

MONTEREY COUNTY

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 20, 2022

To: Office of Supervisor Mary L. Adams, District 5

From: Shandy Carroll, Management Analyst III, HCD

Subject: Update to District 5 regarding Carmel Lagoon and Carmel River projects

cc: Melanie Beretti, Principal Planner

The following is an update regarding Projects and activities in the Carmel Lagoon and lower Carmel River area for the Monterey County Supervisorial District 5 office to share with constituents. It covers work completed between March 23 and May 13, 2022, and work planned for the near future. Prior updates can be found at <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/carmel-river-and-lagoon-project-updates>

1. Carmel Lagoon and River Beach Sandbar Seasonal Management Activities:

Public Works, Facilities and Parks (PWWP) staff continue to monitor the Carmel Lagoon water level and the seasonal weather patterns. Since the sandbar was mechanically managed in December, it has naturally opened and closed several times.

Below are key activities, status and updates related to sandbar management activities.

Project Component	Status	Update
Upcoming meetings	None planned	Annual sandbar management outreach meetings are held in October.
Interim (Seasonal) Sandbar Management	Complete	All necessary permits are complete and active, and can be viewed here: https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects/carmel-lagoon-ecosystem-protective-barrier-and-scenic-road-protective-barrier-systems
Permits	In progress	County Staff are reviewing an update Best Management Plan for sandbar management in preparation to request amendments from the respective permitting agencies.
Temporary Flood Management	Complete	The interim sandbag wall and pumps placed at the end of the ends of Camino Real, River Park Place, and Monte

		Verde Streets will be removed at the end of May, at the availability of contracted staff.
Monitoring	In progress – see links	Carmel Lagoon Water Levels Current and forecasted flow at Robles Del Rio Bridge, Carmel River Wave height at Carmel River Beach

2. Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier (EPB), Scenic Road Protection structure (SRPS) and Interim Sandbar Management Plan (ISMP) Project (REF 120051):

The 2016 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier (EPB), Scenic Road Protection structure (SRPS) and Interim Sandbar Management Plan (ISMP) Project is located at the below link: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects/carmel-lagoon-ecosystem-protective-barrier-and-scenic-road-protective-barrier-systems>

Project Component	Status	Update
Upcoming Community meetings	Tentatively Planned: 5:30 pm June 29, 2022	A community outreach meeting to present an EIR update, and review of technical studies will be held in June 2022 to review the updated 30% SRPS Design plans. This meeting schedule will be finalized at the beginning of June, and the zoom meeting information will be sent via email and by notice in the Carmel Pinecone and Monterey Weekly at that time.
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	Draft revision	Recirculation of the Draft EIR is expected in late summer 2022.
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Ongoing	A meeting will be held with the TAC and the agency advisory group to discuss the 30% SRPS design draft in June 2022.
EIR Technical Studies	Final Drafts	Additional technical studies to analyze the hydrology from stormwater runoff inland of the sandbag wall has been added to the current EIR contract. Comments received on the draft technical study evaluating the effect of the SRPS wall on the beach are under review and may inform revisions on the final draft of the technical study.
SRPS 30% Design	Pending Technical Studies	Following the completion of the technical studies, the existing preliminary SRPS 30% design described in the Draft EIR will be updated to reflect the new information. The design will include the location, dimensions, type of wall, and will consider sea level rise and identify adaptive measures. A visual rendering of preliminary designs will be released with the re-circulated DEIR. All studies will be provided to the Technical Advisory Committee, regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and the community for review and input.

3. Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE) Project

The CRFREE Project Certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) is available at:

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects/carmel-river-free>

Project Component	Status	Update
Project Approval	Complete	The CRFREE Project and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) was approved by the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors June 15, 2021.
National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)	In progress	The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues its NEPA analysis of the Project as part of its consideration of the \$25 million grant funds proposed for the CRFREE project, inclusive of funding for the Carmel Area Wastewater District's (CAWD) project to underground its force main and sewer outfall pipes spanning the south arm of the Lagoon.
Construction and permitting	In progress	The current implementation schedule anticipates phase 1 restoration on the east side of highway 1 will begin in late fall 2022. Phase 1 will include grading, restoration planting, and beginning of the Ag preserve construction. A grading permit application was submitted to the County of Monterey in March 2022. Coordination activities with the Coastal Commission on CRFREE's Coastal Development Permit are continuing. Construction of the causeway and restoration on the west side of highway 1 is scheduled to begin in 2024 and will last approximately twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months.
Agreements	In progress	The All-Party memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the construction phase is under review by the parties and may be considered for approval by the Board of Supervisors in June 2022. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the County and Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) regarding implementation of cultural and tribal mitigation measure will be brought before the Board of Supervisors in June. An MOA with CAWD and the County regarding funding for the pipeline undergrounding project is in draft form and being reviewed by Staff.
Grant Funding	Ongoing	CRFREE is estimated to cost approximately \$43 million. Approximately \$18 million in grant funds have been awarded, with a further \$25 million applied for and pending environmental review with FEMA. County and BSLT Staff are coordinating to fundraise to close the gap.