AGENDA ITEM NO. 7-B

MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
MID-MONTH STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING:	**August 5, 2026**
SUBJECT:	**Monthly Staff Report**
PRESENTER:	**Eric Morgan, 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-June through mid-July 2026, in addition to performing MPRPD's regular business**.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

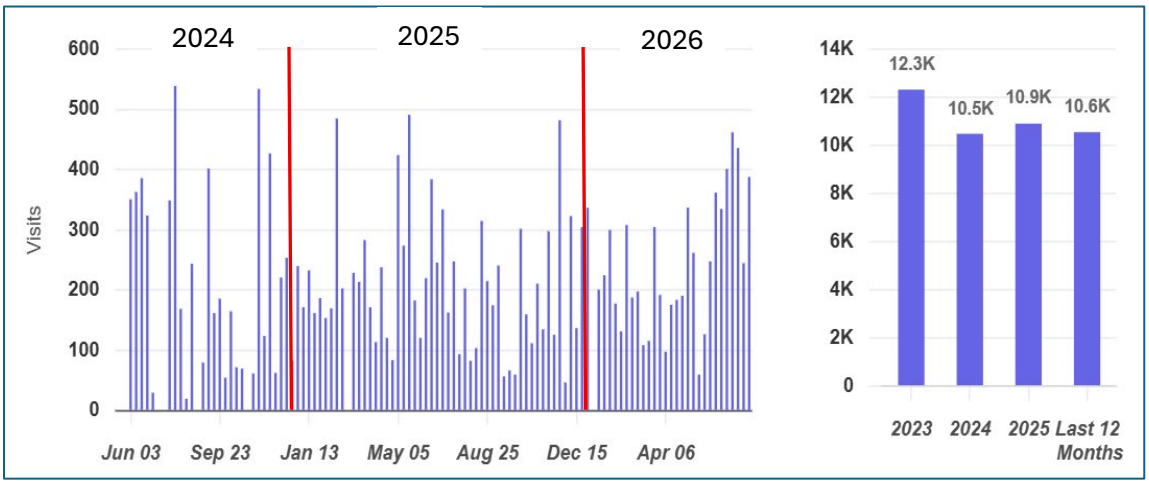
1. **Recruitment**
   Current open recruitment: Ranger and Special Uses Coordinator.

2. **Training**
   Finance Manager concluded the OpenGov procurement introduction webinar.

3. **District Financials**
   Admin staff, including new Finance Manager Angela Rodriguez, met with the auditors regarding the FY2024-25 financial audit. 2024-25 financial audit will be finalized August 2026 and presented September 2026. Financial audit planning for FY2025-26 will begin August 2026.

4. **Data Analytics**
   To better serve District residents, MPRPD staff continue to use a location-analytics platform that uses anonymized mobile device data to estimate foot traffic, dwell time, visitor origins, and movement patterns at real-world places. Staff have been using this tool throughout the year to generate ward profiles showing where residents choose to recreate outdoors and park profiles showing who is using various MPRPD park units, where they are from, how they are getting to those parks, and when they visit. The goal of this new initiative is to better understand our MPRPD customers and the residents we serve in hopes of improving our product delivery – our product being "your parks."

This month, we present visitor metrics for the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project, documenting weekly visitation in the area between and across the bridges spanning the Carmel River to the South Bank Trail. These figures demonstrate the District's success in maintaining public access throughout construction of the largest restoration project in its history, which began in June 2025. Sustaining access has required the establishment of temporary trails across the restoration footprint to minimize disruption for visitors seeking views of the Carmel River or continuing onward to Inspiration Point and the Front Ranch. The sole week of minimal visitation during the construction period occurred from January 5–11, 2026, coinciding with heavy rainfall that left standing water on the temporary access trails.



Weekly visitation through and adjacent to the Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project prior to and during the construction window.

5. **Big Sur Multi-Agency**

District General Manager attended the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council (BSMAAC), commonly referred to as the Big Sur Multi-Agency Coordination Meeting July 17, 2026. The group is a formal advisory body established by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors through Resolution No. 86-443 on July 8, 1986. Its primary purpose is to facilitate communication and coordination among governmental agencies with jurisdiction in the Big Sur area, residents, and landowners, while reviewing proposed projects and developments by federal, state, and local entities for compliance with the policies of the certified Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan.

Topics of discussion included a formal recognition honoring Patte Kronlund for her years of service and dedication to the Big Sur community; consideration of adding the Mid Coast Fire Brigade as a non-voting member of the Council; reports from member agencies; and updates from non-member agencies on issues pertinent to Big Sur. The District General Manager provided updates on planned fuel

management projects in the Carmel Valley and Mill Creek areas, update on the Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project, and support of the ParkIT! Initiative with California State Parks, the Point Lobos Foundation, and others.

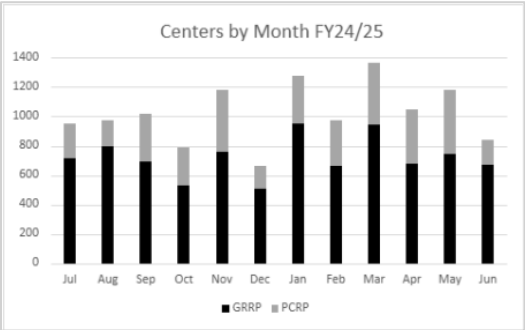
6. **City of Marina Coordination**
   On July 17, 2026, District General Manager joined Ward 1 Board Member Jeff Markham in saying goodbye to long-time City Manager, Layne Long at a special council function. Staff continue to coordinate with the City of Marina on collaborative planning efforts at Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park. These discussions have advanced preparation of two distinct scopes of work — one focused on wetland and riparian habitat enhancement planning and CEQA documentation, and the other on an upland/terrestrial Conceptual Master Plan. The parties are also refining a draft Memorandum of Understanding to support cost-sharing and coordinated roles, particularly for the wetland restoration track. Staff are bringing a recommendation to the Board on August 5 to authorize release of Requests for Proposals for both planning efforts.

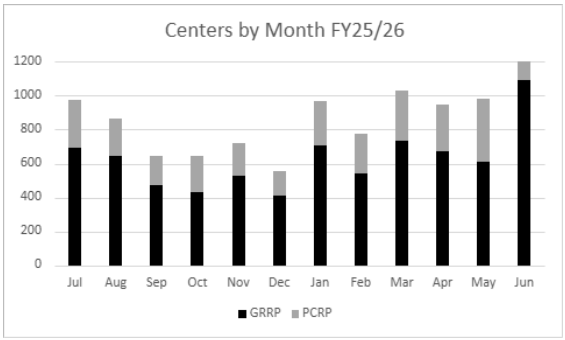
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIVISION

1. **Community Outreach**

   a. **Visitor and Discovery Center Totals**

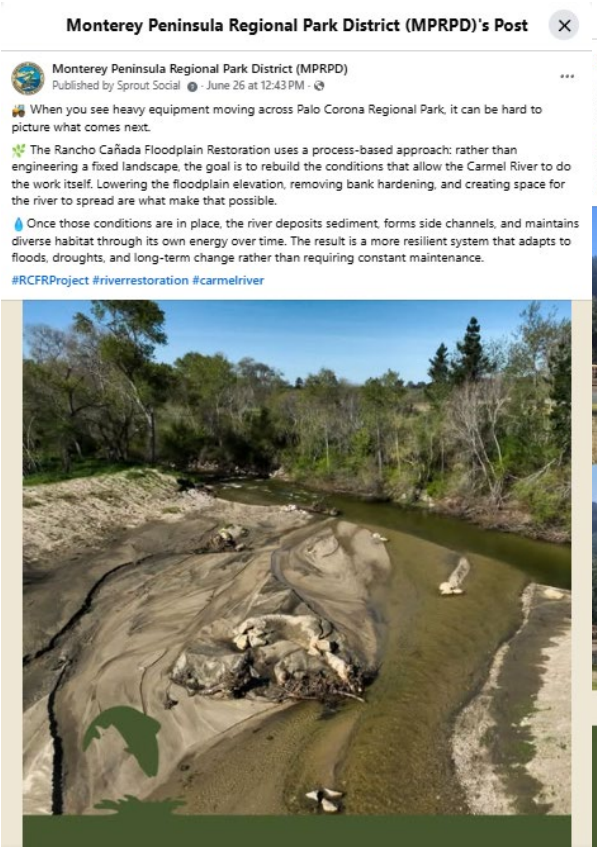
   Recording of visitor contacts at the Palo Corona Discovery Center (DC) and the Garland Visitor Center (VC) is ongoing. We have maintained extended visitation days from April 2024 through June 14, 2026, where the operating hours were 10am-4pm for both centers on Monday holidays, DC was open Friday – Sunday, and the VC was open Thursday – Sunday. The DC continued to be open for additional days on an ad hoc basis, subject to staff availability, and the VC was open 7 days of the week since June 15, 2026, to accommodate summer visitation.

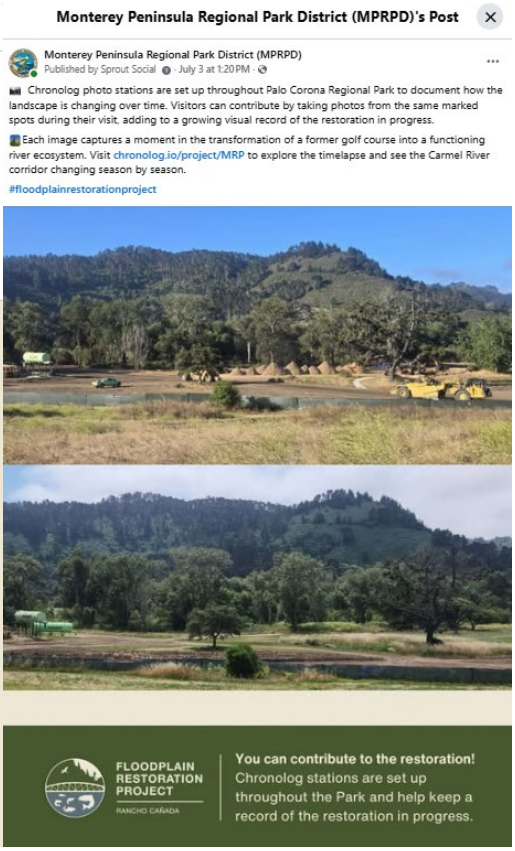




   a. **Social Media Posts**

Facebook stats	@MPRegionalParkDistrict @PaloCoronaRegionalPark @garlandranchregionalpark	
Followers on Jul 15	8,936	+59 from last month
Total Impressions	56,163	+16% from last month
Top 3 posts	Jun 26: Heavy Equipment	7,595 impressions 501 engagements
	Jul 03: Chronolog	10,492 impressions 365 engagements
	Jul 05: Star Party	6,657 impressions 189 engagements
Instagram stats	@mprpd_lgo	
Followers on Jul 15	2,269	+38 from last month
Total Impressions	13,779	+2.5% from last month
Top 3 posts	Jun 24: Cachagua Country Fair	1,372 impressions 76 engagements
	Jul 05: Star Party	1,619 impressions 70 engagements
	Jul 01: Moth Party	825 impressions 54 engagements





b. E-Newsletter

Staff worked with public relations consultants at Spoke to produce the monthly e-News. The June eNews featured: a promotion of Parks and Recreation month, a wonders of wildlife on ring-necked snakes, and an introduction of Angela Rodriguez, new finance manager. For Parks and Recreation month we promoted the Power of Parks celebration in collaboration with ParkRx. The e-News also shared about the Cachagua Country Fair, Beginning Birding, other LGO! Events, and the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe Cultural Presentation.

c. Living History Day, July 4

Staff set up an outreach booth for California State Historic Park's Living History Day in Monterey on July 4th, 2026. We shared two history-themed activities about MPRPD's involvement in the Monterey Coastal Recreation Trail and an iron gall ink demonstration, along with general District information. We contacted 106 people throughout the day, a mix of locals and families visiting for the holiday.

d. Cachagua Country Fair on July 11

Staff and volunteers hosted an outreach booth at the Cachagua Country Fair, highlighting the history of the park and the local wildlife. The event

provided an opportunity to connect with residents and visitors while sharing information about MPRPD's role in supporting the park. MPRPD staff and volunteers engaged with 119 visitors, fostering conversations about the park's history and natural resources.

[Left] MPRPD staff and outreach booth on local wildlife.
[Right] MPRPD volunteers and outreach booth on park history.

2. Education

a. K-12 Education Programs

During FY2025-2026, staff served approximately 300 students through guided educational programs in MPRPD parks. These programs offered students hands-on, place-based learning experiences that highlighted local habitats and wildlife. Activities were designed to support curriculum connections while fostering environmental knowledge and outdoor exploration.

Additionally, in this reporting period, staff coordinated, guided and self-guided YMCA and Boys and Girls Club camp groups through multiple MPRPD parks. In total, we reached over 500 campers from Seaside, Salinas, Watsonville, Hollister, and Monterey who utilized the MPRPD Transportation Grant fund to receive transportation funding to visit MPRPD lands.

Boys & Girls Club summer camp group visit Palo Corona Regional Park (left) and Locke-Paddon Community Wetland in partnership with Bird School Project (right).

b. Let's Go Outdoors!

During FY2025–2026, over 2,000 community members participated in Let's Go Outdoors! programming that included: guided hikes, natural history walks, educational workshops, and hands-on experiences. The LGO! continues to provide opportunities for community members of all ages to connect with local parks, open spaces, and natural resources.

The Spring/Summer 2026 programs have served over 100 participants up to this reporting period. Featured programs included: Flint Knapping – Making Stone Tools, Cold Blooded Friends, and Steelhead Trout in the Carmel River.

The Star Party scheduled for July 11th was cancelled due to the weather.

Bruce Delgado leading Cold Blooded Friends.

Volunteer Blake Bufford demonstrates making stone tools from Flint.

3. Volunteers

a. Communication and connection to our volunteers

During FY 2025-2026 staff sent volunteers four 4 Quarterly Newsletters and 54 weekly schedule updates, in addition to MPRPD e-newsletters and informational emails and texts.

b. Education Program and Fieldtrip Volunteers

Volunteers Andrea Eisler, Jackie Nelson, Bruce Merchant, and Jennifer Smith assisted staff with field trips for the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA.

c. LGO! Program Volunteers

Volunteers led or facilitated the following LGO! Programs and hikes during this reporting period: Flint Knapping-Making Stone Tools, Cold Blooded-Friends, Moon Movement & Mysteries, Beginning Birding at Laguna Grande, Night Hikes, Snively's Ridge Loop, Steelhead Trout in the Carmel River, Birding, and Garland Nature Walk.

Volunteer leaders, facilitators, and hike guides include Blake Bufford, Steve Ibrahim, Reese McDonald, Jennifer Smith, James Folliard, Toni McDaniel, Sharon Osgood, Bill Duouros, Cath Farrant, Mary Dainton, Kathy Simpson, and Susi Diallo.

d. Outreach Volunteers

Volunteers Cath Farrant and Mary Dainton staffed an outreach booth at the Cachagua Country Fair.

Staff and Volunteer, Cath at Cachagua Outreach Booth

e. New Volunteers

Staff onboarded two (2) new volunteer naturalists during this reporting period, Tony Amarante and Emily Adler. During FY2025-2026, Twenty-four (24) new volunteers were onboarded.

f. **Stewardship Volunteers**

Volunteer Bill Douros worked with volunteer team leader, Lois Davidson, in the Garland Arboretum.

g. **Visitor and Discovery Center Volunteers**
Volunteers Eric Hartwell, Patty Armstrong, Barbara Barrett, Rebecca Law, Coral Amende, Amelia Craig, Tim Wilson, Shannon Mandel, Marikay LeValley, Kathy Simpson, Pat Herro, Jordan Goldman, James Folliard, Tony Amarante, Meagan Morales, and Sam Ross greeted and guided visitors at the Palo Corona Discovery Center and Garland Visitor Center. Tempe Wennerholm greeted visitors at the Palo Corona Trailhead.

4. **Special Use Permits (SUP) & MOU Events**
   a. **MEarth (MOU)**
   Staff with MEarth brought a total of ~30 summer camp youth for two days on a center exploration and guided hike through Garland Ranch Regional Park.

   b. **YMCA Central Coast (SUP)**
   Staff with YMCA from Hollister, Monterey, Salinas, and Watsonville visited Marina Dunes Preserve, Palo Corona Regional Park, Garland Ranch Regional Park, and Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park to participate in a variety of self-guided, MPRPD-guided, and/or partner-guided habitat and nature programming. Transportation funding to MPRPD parks was made possible by the MPRPD Transportation Grant.

   c. **Boys and Girls Club Central Coast (SUP)**
   Staff with the Boys and Girls Club Monterey and Salinas visited Palo Corona Regional Park, Garland Ranch Regional Park, and Locke-Paddon Wetland Community Park to participate in a variety of self-guided, MPRPD-guided, and/or partner-guided habitat and nature programming. Transportation funding to MPRPD parks was made possible by the MPRPD Transportation Grant.

   d. **CSUMB – Habitat Stewardship Project (Annual SUP)**
   Staff with Habitat Stewardship Project at CSUMB led a naturalist hike at Garland Ranch during this reporting period as part of the Outdoor Equity Program. Activities for the next year include guided naturalist hikes, outdoor education, family-friendly exploration, and short conservation-based learning activities.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE DIVISION

1. **Rancho Canada Mowing**
   Mowing of seasonal vegetation and invasives at Rancho Cañada is proceeding under procedures coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in lieu of a Habitat Conservation Plan. Working with Planning & Conservation Management

staff and a qualified biologist, Ranger staff have begun targeted mowing along the Southbank Trail, near the entrance pond, and in other priority areas of the Rancho Cañada Unit in a manner protective of listed species.

2. **FORTAG Project Update**
   Ranger staff continue to participate in the weekly construction meetings for the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway (FORTAG) project. Project management staff from TAMC have reported that Segment 1 is nearly complete, however, the anticipated reopening date of the Frog Pond was recently pushed back due to construction delays. The Frog Pond is now scheduled to reopen in late August, assuming no further delays. Ranger staff have continued to patrol the Frog Pond throughout the construction closure to monitor for illegal activity and began taking steps toward reopening by bringing in a Gabilan Crew to begin brushing back heavily overgrown trails.

3. **FEMA Project at deDampierre**
   Following Board approval at the July meeting, District staff executed a contract with Coastal Paving and Excavating to implement winter storm damage repairs at deDampierre Park. Ranger staff are currently working to schedule the kick-off meeting in hopes of starting and completing this project during the month of August.

4. **Water System Repairs**
   a) **DeDampierre Park Entrance Road**
      The main water line serving deDampierre Park suffered a leak requiring Ranger staff to sawcut, jackhammer, and remove a section of asphalt roadway to access the galvanized pipe. The water line was repaired, and cold patch was used to repair the road.

b) Cachagua Rock House

Water service to the Cachagua Community Park Rock House and Apartment was temporarily interrupted when the supply line from the storage tanks suffered multiple leaks, requiring repair.

c) GRRP Ranger Station Pressure Pump

The pressure pump at the Garland Park Ranger Station recently shut down, requiring diagnosis by Dougherty Pump & Drilling, leading to replacement of a corroded brass fitting. While onsite, Dougherty staff inspected and maintained the chlorine injection pump serving the Ranger Station and collected water quality samples.

5. **PCRP Barn Drainage Improvements**
With the forecast indicating a significant forthcoming rainy season, Ranger staff added some large rocks to the drainage behind the Palo Corona Front Ranch Barn, using repurposed rock from the floodplain restoration project.

Before

After

6. **Opossum Rescued from Garza's Road**
Ranger Stephen Sheeter recently saved a young opossum from Garza's Road, which borders Garland Park. As the young opossum appeared distressed, Steve contacted CDFW and the SPCA Wildlife Unit to request support, who requested he transport it in a crate to the SPCA shelter on Highway 68.

7. **Medical Emergency on East Ridge Trail**
   Ranger staff recently supported a medical emergency alongside Monterey County Regional Fire District personnel on East Ridge Trail in Garland Park, near the junction with Garza's Canyon Trail. This required the use of the District's John Deere Gator UTV to extricate the patient from the far reaches of Garza's Canyon. MCRFD personnel then transported the patient to CHOMP.

8. **Whisler-Wilson Road Repairs**
   Another project to prepare for the rainy season was drainage improvements along the Wilson Ridge Trail at Palo Corona Regional Park. This project improved road drainage features and concurrently provided much safer driving conditions for MPRPD staff travel via ATV/UTV.

9. **Fuel Locker Door Repairs**
   Ranger Stephen Sheeter recently saved the District significant funds by repairing the broken fuel locker doors at Garland Park. Steve removed and replaced multiple broken hinges on these steel lockers, preventing the District from having to purchase new lockers.

10. Seasonal Mowing at Closed Properties

Mowing continues at remote District properties closed to public access, including San Clemente-Blue Rock Open Space and Hatton Canyon. These properties serve as critical access routes for emergency vehicles and fuel breaks for adjacent communities.

11. Summer Enforcement

Ranger staff continue to spend considerable time patrolling along the Carmel River, particularly at deDampierre Park, where river access remains an extremely popular activity. A mid-summer heat wave resulted in an increase in enforcement action, including a citation issued for illegal camping along the river near the Visitor

Center, and another fortress at Marina Dunes Preserve constructed from driftwood.

12. Janitorial Services Quality Control

Ranger staff continue to monitor and provide quality control associated with the US Metro Group contract for janitorial services. Ranger staff will continue to facilitate field visits and work with other Divisions to address deficiencies.

13. PCRP Front Ranch Access Road Culvert Replacement

Ranger staff recently teamed up with Fish Ranch staff to remove and replace the damaged/plugged culvert underneath the access road leading from Highway 1 to the Fish Ranch inholding. The old concrete culvert was replaced with a larger-

capacity HDPE culvert and the road repaired using cold patch. This road will require additional attention soon.

14. Trees Down

Multiple large trees came down across District trails this month, including multiple large oak trees blocking Hitchcock Loop, a large oak tree blocking River Trail, and a large willow tree that fell across the GRRP footbridge entrance trail that damaged multiple signs.

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DIVISION

1. **Palo Corona Regional Park**

   a. **Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project:** See Report 13C-Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Phase 2 Construction Progress for more details.

   b. **Rancho Canada Invasive Species Removal:** PCM staff continued to work with CCC Natural Resources crew treating priority invasive species regrowth within the Rancho Canada Floodplain Restoration Project Phase 1 area. Though the official GGRF grant funding for the project ended on June 30th, the CCC crew was able to provide an additional 2.5 weeks (1000 corpsperson hours) of invasive weed removal, from July 1 - July 16, totaling over 3000 corpsperson hours. This work helps fill a crucial gap, addressing recurrence of priority invasive weeds within the restoration area early to help disrupt and prevent re-establishment.

   c. **Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) Monitoring and Compliance:** PCM staff continue Smith's Blue Butterfly transects and surveys at Palo Corona Regional Park to maintain compliance with the District's Safe Harbor Agreement. Foggy weather conditions limited surveys during peak flight season, but SBB were observed during two separate survey events.

d. **Conservation Grazing Program:** Staff continue working with the current operator on grazing rotations and grazing infrastructure maintenance and repairs. Staff expect to release a clarified and revised RFP in the month of August.

e. **Rancho Cañada Village Development Coordination:** Staff continue working with the property owners of the adjacent Rancho Cañada Village housing development to facilitate the design of underground water and sewer pipelines serving that development, portions of which will be constructed on District property, and to coordinate the drafting of easements over District property. The RCV Project team recently completed construction of the CAWD sewer realignment on MPRPD property.

f. **Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan:** To secure an Incidental Take Permit under the Endangered Species Act for operations and restoration at the Rancho Cañada Unit, the District is developing a Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP). The District has now received USFWS approval to conduct park operations under the LEHCPs proposed avoidance and minimization measures, which will streamline park operations relative to previous measures that were in place, and allow staff to test the measures before they are finalized in the LEHCP.

2. **Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve:**

a. **CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant:** PCM Staff completed and submitted the full grant application for consideration for CalFire Forest Health Management Grant FY25-26 funding for The Monterey Pine Forest Resiliency Project. If chosen for award, this grant could fund: contracting a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) to draft a comprehensive Forest Management plan for Joyce-Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve, CEQA development and documentation including requisite biological and cultural surveys, on the ground fuels reduction ~400 acres of forest understory, forest health treatment implementation (invasive plant removal and pest management) for up to 842 acres, erosion control for ~1 acre of highly eroded trail area, and purchase of new forestry grinder (aka masticator) equipment.

3. **Garland Ranch Regional Park:**

a. **Fuel Mitigation and Fire Management Project (Eucalyptus Thinning & Removal):** Staff continue advancing the State Coastal Conservancy-funded eucalyptus removal effort at Garland Ranch Regional Park. Staff are now seeking board approval to enter into contract with Denise Duffy and Associates to help with design and permitting of a temporary equipment access route across the Carmel River to support project implementation in summer 2027.

b. **MPRPD/CalFire Fuel Reduction Planning:** Staff are advancing for priority fuel reduction work at Garland Ranch Regional Park through the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan, which allows qualifying wildfire safety work to proceed under the Governor's emergency proclamation framework. Staff continue working with CAL FIRE to determine if CAL FIRE can support implementation of this work, while staff complete notification requirements to

local tribes. Staff will brief the board and seek its approval before any work occurs.

4. **Laguna Grande Regional Park:**
    a. **Laguna Grande Fuels Reduction:** Staff are advancing planning for priority fuel reduction work at Laguna Grande Regional Park through the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan, which allows qualifying wildfire safety work to proceed under the Governor's emergency proclamation framework. MPRPD received approval for its EPP application in March 2026 and are now notifying local tribes of the proposed work and are awaiting a response from the California Conservation Corps after applying for grant-funded California Conservation Corps support to help implement fuel reduction work by October 2026. Staff have also provided a briefing to JPA member agency staff and Board on this opportunity and are developing a summary of how the EPP program can help streamline vegetation management work contemplated under the Trail and Vegetation maintenance Strategy.
5. **Special Use Permit Coordination:**
    PCM staff worked with researchers and partner organizations to facilitate scientific research on MPRPD properties. This included coordinating CNPS vegetation mapping surveys, supporting CDFW-permitted research involving species such as steelhead and bobcats, and issuing permits for CSUMB bird monitoring for a field ornithology classes and student research projects. These efforts help improve understanding of the District's natural resources while providing opportunities for research and education.