

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2013 MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK TASK FORCE

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force was held on Thursday, September 19, 2013 at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present

Councilmember Scott Sherman, City of San Diego
Supervisor Dave Roberts, County of San Diego
Councilmember Mark Kersey, City of San Diego
Councilmember Rob McNelis, City of Santee
Dorothy Leonard, Chair of Citizens Advisory Committee

Members Absent

Supervisor Diane Jacob, County of San Diego
Kristin Alessio, City of La Mesa

City of San Diego

Chris Zirkle, Deputy Director, Open Space Division
Steve Haupt, District Manager, Open Space Division
Matt Sanford, Senior Park Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park
Gayle Havens, Public Utilities Department
Liz Saidkhanian, office of Councilmember Scott Sherman

County of San Diego

Evan Bollinger, office of Supervisor Dave Roberts

City of Santee

Bill Maertz, Director of Community Services

Guests

Mark Carpenter, KTU+A	Keshav Damoor
Kim Wiley	Peter Vena
Everett Neuman	Van Collingsworth
Robert Jeb Moore	Kevin Loomis
Karen Ensall	Mark Schulze
Amy Comalli	Patty Mooney
Mary Wagner	Valene Peratrovich
Gardner Grady	Robert Wilken
Jeff Clandine	Chad Smart
Julie Murphy	Brentt Hoover
C.J. Truesdale	

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Councilmember Sherman at 1:05PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (ROBERTS/MCNELIS) to approve the minutes of the meeting on May 16, 2013. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUENCES – NONE

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Councilmember Scott Sherman reported the following:

- The City Council unanimously voted to support the Castlerock project near Mast Blvd. The project will be annexed into the City of Santee. 94 acres of this land will be dedicated open space.
- There was some discussion about reverse angle parking along Golfcrest Drive near the Cowles Mountain Staging Area to help ease the congestion in this area, but City planners said it is not possible because of issues with bike lanes, sidewalk and disabled accessibility. There was an idea floated by the City to add 19 parking spaces along Navajo, but Navajo Community Planners group voted against it. We're going to look at other ideas to help ease parking congestion near the Cowles Staging Area.
- Funds to reopen the Kumeyaay Lake Campground for overnight camping should be included in the mid-year budget adjustments.

MTRP CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Dorothy Leonard reported the following for the CAC meeting held on September 3, 2013:

- Supported the Xterra Mission Gorge Trail run to be held in February 2014 which has been approved by Senior Ranger Sanford.
- Recommendation to support item 101 on the Task Force agenda for the creation of a CIP to construct the ESA shade structure and administrative building.

MTRP FOUNDATION REPORT

Dorothy Leonard reported the following:

- Sponsoring the 2nd annual Art-in-the Park fund-raiser on Saturday, October 5th from 6 to 9 PM. Admission is \$25 per person and includes wine, cheese, chocolate and art. Approximately 45 artists are participating with about 125 pieces of art on display and for sale. Funds raised will support Mission Trails programs and projects.
- A committee which includes MTRP staff, volunteers and Foundation representatives is working on a new exhibit which will focus on the animals of Mission Trails – mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, spiders and friends, butterflies, and other insects. This will replace information developed with the opening of the visitor center in 1995, that is

shown on two small monitors located on the 2nd level of the exhibit area, with current technology utilizing touch screen monitors.

- Received a \$25,000 grant from SDG&E for environmental education programs for children and youth in underserved communities. This new program is designed to help Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Camp Fire members earn merit badges.
- Other successful education programs are continuing and include two fee based programs, one a children's art program and the other Children's Nature Adventures for children three and up. Grant funded programs that are continuing include a summer and after-school environmental education program in cooperation with YMCA's of San Diego County and an environmental education program with SDUSD for 6th graders who no longer have the overnight camping experience through the canceled 6th grade outdoor education program. City of San Diego TOT funds will be used for a program to bring children residing in underserved communities to the park in cooperation with recreation centers in Council Districts 3 and 9.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Water Department's Lake Murray Report – *Gayle Havens reported the following:*

- Due to the warm temperatures we've called paramedics several times recently to help park visitors dealing with heat related issues.
- We have a *I Love a Clean San Diego* Cleanup at Lake Murray coming up soon, and other City lakes will be hosting a cleanup as well.
- A resident is working with local Scout groups and the Kiwanis on organizing a fishing derby at the lake. No date for this event yet.
- The water temperature is currently at 65 degrees and getting colder. Trout will most likely be stocked in November. Fishing has been really good.
- The gates closing time is currently 8pm, but will be changing to 6:30pm once Daylight Savings Time ends on November 3rd.
- We've been dealing with a lot of homeless issues around the lake and have been coordinating with SDPD on this. The concession stand was recently broken into.

B. City of Santee Community Services Department – *Bill Maertz reported the following:*

- The San Diego River Conservancy recently gave \$360,000 to SANDAG for the initial public outreach and to study a trail alignment from Mast Park to the Mission Trails.
- SANDAG will consider an early action plan for regional bike trails, and have included staff recommendations to include the Father Junipero Serra Trail in the plan. If approved by SANDAG, there will be \$2.8 million available for design and engineering in 2014, which will include the environmental review and trail alignment study. \$7.4 million will be available for construction of the trail, tentatively scheduled for 2018.
- We've received a lot of calls from homeowners near the Mesa Road trailhead, on the backside of Cowles Mountain, about dust problems as a result of the increased vehicle traffic along this road. The last 200 yards of the dirt road leading up to the

trailhead is private property. We've looked at potentially moving the trailhead to the paved portion of Mesa Road. Paving the dirt road would be very expensive.

C. Park Staff/ Ranger's Report – *Matt Sanford reported the following:*

- The volunteer work crews will be starting back up in October. The Habitat Crew meets on the 2nd Saturday, 8am at the flagpole; the Trail Rehabilitation Crew meets on the 3rd Saturday, 8am at the flagpole; and the Park Beautification Crew meets on the 4th Saturday, 8am at the flagpole.
- On June 16, a fire that started on south side of SR52, just east of Santo Road, burned approximately 110 acres in the park. The cause is not known. SDFD and CalFire responded to the fire and constructed a fire break. Full containment was reached around 11pm, but crews stayed on site through the night, and the incident command was moved to the Visitor Center until the next morning. Park staff closed all park staging areas and evacuated everyone from the park. Park staff posted signs to keep people out of the burned area, and are assessing the damage caused by the fire and the fire break constructed by the Fire bulldozer, and will be rehabilitating some of these areas in the weeks ahead.
- We will be interviewing for 5 Park Ranger positions soon, and 4 of these Rangers will be assigned to MTRP. One pesticide applicator will also be hired soon to help eradicate non-native plants around MTRP, and other open space parks.
- Cowles Mountain: Park staff will be working with 2 crews from the San Diego County Urban Corps from October 21-25 on trail tread work, installing more lodge pole to keep people on trail, and updating some park signage. The trail will remain open most of the time, but all Cowles Mountain trails will be temporarily closed on 10/22 and 10/23, from 7am to 10am, to allow the safe drop-off of materials onto the trail. Park staff have been picking up trash on park property along Golfcrest Drive and will continue to remind trail users to be respectful of the surrounding community.
- The *In Depth Corporation* (working for the US Army Corps of Engineers) will be starting their ordnance mapping on the west side of the Sycamore landfill this week, and lasting approximately 4 weeks.

D. Open Space Division Staff Report – *Chris Zirkle reported the following:*

- As part of the ongoing Master Plan Update (MPU) and Resource Management Plan (RMP), representatives from the US and CA Fish & Wildlife agencies toured the East Elliot area and were taken aback by the number of unauthorized trails in this area. There are approximately 11 miles of unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area, and since 2010 there have been approximately 2.5 miles of unauthorized trails built.
- On August 7th the resource agencies sent a letter to the Open Space Division about the proposals in the MPU and RMP, and in it they mentioned that the unauthorized trail building in East Elliot should be immediately addressed and effectively controlled.

- At a meeting with members of the San Diego Mountain Biking Association it was pointed out that the language in the letter about effectively controlling the unauthorized trails building in East Elliot was vague.
- He met with the representatives from the resource agencies and while it's clear that the unauthorized building of these trails is illegal, he wanted them to clarify what effectively controlling the usage of these unauthorized trails means.
- Preparations have been made to begin restoring these unauthorized trails.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

ACTION ITEMS

101. Recommendation to create a CIP to construct the Equestrian Staging Area Shade Structure and Administrative Building as identified in the Site Development Permit, encumbering MTRP Antenna Funds to be used toward the project – Dorothy Leonard, Chair CAC
- The CAC had been looking at building a picnic shade structure, but as we worked through the project and since new Rangers will be hired and assigned to MTRP soon, the CAC decided to include the administrative building to the shade structure project as approved in the site development permit.
 - It was suggested at the recent CAC meeting that City staff take a look at the building drawings and suggest any changes, and that a public workshop be held to discuss program development of the interior and exterior building design.
- MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/MCNELIS) to recommend the creation of a CIP to construct the Equestrian Staging Area Shade Structure and Administrative Building as identified in the Site Development Permit, and that there be a public workshop to discuss program development of the interior and exterior building design. Motion carried.
102. CAC Reappointments/Reappointments – Councilmember Scott Sherman
- San Diego State University – Dr. Paul Ganster
 - Tierrasanta Community Council
- MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/ROBERTS) to approve Dr. Paul Ganster as a member of the Mission Trails Regional Park Citizen's Advisory Committee, representing San Diego State University. Motion carried.
103. Declaring the City of Santee CAC position vacant due to over three successive unexcused absences of a current representative – Dorothy Leonard, Chair CAC
- The City of Santee representative to the CAC has missed the last 5 meetings.
 - The CAC operating rules state that if a member has three successive unexcused absences, the CAC Chairperson shall notify the Task Force Chairperson that a

vacancy exists by virtue of such absences, and that an action item declaring the position vacant shall be included on the next Task Force meeting agenda.

Public Comment:

- Keshav Damoor expressed an interest in the City of Santee position on the CAC.
- Gardner Grady asked if the application for this position will be made public so that others can apply. Councilmember McNelis stated that it can be found on the City of Santee website.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/MCNELIS) to declare the City of Santee position on the Citizen's Advisory Committee vacant due to over three successive unexcused meeting absences by the current representative. Motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS

301. MTRP Master Plan Update (MPU) and Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) – Mark Carpenter, KTU+A

- Back in May a pre-public draft of the MPU and NRMP was submitted to City departments for internal review, as well as the US and CA wildlife agencies for comments.
- The wildlife agencies toured around the park and were shown different proposals listed in the MPU and NRMP. The East Elliot and West Sycamore areas were also toured.
- The wildlife agencies wrote the City of San Diego a letter outlining all of their comments related to both documents. At this point the actual actions recommended in the plans are not being changed. The types of issues and concerns that will have to be addressed in order for the proposed actions to be implemented are being footnoted.
- KTU+A is finishing revisions to the MPU. RECON Environmental is finishing up revisions to the NRMP. It is hoped that both documents will be completed by the end of this September. City staff will have one last opportunity to review both documents before both are posted as public draft documents. After this is done there will be an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) scoping meeting before starting the programmatic EIR process. It is anticipated that it will take 12-18 months for the EIR.
- As part of the mapping for the MPU approximately 28 miles of existing dirt access roads and single track trails through 2012 were documented.

Public Comment:

- Kim Wiley expressed concerns over closing the unauthorized trails in East Elliot without providing alternative trail options, and suggested the City organize workshops with the different user groups about this issue.

- Gardner Grady expressed concerns over the closing of unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area, and encouraged a solution that allowed responsible users to continue using trails in this area.
 - Van Collingsworth encouraged the City to complete the MTRP Master Plan Update, Natural Resource Management Plan, and other environmental plans currently in the works.
 - Kevin Loomis proposed a more collaborative effort between the City and user groups in managing the unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area.
 - Patty Mooney urged that the unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area be left open.
 - Mark Schulze asked that the unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area be left open, and suggested that user groups could be utilized in a way to help with this issue.
 - Valene Peratrovich urged that the unauthorized trails in the East Elliot area be left open, and offered to assist with this issue.
- Chris Zirkle stated that clarification is needed from the wildlife agencies about their recommendations to effectively control and manage the unauthorized trail building in the East Elliot area, and added that this should be resolved before any effective management of this area is initiated.
 - Dorothy Leonard suggested that this issue be added to the November Task Force meeting agenda as an informational item.
 - Supervisor Roberts suggested that the City get the MPU and NRMP plans in order, and asked if there is flexibility to allow usage while the City gets these plans in order. Chris Zirkle stated that this is the dialogue that he is trying to illicit from the wildlife agencies.
 - Chris Zirkle added that the wildlife agencies have oversight to the MSCP and MHPA protected areas under the California and Federal Endangered Species Acts.
302. Old Mission Dam Dredging/Maintenance Project Update – *Chris Zirkle, Deputy Director Open Space Division*
- Staff have been working very closely with the Public Works Contracting Department and are very close to a contract that can be released for bids.
 - Staff was recently advised that the City still does not have the US Army Corp of Engineers permit, and that within this permit is a requirement to consult with Native American entities to discuss the ramifications of this project. There is a concern that tribal resources are located within the work area.
 - Councilmember McNelis expressed concerns over the many delays in getting this project started. He asked if there was anything the Task Force can do to help move it along. Chris Zirkle offered to write a draft letter to the US Army Corp of Engineers about the permit issue, and will send it to the Task Force members so they can help expedite the required permit.
303. Discussion regarding adding representatives from the Scripps Ranch planning group and the City of Poway to the MTRP CAC

- Councilmember Sherman stated that with the addition of the West Sycamore and East Elliot areas to the park, we're expanding into new communities that should be more involved with the park.
- He suggested that this topic be made into an action item for the November Task Force meeting, and offered to contact representatives with the City of Poway about getting involved.

304. Discussion regarding expanding the MTRP Task Force to include the City of Poway

- Councilmember Sherman offered to contact representatives with the City of Poway about joining the MTRP Task Force.
- Councilmember McNelis stated that this was a good idea, but expressed concerns about the quorum if the new representative does not show up for the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.

NEXT MEETING

November 21, 2013 at 1:00 pm.