Ops, and Admin staff continued to refine the design of several proposed exhibits that will be showcased at Palo Corona Regional Park's Discovery Center. These projects include construction of a full-size Rumsen tule house (ruk) and a tule boat.

Ms. Linda Yamane, a highly respected Rumsen Tribal Leader continues to be instrumental in the continuation of her Tribe's culture, art, and language. She has also been instrumental in guiding these two projects' design. Ms. Yamane is helping us ensure that authentic techniques and materials are used in the fabrication of the tule ruk and boat. Towards that end, she has harvested many of the locally sourced native plant materials that will be used for these two projects.

In alignment with COVID-related safety protocols, Ms. Yamane and MPRPD's staff will alternate workdays during the exhibits' construction to ensure social distancing and other measures are strictly adhered to.



Ruk Concept Schematics

Tule Boat Exhibit Model

- 5. Interpretive Exhibits at PCRP – Other Topics:** Staff will invite experts to help design and develop exhibits featuring the Monterey Bay's geomorphology, biology, and influence on climate; wildfire and the Central Coast flora's adaptation to a fire-influenced regime; climate change and its noted and potential impacts on phenological shifts; California condors; Carmel River Watershed; and other topics.
- 6. LGO! On the Go App:** Staff reviewed and edited the **LGO! On the Go** app in preparation for a re-release coinciding with CA Wildlife Day.
- 7. Marina Dunes Preserve (MDP):** CSUMB's Return of the Natives planted hundreds of native plants in priority areas identified in the draft MDP Implementation Plan. The final review of the MDP Implementation Plan is underway and will be presented to MPRPD's Board in the coming months.



CSUMB's Return of the Native Staff and Service Learners restore areas of the Marina Dunes Preserve foredunes on January 23, 2021

8. **Service Learning at CA State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB):** Staff held an orientation meeting to discuss roles, commitment, and communication practices related to the coordinated roll-out of the CA Wildlife Day event. Nine CSUMB Student Service Learners were paired with mentors and are being assigned specific responsibilities for this event.
9. **Special Use Permits:** The Big Sur Land Trust was issued an annual Special Use Permit (SUP) to access MPRPD lands in support of their ongoing natural resource and habitat restoration conservation work. This SUP is active through December 31, 2021 unless canceled sooner.
10. **Webinars:** Staff attended two National Association for Interpretation (NAI) hosted programs. One webinar focused on: "Create Multi-levels within your Volunteer Corps." Participants also included three volunteer coordinator staff from the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The second session focused on "Redesigning and Reopening post-COVID" a symposium on returning to in-person activities at visitor and discovery centers.
11. **Public Outreach/Social Media:** Staff continued to post park updates, recent wildlife sightings, PSAs, and research technology to connect the public and volunteers to parks and open spaces.

A. Facebook stats - @MPRegionalParkDistrict:

- February 15th follower count: 1441
- New followers since January 15th: 0
- Post reach: People reached at least once
 - December 14 – January 14 average: 119 views per post
 - January 15 – February 15 average: 167 ▲ views per post

B. Reactions, Comments, Shares, and Top Posts

Reactions:

- December 14 – January 14 average: 8 reactions per post
- January 15 – February 15 average: 8 reactions per post

Comments:

- December 14 – January 14 average: 1 comment per post
- January 15 – February 15 average: 1 comment per post

Shares:

- December 14 – January 14 average: 1 share per post
- January 15 – February 15 average: 1 share per post

- **Top 3 most popular posts:** January 15 – February 15
 - 1/19 #saddletrail (521 views)
 - 2/2 Prowling on powerline, Bobcat (513 views)
 - 2/1 Carmel River before and after storm (471 views)

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. **Boundary Fence w/ Santa Lucia Preserve:** Rangers continued to coordinate the replacement of 4.5 miles of deteriorated property boundary fence between Palo Corona Regional Park and the Santa Lucia Preserve.
2. **BSLT Race for Open Space:** As previously reported, Ops, EECO and Big Sur Land Trust personnel continue to coordinate the *Race for Open Space* at Palo Corona Regional Park. This event will traverse the Palo Corona backcountry, leading runners into the BSLT's Mitteldorf Preserve, and back. This event is scheduled to take place in April 2021.
3. **Cachagua Community Park Site Improvements:** In alignment with the proposed Master Plan, Ops staff is coordinating with the Esellen Tribe to make several modifications to the park. These include the relocation of the horseshoe pit, which was previously erroneously constructed over a sacred site, planning for the construction of a security fence between the park and Princess Camp that includes pedestrian and emergency vehicle gates between the properties, and other improvements.
4. **California Coastal Trail (CCT) Alignment:** Staff identified a potential trail alignment through Palo Corona Regional Park. This initial alignment will be used in furtherance of CCT discussions and planning.
5. **Carmel Area Wastewater Department (CAWD):** Staff continued to work with CAWD and the advancement of their sewer line project. This project will increase sewerage carrying capacity. The sewer line will run east to west from Quail to the proposed Rancho Canada Village development. MPRPD's connections to this sewer line were identified and are included in CAWD's project. MPRPD's maintenance shop/operations center, new restroom facilities, and the former clubhouse and its banquet rooms, commercial kitchen, pub, and offices will tie into this sewer line.
6. **Essential Workers:** In compliance with COVID-related precautions, Rangers continue to operate on a limited staffing schedule while remaining on-call to address emergencies. MPRPD continues to explore means by which our Rangers can be considered for vaccination. Staff will continue to be careful, especially as this spring's warm weather and seasonal holidays combine. Visitation to Garland Ranch and Palo Corona regional parks has continued to be very heavy, exceeding previous use patterns and visitation numbers. Congestion at MPRPD's parks is greatly exacerbated whenever other jurisdictions close their facilities.

- 7. FEMA – Carmel Fire:** Ops and Admin staff continued to work with FEMA and Cal OES personnel on MPRPD securing public assistance funding to reconstruct the fence at MPRPD's San Clemente-Blue Rock property, damaged during the Carmel Fire.

As previously reported, it is anticipated that FEMA will cover mitigation costs including a certain percentage of the \$5,000 deductible. Additional detail will be provided as it is obtained.

- 8. Interpretive Exhibit Fabrication:** Ops, EECO, and Admin staff met to prepare for Ops construction of the tule house and tule boat exhibits. Although the Discovery Center at PCRPD and Visitor Center at GRRP continue to prohibit public access in response to the on-going pandemic, staff wants to advance the construction of several interpretive exhibits while these museum buildings are shuttered, in preparation for the eventual re-opening of these facilities. These exhibits may be utilized by EECO staff during this shutdown by providing interpretive programming via internet.
- 9. Memorial Bench Program at PCRPD:** Staff began working on the development of a memorial bench program for this park. This project will include the identification of various memorial bench sites at the Rancho Canada Unit and the Front Ranch, including the Animas Pond area. Bench locations may also be identified along the San Jose Creek Trail which presently remains closed for public use.
- 10. National Publication in NRPA Magazine:** As mentioned above, Ops will play an important role in the research and writing of a feature article. Ops' key contributions will include Project-A's proposed Incident Command Center which will help address wildfire and other natural disasters; MPRPD's coalition with CalFire, State and County OES, SPCA, and other organizations; MPRPD's coordination with the construction of fire breaks at Palo Corona and Garland Ranch regional parks; and, coordination with EECO in the development of wildfire-related exhibits that highlight the pros and cons of fire management over the last 100-years, the region's fire-adapted flora, and Indigenous peoples' use of fire as a land management tool.
- 11. Projects-A, -B, and Former Clubhouse Re-roofing Projects:** Rangers continued to provide project management and support services for the Rancho Canada Unit's Projects-A and B, and the re-roofing project.
- 12. Security Cameras at Discovery Center:** Staff is evaluating the site's security cameras' coverage to determine if additional surveillance may be necessary.
- 13. Storm-damage Response:** Rangers completed several projects in response to recent storm-damage. Projects included removing damaged and downed trees, unblocking storm sewer intakes, and repairs to service roads and trails.