AGENDA ITEM NO. 7-B
MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
MID-MONTH STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING: October 1, 2025
SUBJECT: Monthly Staff Report
PRESENTER: Eric Morgan, General Manager (EAM)
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 2025, in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

1. Recruitment

a. Open/vacant positions: Administrative Assistant and Ranger (O&M); Finance Manager and Procurement and Contract Specialist (Admin); Environmental Education Supervisor and Environmental Education Specialist (EECO)
b. Updates: Candidates for the EE Specialist and EE Supervisor positions have been selected, and we anticipate October start dates. We anticipate interviewing for the Procurement position late September/early October. Ranger applications are still being reviewed, and Administrative Assistant and Finance Manager positions are still open, and we may extend deadlines based on responses received to date.

2. Training

Staff participated in the following training: Diversity and Inclusion, CJPIA.

3. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Audit

Staff will begin working on the FY2024-25 audit, with the draft financial statements tentatively planned for Board review in January. A meeting with the auditors and the District Finance Committee is being scheduled for late September/early October.

4. Personnel Committee

The committee met to discuss recommended changes to the District's healthcare contribution rate.

5. Real Property/Land Use Committee

The committee met in closed session to discuss real property negotiations.

6. CalPERS Open Enrollment – 2026

The CalPERS Open Enrollment began September 15 and runs through October 10. Admin staff is working internally and with CalPERS on upcoming changes and a

recommendation to increase the District's contribution is included on this meetings agenda for Board consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION

1. **Community Outreach**
    a. **Seaside Library's 50th Anniversary**

Staff presented an outreach booth at the Seaside Monterey County Free Library (MCFL), educating visitors about *Let's Go Outdoors!* programs and local birds. We made approximately 46 contacts, mostly with families with small children. MPRPD tabled with Friends of the Seaside Library and engaged families by playing a guessing game about local wildlife and talking about relevant parks and family friendly programs. This was the first MPRPD outreach event at the Seaside Library as a part of a pilot outreach tabling effort through the MOU with the MCFL system.



Outreach booth at the Seaside Library

b. **MEarth- Glass Pumpkin Patch**

Staff presented an outreach booth educating visitors about *Let's Go Outdoors!* activities. We made approximately 78 contacts. The event featured agencies who provide opportunities for the community to connect with the shared organization's mission and engaged attendees through a hands-on family-friendly activity. MPRPD joined as an exhibitor as part of our Kids Zone with a "how far can you jump" game. Partnering agencies included MPRPD and Ventana Wildlife Society.



Layout for game at MEarth event

c. **Social Media Posts (Aug 16 –Sept 15, 2025)**

For this reporting period, posts consisted of District news, park access rules and etiquette, promoting *Let's Go Outdoors!* events, and educational content about the parks.

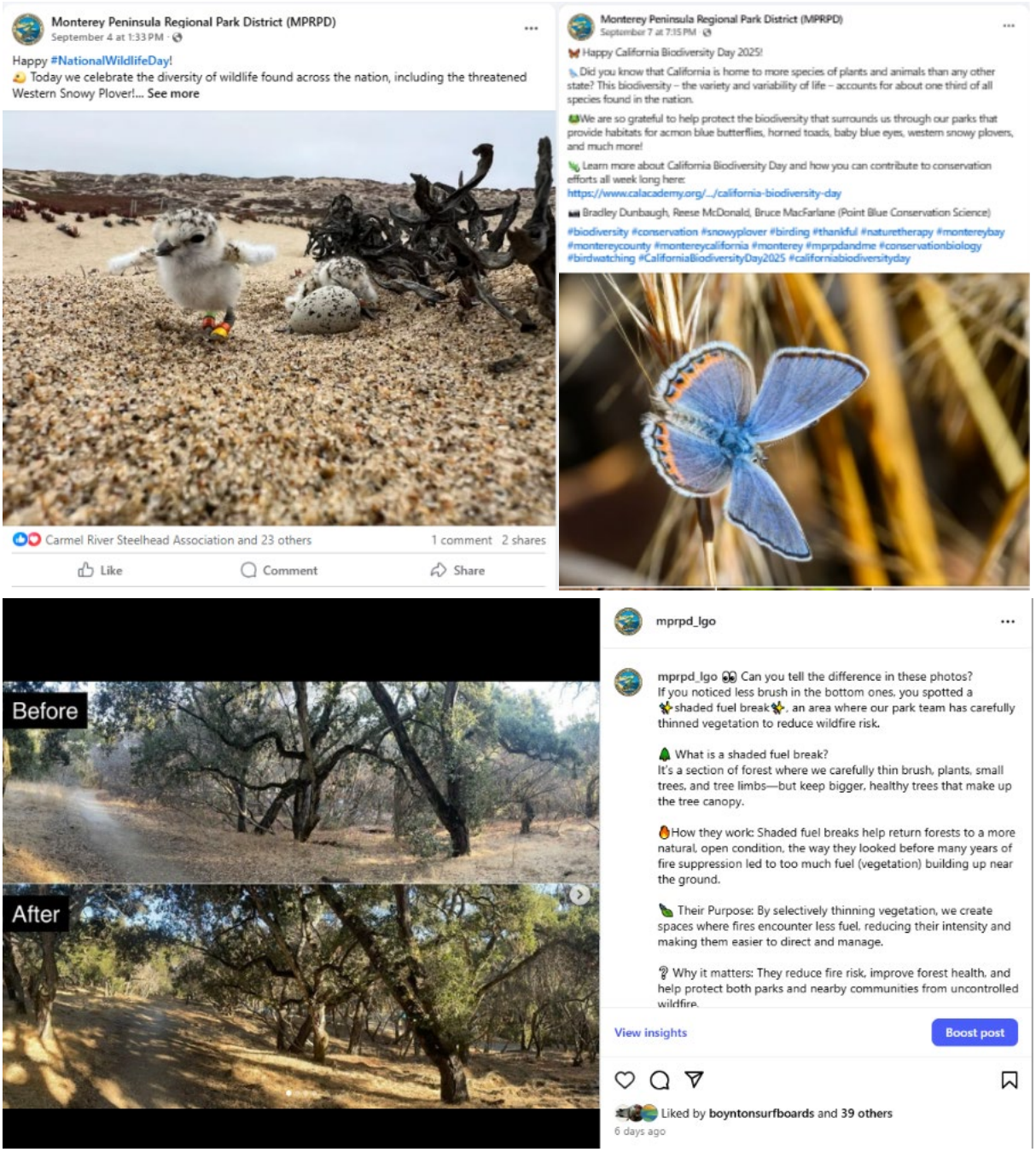
The statistics below are presented relative to the previous reporting period.

i. Facebook stats – @MPRegionalParkDistrict @PaloCoronaRegionalPark @ garlandranchregionalpark

- September 15th Total Follower Count: 8,117 (+34)
- Total Impressions: 13,230 (-23%)
- Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: Aug 16 –Sept 15
- Sept 7: CA Biodiversity Day post (816 impressions) (48 likes/reactions)
- Sept 4: National Wildlife Day post (533 impressions) (31 likes/reactions)
- Sept 8: ParkIT! LGO post (1,031 impressions) (27 likes/reactions)

ii. Instagram stats - @mprpd_lgo: *Monterey Peninsula Parks (@mprpd_lgo) • Instagram photos and videos*

- September 15th Follower Count: 1,863 (+28)
- Instagram Page Impressions: 16,451 (+39%)
- Top 3 posts for likes/reactions: Aug 16 –Sept 15
- Sept 4: National Wildlife Day post (494 impressions) (47 likes/reactions)
- Sept 10: Shaded fuel break post (1,059 impressions) (40 likes/reactions)
- Sept 7: CA biodiversity day (462 impressions) (40 likes/reactions)

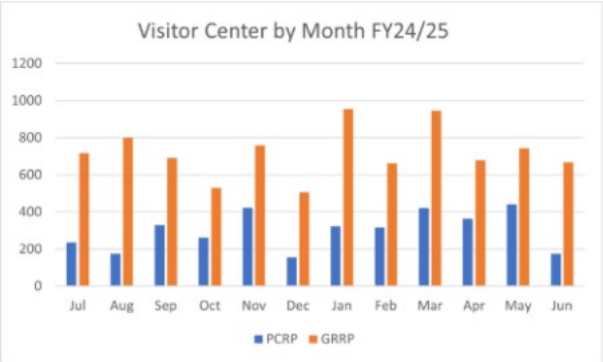


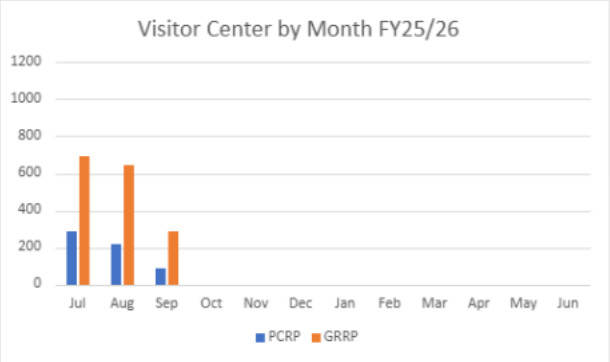
Screenshots of MPRPD Facebook and Instagram Posts

d. **Visitor and Discovery Center Totals**

Recording of visitor contacts at the Palo Corona Discovery Center (DC) and the Garland Visitor Center (VC) is ongoing. We have maintained extended visitation days since April 2024. The DC is open Friday – Sunday, and the VC is open Thursday – Sunday. Both centers are open from 10am – 4pm and continue to be open during the Monday

holidays. The DC is open for additional days on an ad hoc basis, subject to staff availability.





2. **Education**

a. **College Education - California State University Monterey Bay**

Staff taught interpretive methods and practical field applications at the Marina Dunes Preserve for 19 students as part of their Environmental Studies class. The Environmental Interpretation and Outreach (ENSTU 349S) class focuses on techniques for communicating environmental messages to diverse audiences.



CSUMB Environmental Interpretation and Outreach students learn interpretive techniques during a guided walk at Marina Dunes Preserve.

b. **Let's Go Outdoors! (LGO!) Spring/Summer Programs**

The Spring/Summer 2025 season of activities during this reporting period served over 100 participants that featured guided hikes, State Parks and Point Lobos Foundation-

led driving tour of the proposed ParkIt! reservation system for Point Lobos, Coffee with Cows, and many more outdoor activities.

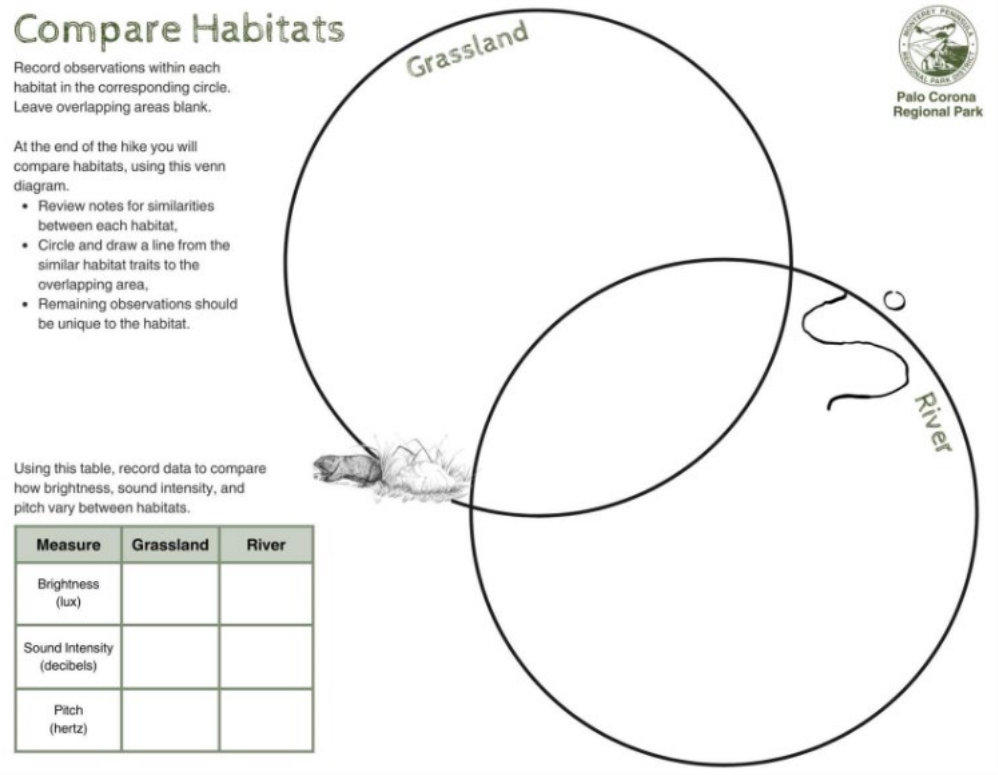
Nicole led our fourth and final walk of the 2025 nesting season at Marina Dunes Preserve interpreting sensitive species, the local history, the changing dune landscape, and the Western snowy plover.



[Left] Luke Gardner leading "Coffee with Cows" at the Palo Corona Regional Park. [Right] John Hiles and Steffanie Gamecho leading "ParkIt! Point Lobos Shuttle Demo" at Marathon Flats, Carmel.

c. **K-12 Educational Programs - Field Trip at Palo Corona**

Carmel Middle School (CMS) 7th graders visited Palo Corona Regional Park for their Monterey Bay Outdoor Education (MBOE) experience. Approximately 150 students participated in a three-day field trip to Palo Corona Regional Park, Andrew Molera State Park, and Hastings Reserve. At Palo Corona, the activities included four stations hosted by two teachers, one partner, three MPRPD staff, and two MPRPD volunteers. These stations featured a habitat walk through grassland and riparian habitats (MPRPD), water quality testing (Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History), spider investigation (retired CMS teacher), and nature poetry (current CMS teacher). Lastly, Construction Manager Peter Smith & Civil Engineer Katrina Harrison spoke with the students about the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project, how it's going to benefit the river, and how they are involved in the project process.



Compare Habitats

Record observations within each habitat in the corresponding circle. Leave overlapping areas blank.

At the end of the hike you will compare habitats, using this venn diagram.

- Review notes for similarities between each habitat,
- Circle and draw a line from the similar habitat traits to the overlapping area,
- Remaining observations should be unique to the habitat.

Palo Corona Regional Park

Grassland

River

Using this table, record data to compare how brightness, sound intensity, and pitch vary between habitats.

Measure	Grassland	River
Brightness (lux)		
Sound Intensity (decibels)		
Pitch (hertz)		

Data cards used by Carmel Middle School Students



Jeanette Johnston from PG Museum of Natural History leading Watershed Guardians for CMS students at

Palo Corona Regional Park.

d. **Training and Networking - Amah Mutsun Educator Workshop at SCMNH**

Staff attended an educator workshop at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History (SCMNH), hosted by museum staff, Amah Mutsun Chairman, and UC Santa Cruz faculty, to identify ways that neighboring educational agencies and tribal groups have approached Indigenous education.



Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History's collaborative "First Peoples Classroom Education Kit" displayed at the workshop, available for check-out.

3. **Special Use Permits (SUP) & MOU Events**

a. **Santa Catalina School (SUP)**

Santa Catalina School students (70) visited Garland Ranch Regional Park to explore and experience nature for their beginning of the year orientation.

b. **CSU Monterey Bay – S.W.A.M.P. training (SUP)**

CSUMB undergraduate and graduate students (20) participated in a Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) water quality training led by their professor John Olson at Garland Ranch Regional Park in the Carmel River.

c. **CSU Monterey Bay – O.L.L.I. Coffee with Cows (SUP)**

CSUMB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) students (20) participated in a permitted "Coffee with Cows" led by Emily and Luke Gardner at Palo Corona Regional Park.

4. **Volunteers**

a. **New Volunteers**

A new Volunteer, Makayla Wheeler began assisting staff in the Palo Corona Discovery Center.

b. **LGO! Program Volunteers**

Volunteers led or facilitated the following LGO! Programs and hikes:
Beginning Birding at Laguna Grande, Exploring Nature with Children, Steinbeck Views in Ft. Ord National Monument, Art in Nature, Vista Lobos Ocean Views, Nature Walk at Palo Corona, Coffee with Cows, Wildlife in the Marina Dunes Preserve, Solar System Stroll, Star Party, Walk with Poems, Vista Lobos Ocean Views, and Discover Kahn Ranch. Leaders and facilitators were Steve Ibrahim, Sharon Osgood, Kathie Blau, Mark Laycox, Toni McDaniel, Jennifer Smith, Tempe Wennerholm, Vicky Thomas, Marty Tweed, Marikay LeValley, Mary Dainton, Linda Smith, Amelia Craig, and Cath Farrant.

c. **Special Event Volunteers**

Sustainable Communities of Monterey Couty through Sustainable Marina hosted a volunteer event Locke-Paddon Park where 60 students from Santa Catalina pulled iceplant filling 69 large trash bags with narrow-leaf iceplant (*Conicosia*). MPRPD volunteer, Jennifer Smith facilitated the event.



Santa Catalina students volunteering with Sustainable Marina at Locke-Paddon Park

d. **Visitor and Discovery Center Volunteers**

Volunteers Marikay LeValley, Amelia Craig, Patricia Merrifield, Michelle Harrison, Coral Amende, Deb Kramer, Laurie Benner, Shannon Mandel, Mark Laycox, and Bruce Merchant greeted and guided visitors at the Garland Visitor Center and Palo Corona Discovery Center. Tempe Wennerholm greeted visitors at the Palo Corona Trailhead**.**

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. **GRRP Security Camera Repairs**
   The security cameras at Garland Ranch Regional Park were non-op temporarily due to a malfunctioning antenna. The antenna (located at the Sherar property) was replaced, along with the aged solar panel by Core Surveillance staff.



Ranger staff working with Core Surveillance staff

2. **FORTAG Update**
   The Fort Ord Regional Trail & Greenway Project continues at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve. Due to various delays, the Frog Pond is not expected to be reopened to public access until December 2025 at the earliest. If pending permit extensions are not approved, the reopening date is expected to be June 2026.



Ongoing FORTAG trail construction at FPWP

3. **GRRP Ranger Station Alarm/Electrical Repairs**
   The security alarm system at the Garland Park Ranger Station needed to be repaired due to apparent rodent damage. Ranger staff worked with First Alarm technicians to facilitate and affect these repairs.
   On the same day, Ranger staff worked with MGE (PG&E subcontractor) to make infrastructure improvements on the Ranger Station electrical service pole.



MGE at GRRP Ranger Station

4. **Summer Enforcement at all Parks/Preserves**
   The busy summer season is winding down, but definitely not over. Rangers responded to the following incidents at MPRPD parks/preserves over the past month:

   a. Visitors reported active BBQing at the Dampierre Park lower footbridge access point. Ranger staff responded, extinguished the flames, and issued a citation to the violator.



Illegal BBQ at Dedampierre Park river access

b. Ranger staff contacted a male subject at Marina Dunes who was actively erecting a tent in the southern closed area of the Preserve. Ranger staff requested support from Marina Police Department to escort the subject and his belongings from the closed area. Subject was issued a written warning.

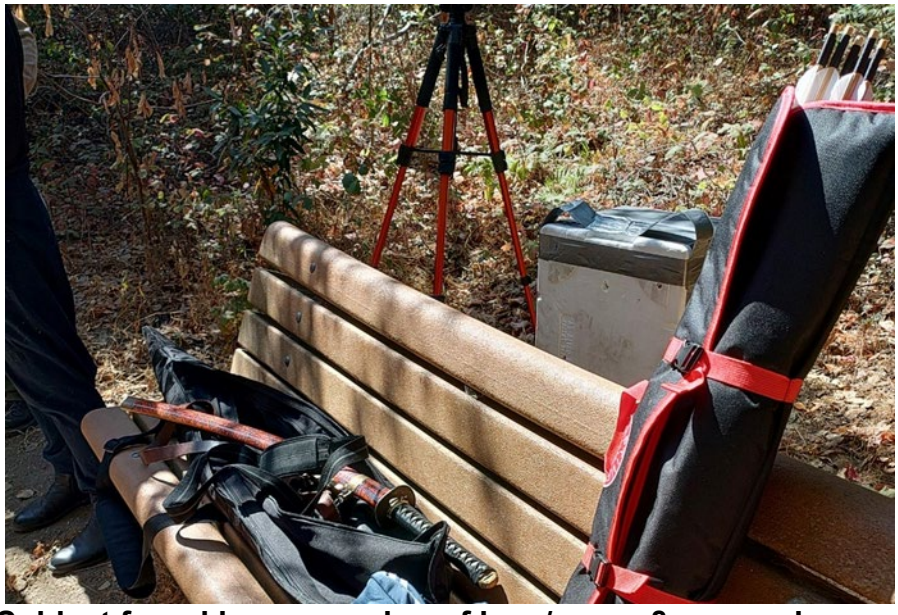


Camping tent removed at MDP closed area

c. Ranger staff received a call from Monterey County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Deputies requesting assistance with locating an individual reported to be practicing archery in Garland Park. Ranger staff assisted MCSO deputies with locating the subject (who was also found to be in possession of a samurai sword), and escorted him back to his vehicle, where he was issued a citation for violation of Section 408.7.



Subject located along River Trail at GRRP



Subject found in possession of bow/arrow & samurai sword

d. Not so much enforcement related, but summer and early fall remain rattlesnake season! This little guy was removed by Ranger staff from the GRRP Visitor Center patio and relocated to a more suitable area.



Rattle Rattle!!!

5. **E-bike Enforcement**
   Electric bicycles have become an increasingly popular means of transportation and recreation at Garland Park. Similarly, the power and speed of e-bikes have increased over the years, leading many users to become concerned about their safety along Garland Park trails. Ranger staff continue to enforce existing rules/regs prohibiting the use of bicycles in a reckless/negligent manner but feel a revision to MPRPD's Ordinance may be necessary in the future to address the increased popularity of e-bikes.



Overly aggressive e-bikers at GRRP

6. **Frog Pond Trail Repairs**
   Ranger staff recently completed trail improvements at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve in anticipation of the reopening date, including removing a failing section of the observation deck and replacing it with compacted aggregate base. Also, staff resurfaced a deteriorated segment of the Crossover Trail with aggregate base, creating a crowned finish grade that will allow water to runoff.





Rangers replacing failed section of boardwalk with aggregate base

7. **Step Removal/Replacement at GRRP**
   Ranger staff recently removed a failing section of steps along Cliff Trail and were able to achieve a sustainable grade by using hand tools, thus eliminating the need to replace the steps.
   The next scheduled step replacement is along Gabilan Trail. Ranger staff have already begun to prefabricate the steps in the GRRP Ranger Station workshop, and will haul steps, tools, and materials to the site when the project begins.



Ranger Hatton removing section of steps

8. **Medical Emergency on Gabilan Trail**
   Ranger staff assisted with a medical emergency along Gabilan Trail on September 22, where a woman suffered a knee injury while hiking alone. Monterey County Regional Fire District (MCRFD) personnel arrived with their Utility Rescue Vehicle, which was used to transport MCRFD and MPRPD personnel to the beginning of Gabilan Trail. From there, firefighters and Ranger staff hiked along this single-track trail until they located her approximately a quarter-mile from the trail junction. Firefighters and Rangers extricated the woman from Gabilan Trail using a Stokes' basket, before loading her into the Rescue UTV, and then driving her to the awaiting ambulance staged at the Carmel Valley Trail & Saddle Club.



Rangers and Firefighters extricating patient on Stokes Basket



Patient being loaded into ambulance for transport to hospital

9. **Memorial Bench Installation on Buckeye Trail**
   Ranger staff recently completed installation of a memorial bench along Buckeye Trail, honoring the late Steven Sherwood, who passed away at Garland Park on February 14, 2025. Rangers worked with Mr. Sherwood's widow, Margaret Johnson, to facilitate sponsorship of this memorial bench.



Margaret Johnson (sponsor) and "Freya"

10. **GRRP Vehicle Bridge Decking Repairs**
    Ranger staff worked to resecure a few of the large deck timbers on the Garland Park vehicle bridge. MPRPD needs to begin discussing replacement of this bridge, as it serves as the only year-round publicly-accessible route across the Carmel River and into Garland Park's most visited areas.



Rangers Jeff and Hatton replacing bridge hardware

11. **Interview Panel Participation**
    Ranger staff participation was requested on multiple oral interview panels this month, including interview panels for MPRPD's Environmental Education and Community Outreach (EECO) Supervisor, and City of Monterey's Senior Park Maintenance Worker.

12. **Trees Down**
    Multiple trees down this month, including a bay laurel tree along Lupine Loop and a large oak tree down across the River Trail.



Oak tree down across River Trail

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION

1. **On- Call Environmental Management and Planning Services:** Staff, with support from the Admin team, completed a request for proposal process and entered into agreements with two additional pre-qualified consultants, Jodi McGraw Consulting and Sequoia Environmental Consulting, for on-call consulting services.

2. **On-call Invasive Species and Vegetation Management Contractors:** Staff are researching how other land management agencies have developed on-call contracts for invasive plant management and vegetation management services. This research will inform MPRPD's exploration and development of similar on-call agreements to support a variety of vegetation-related work across MPRPD properties, including invasive plant management, fire and fuels reduction, arborist, and prescribed herbivory services. Staff are aiming to complete

solicitation for at least one of these services in time to pilot on-call contractors in late spring 2026.

3. **Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network:** Staff attended the Central Coast Climate Workshop, co-hosted by the Monterey Bay Climate Adaptation Action Network and the Wetlands for Climate Partnership, with support from regional and statewide conservation organizations. The workshop focused on advancing collaboration to accelerate wetland restoration, resilience, and climate adaptation across the Central Coast. Sessions included discussions on governance and permitting, funding strategies, and regional monitoring methods, as well as a presentation on integrating nature-based solutions into coastal storm modeling. The event concluded with a site visit to the Salinas River State Beach dune restoration project, providing participants with a hands-on perspective on coastal resilience efforts.

4. **Tri-County Durable Funding Working Group:** Staff attended a meeting at the Santa Cruz Community Foundation, spearheaded by the Trust for Public Land in coordination with Assemblymember Pellerin's office. The meeting focused on the development of legislation to establish a Tri-County Authority (Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito) dedicated to conservation, resilience, parks, open space, and working lands. Legislation is being drafted for the 2026 legislative session. The purpose of the meeting was to provide land conservation and management practitioners with an overview of the proposed entity and to gather feedback on the proposal. Staff will request that the initiative's steering committee provide a presentation to MPRPD's board before legislation is brought forward.

5. **Palo Corona Regional Park**
    a. **Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration:**
        i. **Project Construction:** The Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project construction continues. A construction progress and lookahead report is provided in the section under item 7C of the September MPRPD Board Meeting packet.
    b. **Rancho Canada Ventures Comprehensive Real Property and Soil Sharing Agreement**
        i. **RCV Soil Sharing Coordination**: The Rancho Cañada Village Housing project started construction on 7/22/25 and commenced removal of soil from MPRPD property on August 12th, as outlined in the board approved comprehensive soil sharing agreement, and will complete soil removal no later than September 30, 2025. All soil that is being removed by RCV has been excavated by the floodplain project and reduces that amount of soil that the restoration project will need to contour onsite, benefiting the Park.

c. **Conservation Grazing Program:** Staff continue auditing MPRPD conservation grazing program, including monitoring and management of grazing activities, lease terms, and the condition of grazing infrastructure, in preparation for releasing a competitive request for proposals for a new grazing lease to take effect when the current lease expires on June 30, 2026.Staff are currently focusing on mapping the location and condition of grazing infrastructure within the Park and reinstituting regular monitoring with support from Jodi McGraw Consulting.
    i. **Coordination with BSLT:** Staff coordinated replacement of a fence line between Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) Property and MPRPD property to ensure that BLST's grazer was not inadvertently grazing on MPRPD property.
d. **Palo Corona Regional Park- USFWS Safe Harbor Agreement**: Staff are working with Denise Duffy & Associates to develop a monitoring and reporting schedule for the 25/26FY to fulfill monitoring and reporting requirements under MPRPD's Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) with United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
e. **Rancho Cañada Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan:** Staff are reviewing the draft Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cadan Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park.
f. **Palo Corona Regional Park- Santa Lucia Preserve California Tiger Salamander Habitat Restoration:** Staff are working with the Santa Lucia Conservancy on a proposal to seek grant funding for a multi-year habitat restoration project focused on supporting the recovery of the threatened California tiger salamander (CTS). The project includes upland habitat restoration through shrub removal, targeted grazing, pond construction, and invasive genista removal across approximately 153 acres. Staff are reviewing the proposal and providing input to ensure alignment with MPRPD's Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) requirements, invasive plant management targets, and grassland enhancement goals.

6. **RCDMC Carmel Valley Fuel Break Project:** Staff continue working with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCD) to implement fuel breaks and reduction projects on MPRPD properties as part of the CalFire-funded Carmel Valley Fuel Break Project. Staff continue working with the RCD on the development of a more detailed treatment prescription for the RCDs contractor that is expected to begin implementation as early as the middle of October.

7. **Resource Conservation District of Monterey County Regional Prioritization Plan for Wildfire Projects in Monterey County**: Staff continue to work with RCDMC and other land management agencies to advance the development of a

Regional Prioritization Plan for Wildfire Projects in the County, and to include MPRPD project as priorities within the plan. The Plan's development is being led by RCDMC with funding from the State Coastal Conservancy and will used by grant funders at the state to evaluate local projects for grant funding. MPRPD hosted a partner coordination meeting on 9/15/20 to go over the draft project list.



Agency staff attending Regional Prioritization Meeting at MPRPD's Discovery Center on 9/15/25

8. **Garland Ranch Regional Park**
    a. **Wildfire Preparedness and Fuel Mitigation Projects**
        i. **Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan:** Staff continue working on the development of an administrative draft of the Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Plan for Garland Ranch Regional Park. The plan is expected to be shared with the public for input by October.
        ii. **Graphic Wildfire Incident Response Plan: Graphic Wildfire Incident Response Plan:** Staff continue development of a graphic emergency response plan/ fire pre-attack plan for Garland Ranch Regional Park. The "Plan" (map) will include detailed information to help emergency responders access and navigate the park when responding to wildfires and other emergency events at the park.
        iii. **Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Project (Eucalyptus Thinning & Removal):** The eucalyptus removal project at Garland Ranch Regional Park is one of the most complex and challenging fuel reduction efforts in MPRPD's portfolio. Due to site access constraints, staff are evaluating the feasibility of constructing a temporary stream crossing to allow heavy equipment to access the site and facilitate tree removal. Staff are now consulting with

regulators for review and consideration for permitting under their cutting green tape permit programs that streamline permitting for environmental restoration projects.

b. **Robinson Canyon Tree Mitigation Project:** staff continue to coordinate with representatives from Monterey County regarding the feasibility and logistics of developing and implementing a tree mitigation planting project at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Staff expect to bring a proposed planting plan and MOU or encroachment permit to the board for review and approval during the November Board meeting.

Lagua Grande Regional Park- Trail and Vegetation Maintenance Strategy Permitting: Staff are working with other JPA representatives from the Cities of Monterey and Seaside to review the status of project permitting and permit requirements for priority projects identified in the Trail and Vegetation Maintenance Strategy. This effort will support the development of an implementation timeline focused on Phase 1 priority projects outlined in the Plan that will be shared during the next JPA meeting in November.

9. **Marina Dunes Preserve**
    a. **Coastal Dunes Restoration and Enhancement Project:** Staff have developed a detailed workplan for dune maintenance and management activities funded under the PG&E mitigation agreement for the 25/25FY. Staff are now working to advance a contract with Harris Environmental Gorup to continue this work on behalf of MPRPD.

10. **MPRPD GIS Program:** staff continue work formalizing protocols for data backup routines for MPRPD Geographic Information System (GIS) data to ensure that all data that are being collected are backed and can be restored. This work is increasingly important as the number of MPRPD staff using GIS is increasing, which increases the number and frequency of edits to MPRPDs GIS data.