

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: JOEL ROJAS, AICP,  COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2016

SUBJECT: PALOS VERDES NATURE PRESERVE – PALOS VERDES PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

REVIEWED: DOUG WILLMORE, CITY MANAGER 

Project Manager: Ara Mihranian, AICP, Deputy Community Development Director 

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the 2014 Annual Report submitted by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy regarding its management activities for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve.

FISCAL IMPACT

The filing of the 2014 Annual Report has no fiscal impact upon the City.

BACKGROUND

The City's Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) calls for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC) to serve as the City's habitat manager for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. In this capacity, the PVPLC is required by the NCCP to submit certain annual reports to the City and Wildlife Agencies (the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Specifically, the PVPLC is required to submit a monitoring report on its habitat restoration areas in the Preserve and on its exotic plant removal efforts.

Pursuant to the NCCP approved by the City Council in 2004 and the formal management agreement authorizing the PVPLC to manage and restore the Preserve habitat on behalf of

the City, the PVPLC has submitted, for the City Council's acceptance, the 2014 Annual Report summarizing the PVPLC's management activities pursuant to the management agreement in the Preserve. An electronic copy of 2014 the Annual Report was posted on the City's website and an electronic link to the Annual Report was provided to the Council via e-mail on January 8, 2016. In an effort to save paper, a hard copy of the Annual Report is not attached to this Staff Report, but can be provided to Councilmembers upon request.

DISCUSSION

The PVPLC Annual Report covers the period between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. The Annual Report describes the PVPLC's habitat management activities relating to habitat enhancement and restoration, property maintenance and monitoring, vegetation and wildlife monitoring, trail management and monitoring, and volunteer involvement during the 2014 calendar year. The 2014 PVPLC Annual Report includes the following sub-reports (see Annual Report):

- Habitat Restoration Monitoring
- Portuguese Bend NCCP Restoration Plan
- Restoration Plans
- 2014 Targeted Exotic Removal Program for Plans (TERPP)
- Scientific Research and Wildlife Monitoring
- Volunteer involvement
- Trail Management and Monitoring
 - Unauthorized Trails Closed in 2014 (Appendix G)
 - Future Trails Projects List (Appendix H)

Of particular public interest are the unauthorized trails closed in 2014 and the trail project list in the Annual Report. Based on the Council-adopted Preserve Trail Plan, the PVPLC works to implement the trail network, which includes closing unauthorized trails throughout the Preserve. There is also an annual list of potential trail projects to be completed by the PVPLC within the Preserve, based on available volunteer time and funding opportunities, such as grants and volunteer events. Maps identifying the unauthorized trails closed in 2014 can be found on Page 359 of the Annual Report. The Preserve Trail Project List is located in Appendix H on Page 363 of the Annual Report, and includes erosion repair, trail delineation, and fence removal projects, to name a few. Projects on the list that are not completed during the calendar year are carried over to the following year's list of projects.

According to the attached letter from PVPLC Executive Director Andrea Vona (see attachment), the Annual Report is consistent with the reporting requirements of the NCCP. Furthermore, the wildlife agencies have reviewed and accepted the Annual Report as presented. It should be noted that a statement under the discussion of the Volunteer Trail Watch (VTW) program should be clarified to reflect that the 1,246 hours dedicated by volunteers includes the hours contributed by the Volunteer Trail Watch Coordinator.

Staff has reviewed the Annual Report and agrees that it is consistent with PVPLC's preserve habitat management responsibilities, as required by the City Council-approved 2004 NCCP and the current management agreement between the City and the PVPLC.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2014 Habitat Loss Tracking Report

As part of the Annual Report, the NCCP requires the City to track and report all of the Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) habitat loss. According to the “Habitat Loss Tracking Report” for the 2014 calendar year, a total of .08 acres of CSS was lost for a variety of reasons.

Night Use in the Preserve

The NCCP also requires that the City annually report permitted nighttime activities in the Preserve as summarized below for 2014:

- MRCA Ranger-led night hikes: 6 night hikes / 57 participants
- Sierra Club-led night hikes: 20 hikes / approximately 390 participants

The nighttime hikes listed above only occurred in the Portuguese Bend Reserve.

Availability of the 2014 Annual Report

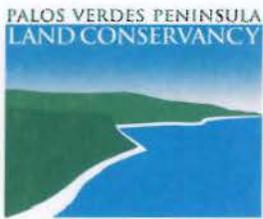
As previously noted, an electronic copy of the Annual Report was posted on the City’s website under the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve homepage on January 8, 2016. In effort to save paper (because the document is 364 pages), a hard copy of the Annual Report is not attached to this Staff Report, but can be found on the City’s website at <http://www.rpvca.gov/490/Palos-Verdes-Nature-Preserve-NCCP-PUMP-H>. However, a hard copy can be provided to Councilmembers upon request.

Public Notification

On January 8, 2016, an e-mail was sent to the subscribers of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve listserv, announcing the availability of the 2014 Annual Report (with a link to view the document), and of the February 2, 2016, City Council meeting at which it would be presented. To date, no public comments were submitted to the City. In the event public comments are submitted to the City after the transmittal of this Staff Report, Staff will provide those comment letters to the Council at tonight’s meeting as “Late Correspondence.”

Attachments

- Cover letter from Andrea Vona, PVPLC Executive Director (page 4)
- 2014 Nighttime Preserve Use Summary Report (page 5)



PRESERVING LAND AND RESTORING HABITAT FOR THE EDUCATION AND ENJOYMENT OF ALL

January 19, 2015

Joel Rojas, Director, Community Development
City of Rancho Palos Verdes
30940 Hawthorne Boulevard
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

Subject: 2014 Annual Report for the Rancho Palos Verdes Draft Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan

Dear Joel,

The 2014 Report for the Draft Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan were delivered to the wildlife agencies as well as your department for review in October of 2015. The wildlife agencies have accepted the reports as presented.

I would like to let you know that one statement in the report under the discussion of the Volunteer Trail Watch needs to be clarified to be consistent with a companion sentence in the volunteer appendix of the report. Specifically, the 1246 hours dedicated by volunteers from the volunteer trail watch program *includes* the hours contributed by the Volunteer Trail Watch coordinator, who dedicated much of her time to training and coordinating the program's volunteers in addition to her time as a VTW volunteer on the trail.

These reports are part of our commitment under our management agreement with the City as well as the requirements of the Draft NCCP/HCP. As part of the final submission of this annual report to the Wildlife Agencies, the City must include a Habitat Tracking Report and Covered Species Report as documentation of the loss and protection of habitats and Covered Species. The City must also include a summary of night use in the Preserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vona, Executive Director
Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Nighttime Use in 2014

1. Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Ranger led night hikes

Conducted in the Portuguese Bend Nature Reserve

6 night hikes/57 total participants

2. Sierra Club led night hikes with by City permit

Conducted in the Portuguese Bend Nature Reserve

20 hikes/approximately 390 total participants

Grand Total night hikes in 2014 (all took place in the Portuguese Bend Nature Reserve)

26 hikes

447 total participants