

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MARCH 20, 2014 MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK TASK FORCE

## TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force was held on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center.

## ATTENDANCE

### Members Present

Councilmember Scott Sherman, City of San Diego  
Councilmember Mark Kersey, City of San Diego  
Vice-Mayor Kristine Alessio, City of La Mesa  
Dorothy Leonard, Chair of MTRP Citizens' Advisory Committee

### Members Absent

Supervisor Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego  
Councilmember Rob McNelis, City of Santee  
Supervisor Dave Roberts, County of San Diego

### City of San Diego

Andy Quinn, Senior Park Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park  
Steve Haupt, District Manager, Open Space Division  
Chris Zirkle, Deputy Director, Open Space Division  
Barrett Tetlow, office of Councilmember Scott Sherman  
Jeannette DeAngelis, Public Works Department  
Lane MacKenzie, Real Estate Assets Department  
Levi Dean, Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park  
Chris Axtmann, Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park  
Araceli Dominguez, Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park

### County of San Diego

Evan Bollinger, office of Supervisor Dave Roberts

### City of Santee

Bill Maertz, Director of Community Services

### Guests

Kim Wiley, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Dustin Sharp, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Mike Jennings, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
John Fernandez, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Ben Stone, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Cesar, mountain biker  
Dave Viera, resident  
Dom Dias, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Doug Johnson, biker  
Janet Sprague, biker  
Ian Foster, mountain biker  
Kevin Loomis, San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
Rich Thesing, Tierrasanta Community Council

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Councilmember Sherman at 1:15PM.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/KERSEY) to approve the minutes of the meeting on January 16, 2014. Motion carried.

### REQUEST FOR CONTINUENCES – NONE

### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

*Councilmember Scott Sherman reported the following:*

- We had our budget approved by City Council for re-opening the Kumeyaay Lake Campground in mid-June of this year.
- We had \$60K allocated in the budget to upgrade the lighting fixtures at the MTRP Visitor Center as part of energy efficient upgrades to the entire facility.
- The Infrastructure Committee approved the funding to design a multi-use administration building and shade structure at the East Fortuna Staging Area.
- On March 7, I hosted a meeting downtown involving several agencies which included State of California, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, and San Diego Mountain Biking Association, all dealing with figuring out what we're going to do about the trail system in East Elliott. I think it was a very good meeting, collaborating together to establish the use of the East Elliott area in the future.

### MTRP CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

*Dorothy Leonard reported the following from the CAC meeting held on March 4, 2014*

- Welcomed Jim McGinn the representative from the Scripps Ranch Civic Association. The new representative from the City of La Mesa, Johnny Gonzales, was ill and not able to attend.
- Supported Senior Ranger Matt Sanford's recommendations to approve two runs in the park. Dirt Devil Racing is sponsoring their fifth 15k run, "Stairway to Heaven", on August 10. REI is organizing their first run on May 4. Since this is their first run they are keeping it to 5k and limiting it to 100 participants.
- Appointed an ad hoc subcommittee of the CAC to work with park staff to name two quarries and three unnamed trails identified in the MTRP Master Plan Update (MPU). The ad hoc subcommittee will also recommend names for the main east and west entrances to the Fortuna Mountain areas of the park.
- Heard a presentation on the City of San Diego's Trail Policies and Standards since trails are a large part of the MPU.
- Reported on work of the CAC MPU ad hoc sub-committee. The subcommittee has reviewed the public drafts of the MPU and Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) and found what we consider miss-information in the document. Some of this information appeared after our meetings with staff to review the pre-public draft. A letter with our concerns and recommendations for corrections will be sent to Jeff Harkness with the City's Planning,

Neighborhoods and Development Department, and the lead staff for the MPU. The major corrections we would like to see in the next draft of the MPU include the following:

- Correcting the description of the West Sycamore area as an undeveloped area of the park.
- Clarifying that the JPA between the City and County of San Diego pertains only to the Cowles Mountain area of the park, not the entire park.
- Noting that the San Diego River no longer flows year-round.
- Including purchase of the SDUSD vacant parcel in Tierrasanta as the first priority, with the acquisition of a public access easement as a fallback position.
- Clarifying that the MTRP CAC and Task Force make recommendations and authorize the use of the ongoing income from the antenna facilities atop Cowles Mountain, not the MTRP Foundation. These funds have been designated by the City Council and County Board of Supervisors to support capital improvements in the park per the 1996 JPA.

The corrections to the NRMP we would like to see included in the next draft are

- Removing the statement that MTRP is closed at night. The only signage posted is for the closure of Father Junipero Serra Trail, the road through Mission Gorge, and many of the parking lots. There is no signage that states that the park is closed.
- Clarifying that plans to develop an equestrian center as described in the 1985 Master Plan were dropped by the CAC and Task Force in 1999 after extensive public input. The plans for that site are those approved per the Site Development Permit #40.0524.
- Acknowledging that signage and user education on kiosks are in place at West Sycamore.

#### MTRP FOUNDATION REPORT

*Dorothy Leonard reported the following:*

Foundation representatives are working closely with MTRP staff on planning for the annual Explore Mission Trails Day to be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, with the majority of activities at the Visitor Center and the East Fortuna staging area. The theme of the event is “Connecting Children with Nature” with Discovery Stations at East Fortuna and Explorer Stations at the Visitor Center. There are also pony rides and a climbing wall at East Fortuna, along with outdoor recreation and public safety demonstrations. At the Visitor Center there will be a visit from Ms. Frizzle with a program about coyotes, live raptors and reptiles, and sun spot viewing. There are also nature walks for children at East Fortuna and hikes for all ages beginning at the Visitor Center. Most of the events are between 9 and 2 and all are free. Food will be available for purchase at both sites, courtesy of the Kiwanis Club of Santee and Lake Murray Kiwanis.

#### STAFF REPORTS

A. Water Department’s Lake Murray Report

No report.

B. City of Santee Community Services Department

No report.

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

- The park has been very busy since the start of the new year with the nice weather. Park staff has coordinated with SDFD on several medical calls on Cowles Mountain and have been patrolling the mountain and other popular areas more frequently. Addressing the dogs-off-leash issue in a big priority for staff moving forward especially with the new Rangers on board.
- The new Rangers are all on-duty, and we're already seeing a very positive impact on operations, maintenance and enforcement issues with their addition.
- The new Rangers are up to speed on the East Elliott unauthorized trails issue and have been actively patrolling the area, replacing lost and damaged signs, and communicating with recreationalists that need clarification about the changes in effect. Blocking additional unauthorized trails in this area is still pending at this time. As a reminder there currently are no authorized trails north of State Route 52, and many if not all of them cross over private and/or federal MCAS Miramar property.
- The volunteer Park Beautification crew, led by Tom Folk, meets this Saturday 8am at the Visitor Center flagpole.
- And as most of you already know, the Kumeyaay Lake Campground will be reopening this June for Friday and Saturday evening camping. Thanks to Councilmember Sherman and his staff for all of their efforts in getting it reopened.

D. Open Space Division Staff Report

No report.

COMMUNICATIONS

ACTION ITEMS

101. CAC Appointments & Reappointments – *Chairman Sherman*

- City of El Cajon – nominee pending
- City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board – Robert Chavez
- County of San Diego Parks Advisory Committee – nominee pending
- At-Large member – Dorothy Leonard
- Navajo Community Planners – Jay Wilson

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (KERSEY/ALESSIO) to approve the MTRP CAC appointments of Robert Chavez representing the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board, Jay Wilson representing Navajo Community Planners, and Dorothy Leonard as an At-Large member.

102. Appointment of CAC Chair and Vice Chair

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (KERSEY/ALESSIO) to approve the appointment of Dorothy Leonard as the MTRP CAC Chairperson and Dick Murphy as the Vice Chairperson. Motion carried.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

### 301. Request to amend the MTRP CAC Operating Rules to add a user group representative – Dustin Sharp and Kevin Loomis

- Dustin Sharp and Kevin Loomis (San Diego Mountain Bike Association members) requested that user groups be given representation on the MTRP CAC. Dustin Sharp stated the goal is to help the Task Force do their job by finding a balance between user groups and geographic representation. As cyclists, Mr. Sharp stated they're not represented and don't have a voice in the policy and planning in the needs of the park. Kevin Loomis stated that we need to open up the communication to create opportunities.
- Dom Dias, a hiker and mountain biker asked the Task Force, what are the tools you use to measure the highest amount of user groups in the park? Mr. Dias wanted to make sure that the Task Force is getting an accurate number of who the user groups are.
- Mike Jennings, representing Mass Meet Up, offered their assistance and to give advice on what's causing some of the problems in MTRP. Mr. Jennings stated we're willing to build trails and give ideas of what type of trails mountain bikers like to ride.

### 302. Status report on transfer of remaining West Sycamore acreage from McMillin to City of San Diego – Lane MacKenzie, Real Estate Assets Department

The transfer of over 1,000 acres in West Sycamore is almost done. We're waiting for an environmental clearance from the County of San Diego for the last 50 acres where most of the testing was done with the prior owner. Once the clean bill of health for the property is reviewed, and before we accept the deed itself, we'll be working with Park and Recreation for a final inspection of the site.

### 303. Old Mission Dam Dredging/Maintenance project update – Jeannette DeAngelis, City of San Diego Public Works Department

The project description and conditions have not changed. The US Army Corps of Engineers had additional requirements which took several months to complete. There was an additional coordination that had to happen with some of the tribal communities in the region and the State Historic Preservation Officer. We're negotiating the final conditions of the new permit under the 2008 mitigation rule involving the long term maintenance, management and monitoring for the mitigation site, which is the site adjacent to Carlton Oaks. The 2008 mitigation rule has become a regional topic between many municipalities and the US Army Corps of Engineers as it relates to long-term conservation measures and financial assurances. These items are difficult for municipalities to strictly adhere to. It is hoped that within the next couple of months, the permit will be completed. Ms. DeAngelis thanked Steve Haupt and Chris Zirkle for all their help.

### 304. East Elliott trail restoration and closures – Chris Zirkle, Deputy Director Open Space Division

- There's nothing new in terms of additional problems in East Elliott. Fish and Wildlife Services are planning to go out in the field and look at what they perceive to be

additional unauthorized trails that we all thought were game trails based on the aerial photos. They are still pending on giving us specific recommendations on trail alignments in the master plan.

- We were approached by Sycamore Landfill representatives in regards to conveying some property in East Elliott. The exact parcels are still being determined.
- I was advised by the Multiple Species Conservation Program staff in charge of Open Space land acquisition about acquiring property in East Elliott. In particular, we'd like to prioritize property acquisition such that it would facilitate opening a trail as a vision. Jeff Harkness and Lane MacKenzie are going to meet and identify willing sellers versus locations that are within the proposed trail alignments and try and see if they can start acquiring property.

*Public Comment:*

- Ben Stone who represents the SDMBA advocacy committee and the recent survey group wanted to reiterate that representation on the MTRP CAC would be great for all user groups.
- John Fernandez who represents SDMBA, stated he was injured on a trail by debris/stick that was directly placed on a trail. Mr. Fernandez stated he was informed by Sr. Ranger Matt Sanford about a perpetrator who could possibly have placed the debris/stick at that location. He spoke to Matt Sanford about the incident and wanted an explanation about what was going to be done.

305. Status of creation of a CIP for administration building and shade structure at Equestrian Staging area – Jeff Harkness

Steve Haupt reported on behalf of Jeff Harkness. The proposed Council Action was presented to the Infrastructure Council committee on March 5 and received unanimous support. This will be Item #103 on the City Council's docket for March 25.

306. MTRP Master Plan and Resource Management Plan- Jeff Harkness, City of San Diego Planning, Neighborhood and Economic Development Dept./Mark Carpenter, KTU+A

Steve Haupt reported on behalf of Jeff Harkness. We are waiting for sections of the Development Services Department (DSD) to complete their review of the MPU and NRMP as a Public Project Assessment. A Draft Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Document and Scoping Letter have been provided to DSD staff to assist in the Environmental Review Process. We are anticipating the NOP meeting will be held in April and will work with scheduling the meeting at the Visitor Center once we hear back from DSD.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 PM.

NEXT MEETING

May 15, 2014 at 1:00 pm.