

**CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES
NATURE PRESERVE QUARTERLY PUBLIC FORUM
June 28th, 2017**

Forum began at 6:05 p.m. in the City Hall Community Room, 30940 Hawthorne Boulevard.

ATTENDANCE

City of RPV: Sean Larvenz – Public Works Maintenance Superintendent

Matt Waters- Recreation & Parks Senior Administrative Analyst

Dave Pearce – Recreation & Parks Recreation Supervisor

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy: Adrienne Mohan – Conservation Director

Senior Administrative Analyst Waters thanked the group for attending and explained that the purpose of the Forum is to share information on Preserve projects and public use and to solicit public feedback. City and PVPLC staff introductions were made.

Preserve Maintenance

Review of Active Habitat/Trail Projects: The City has been repairing trails damaged in last winter's storms. Many trails have suffered erosion, but due to recent repairs, several trails have reopened. The City along with the PVPLC Trail Crew were able to reopen Rattlesnake, Fire Station, Eucalyptus, Barkentine and portions of Peppertree and Ishibashi Farm Trails.

Maintenance Superintendent Sean Larvenz reported that the Public Works Department will be repairing the trails in the lower Portuguese Bend area using machinery. They will also be conducting a 3-4 week program to repair Burma Road.

Conservation Director Mohan said that PVPLC is in the process of repairing the Vanderlip Trail and that it is an ongoing project. They are currently recruiting an Eagle Scout to help repair Barkentine Trail by hauling soil up to fill in a large erosion gully.

Conservation Director Mohan also commented that Alta Vicente Reserve is in Phase Three of the planting process. Last winter, they planted over 10,000 plants in that designated 5-acre project site. PVPLC Staff and volunteers are controlling weeds and irrigating with a drip-system. Next winter, they will be moving towards Phase Four which is the final step in the project. They are currently still managing the Portuguese Bend Restoration area Peacock Flats, where over 25 acres of habitat is being restored by maintaining it in five different 5-acre phases. Controlling overgrowth of mustard is currently their main focus at that site.

Unauthorized/Spur Trail Closures: Conservation Director Mohan commented that their Field Operation Technician's main focus is closing unauthorized spur trails and repairing damaged trail markers. They have noticed increased visitations at coastal reserves such as Abalone Cove and Portuguese Bend Reserves, so they are focusing on closing spur trails in those areas to protect sensitive habitat.

City Preserve Maintenance Report: Recreation Supervisor Pearce discussed the Preserve Maintenance log where there are numerous maintenance problems and public use issues reported in every Reserve. Over the past six months, 45 tagging incidents have been reported to the City's graffiti contractor and over 41 service requests have been submitted to the Public Works Dept. (not including graffiti that Open Space Management independently cleaned up).

In addition to storm trail repairs, OSM has been conducting maintenance throughout the Preserve as well as conducting numerous weekly patrols.

Public Comments:

Rod Jenson reported that a graffiti artist is routinely vandalizing restrooms and signage throughout Abalone Cove Shoreline Park. Does staff report graffiti issues to the Sheriff? What communication is being utilized to make Deputies aware of these ongoing incidents?

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters responded that there is a mechanism provided by our graffiti contractor to notify the Sheriff's Department of such incidents.

===Conservation Director Mohan recommended one way for Sheriff Deputies to keep weekly updates of incidents is to take photographs of vandalism and report them.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters indicated that any vandalism reports coming through City Staff or PVPLC staff are forwarded to the Sheriff's Dept. This is done to insure everyone is kept in the loop in regard to recent incidents.

Barry Holchin asked, how is PVPLC treating the weeds in the Preserve. What chemicals are being used to control them? Why can't weeds be pulled in the rainy season before they go to seed?

===Conservation Director Mohan commented that herbicides are being used as a last resort. Weeds are usually eradicated by weed whacking before the invasive plant goes to seed. Volunteers remove weeds around native plants creating a "halo" so that native plants are easier to see when staff conducts weed whacking.

Barry Holchin asked which methods are used to block unauthorized trails.

===Conservation Director Mohan stated that they use vegetation from the surrounding area to block off a spur trail, trying to give it a natural, camouflaged appearance. Other methods, if necessary, are to install wooden posts & cables inserted with branches to seal off access.

Eva Cicoria commented about how well restored the Peacock Flats area is in the Portuguese Bend Reserve. She is also concerned about grading the trails in Portuguese Bend. Is there is anything that can be done to limit the displacement of dirt and reduce runoff?

===Maintenance Superintendent Larvenz responded by describing several approaches in limiting soil when grading the trails. He also indicated the importance of having a trail accessible in case of emergency and for maintenance issues.

Barry Holchin expressed concern with regard to Preserve rule enforcement. What solutions are being taken to prevent rule violations in the Preserve?

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters indicated that the Preserve has Open Space Management, the Volunteer Trail Watch and two dedicated Deputies regularly patrolling the Preserve. Preserve attendance is growing due to social media, but he understands the importance of increasing enforcement as well as educating the public. There has been a need overall to create a much greater presence in the Preserve to maintain order and protect habitat.

Barry Holchin is concerned about the widening of trails. Are there any ways of measuring statistics about closed and widening trails?

===Conservation Director Mohan indicated that the Preserve Annual report contains information about how many spur trails PVPLC has closed and other maintenance related issues. She also said that a lot of trail widening is due to recent years of drought.

Minas Yerelian is concerned about the impact bicyclists have on the trails and how they affect hikers and equestrians.

=== Conservation Director Mohan indicated that the Volunteer Trail Watch has reported on various bike-related concerns, some of them relating to widening trails and being on unauthorized trails.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters stated that the City has certain trails that are designated for bike-use. Trail usage was established through a collaborative Public Use Master Plan process.

Barbara Ailor recommended the city re-evaluate the guidelines for bicyclists and the type of trails designated for their use. Barry Holchin expressed concern about the overall impact and damage caused by bicyclists on multi-use trails. Carrie Cahill-Asher recommended working with local mountain bike groups.

=== Senior Administrative Analyst Waters commented that the City and PVPLC has worked closely with all Preserve User groups, including CORBA. PVPLC and City Staff would discuss the proper process for re-evaluating and determining individual trail usage concerns.

Preserve Operations

Preserve Operations Report:

Open Space Management (OSM) Recreation Supervisor Pearce summarized the Preserve Staff Maintenance and Operations report for all the Reserves. The report lists all activities done such as trail repair, trimming vegetation and clearing out trash.

Enforcement Report:

Recreation Supervisor Pearce summarized the Preserve Staff Public Contacts Report. From January 1st to the present, Preserve staff have encountered almost 10,000 people when out patrolling. Memorial Day was the busiest day recorded this year with 670 people encountered.

When it comes to enforcing rules, Preserve Staff strongly encourage people to follow the rules and most people do comply.

Review of Volunteer Trail Watch Reports: Conservation Director Mohan reported the VTW is observing an up-tick in problems such as graffiti, smoking and recreation fires. PVPLC is concerned about this for safety reasons and to prevent fires. The PVPLC is encouraging all residents to be on the lookout for any evidence of recreation fire activity and to report these findings to the Enforcement line. The VTW has been very active in interacting and educating the public in the Preserve as well as reporting maintenance issues. Randy Hardwood from VTW commented that the VTW does a good job communicating with the public. Eva Cicoria said that when wearing a VTW uniform, it conveys to the public that there is a presence out in the Preserve.

Senior Administrative Analyst Waters commented that VTW does a tremendous job and he is very impressed by the maintenance reports and how much the VTW has accomplished.

Projects in the Preserve: Recreation Supervisor Pearce announced that monument signage will be installed at the entrance of Burma Road. Conservation Director Mohan commented on how this monument signage will convey to the public that they are entering a Nature Preserve.

Recreation Supervisor Pearce also reported that OSM has recently ordered trail counters. They are planning to install one of them at the entry to Burma Road. The counter will be underground and it will measure the number of hikers, bicyclists and equestrians that walk or ride over it. The City will then be able to obtain hard data on how many people are visiting the Portuguese Bend Reserve at all hours.

Conservation Director Mohan reported that the PVPLC is planning to install Preserve signage next fall and that they are currently working on trail/habitat restoration throughout the Preserve.

Senior Administrative Analyst Waters discussed upcoming items for the City Council such as a new alcohol ordinance and no-smoking ordinances. Recommendations are moving towards not allowing alcohol on public grounds with a few exceptions such as special events, private rentals and etc. He conveyed that most cities have this ordinance in place, which gives law enforcement personnel the ability to enforce public drinking. He referred to a recent Preserve incident where a large social running group was reported recently utilizing the Preserve for their event and consuming alcoholic beverages in large groups.

Public Comments:

Eva Cicoria questioned whether alcohol is a recurring issue at the Parks and whether alcohol is in fact the issue or is the issue really that groups that are too large are the problem.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters recommended everyone to attend the City Council Meeting on August 1st to learn more about the new alcohol ordinance.

A member of the public asked about the status of Conqueror Trail.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters mentioned that Conqueror Trail will be discussed at an upcoming Council meeting.

A member of the public expressed concern about access, noting that people are bringing in illegal items such as dirt bikes through different Preserve access points. Someone else asked if video cameras could be put up in the Preserve to catch rule breakers.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters pointed out there are many access points to the Preserve. He discussed that City Council has taken steps in the Del Cerro area restrict parking to reduce negative impact on adjacent residents. He explained that the City wants to maintain access, but be very cognizant of the residents in the surrounding areas. Any camera surveillance would require City Council approval.

Eva Cicoria asked why there was no Public Forum in the spring.

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters stated the Forum could not be held at that time because City Staff was unavailable to conduct the meeting, but that the intent going forward was to host quarterly meetings.

Barb Ailor asked, why are docents off trail in the Forrestal Reserve?

===Senior Administrative Analyst Waters stated that the Los Serenos Docents have conducted educational hikes in those areas for years, however they will be contacted to remind them to take care not to damage native plants.

Preserve Interpretive Activities / Other

PVPLC-led Interpretive Activities: Conservation Director Mohan discussed activities going on with the PVPLC such as Nature Walks, volunteer opportunities and Trail Crew Introductory classes.

Senior Administrative Analyst Waters discussed the City's upcoming, annual Fourth-of-July Celebration on Tuesday, July 4th from 11am-5pm at City Hall. Recreation Supervisor Pearce announced the Los Serenos Docent-led hike at Point Vicente Interpretive Center with its free tour of the Point Vicente Lighthouse. He also mentioned the Coastal Cleanup Day in September.

Senior Administrative Analyst Waters announced the next Quarterly Preserve Public Forum is on November 15th.

Public Comments:

There was no further questions or comments.

Meeting concluded at approximately 7:30pm.

