



CITY OF  RANCHO PALOS VERDES

MEMORANDUM


TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CAROLYNN PETRU, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER/ INTERIM 
DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS

JOEL ROJAS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR 

DATE: MARCH 19, 2013

SUBJECT: PALOS VERDES NATURE PRESERVE – MINIMIZING TRAIL USER
CONFLICTS (SUPPORTS 2013 CITY COUNCIL GOAL – TRAIL
SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT)

REVIEWED: CAROLYN LEHR, CITY MANAGER 

Staff Coordinator: Ara Mihranian, Deputy Community Development Director
Katie Howe, Administrative Analyst II – Recreation and Parks Dept.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Receive and file an update report on the management tools used in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve to minimize trail user conflicts;
2. Affirm the proposed Volunteer Trail Patrol Program for the Preserve by directing staff to implement the Program in cooperation with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy;
3. Direct staff to convert un-programmed interpretive hours in the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Contract to Preserve patrol hours; and
4. Authorize staff to augment the PVPLC's trail signage responsibilities by including \$10,500 of City monies in FY 13-14 toward improving trail signage in the Preserve.

BACKGROUND

On October 2, 2012, the City Council adopted certain trail route and trail use amendments to the 2008 Council-adopted Preserve Trails Plan (PTP) for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve (Preserve). During the Council's discussion that evening, concerns were raised regarding reported trail user conflicts adversely impacting biological resources and trail users' experiences in the Preserve. The concerns expressed generally pertained to violations of the Preserve rules (as codified in the City's Municipal Code), including extreme downhill mountain bike speed, and hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers off designated trails; as well as poor trail etiquette between the different user groups. In response to these concerns, the City Council directed staff to bring back a report on management tools that could be used in the Preserve to minimize trail user conflicts. As such, the Council is being asked to receive and file a report on such management tools, as well as affirm a Volunteer Trail Patrol (VTP) Program developed by City and PVPLC staff to assist with the enforcement of City regulations in the Preserve, and to convert un-programmed interpretive hours to patrol hours for the MRCA Rangers.

DISCUSSION

The Council-adopted PTP identifies designated trail routes and trail uses for each of the eleven Reserves that make up the entire 1,400 acre Preserve. Existing trails that are not identified in the Council-adopted PTP are considered unauthorized trails, and in the interest of habitat preservation, are closed to the public as required in the City's Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP). Since the adoption of the PTP, ongoing efforts have been employed to change Preserve user behavior to comply with designated trail routes and uses, and to discontinue the use of unauthorized trails. Examples include creating trail map brochures, providing maps on the City and PVPLC websites, and installing signs, such as welcome signs at the Preserve entry points and trail markers along designated trails specifying the allowable uses on each trail. Additionally, the Preserve is patrolled by Rangers, a City service provided by the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA), who enforce the City's ordinances. However, it has become evident that improved efforts are needed to address trail user issues that continue to arise. Moreover, an occurrence, not unique to the City's Preserve, is trail user conflicts. Trail user conflicts are a more common source of contention throughout open space areas when multiple users share the use of trails. Research has revealed techniques to address trail user conflicts that have been successful for other agencies.

In order to minimize the potential for trail user conflicts from occurring in the Preserve, City and PVPLC staff have worked closely to identify certain management tools that can be implemented to minimize or avoid such conflicts, as discussed below.

1. Management Tools to Reduce Trail User Conflicts

The following are management tools intended to reduce trail user conflicts that the City and the PVPLC have either implemented or are planning to implement within the very near future.

Installation of Preserve Rules Signs

In order to better achieve compliance with the Preserve rules specified in the City's Municipal Code, signs that concisely cite the City's regulations will help educate visitors and reduce any ambiguity or confusion about permitted and prohibited activities in the Preserve. Additionally, adequate signs also strengthen the ability for Ranger-issued citations to stand up in court. Therefore, the City will install newly-designed "Preserve Rules" signs at approximately 58 entry points to the Preserve in the coming weeks. The "Preserve Rules" signs are approximately 30" x 36" in size and will be installed at eye-level to maintain a human scale and to minimize view impacts. The signs list the permitted and prohibited activities in a concise and modern style.

It should be noted that manufacturing and installing the "Preserve Rules" sign at the 58 entry points is estimated to cost approximately \$14,000. According to Public Works, this cost will be absorbed by an existing FY13-14 budget line item for Parks, Trails and Open Space Maintenance.

Updating Trail Markers

Pursuant to the 2011 Council-adopted Management Agreement between the City and the PVPLC, the City is responsible for installing entry regulatory signage (as noted above) and the PVPLC is responsible for installing trail markers (up to 25 per year). Upon approval of the trails plan for Filiorum, trail signage was installed in this Reserve. PVPLC installed additional signage and revised some trail signage to better delineate authorized trails at the Abalone Cove, Portuguese Bend, and Forrestal Reserves. The PVPLC has also embarked on an update to the existing trail markers in key areas of the Preserve. Updates to the Portuguese Bend Reserve have begun, and include re-ordering trail marker decals so that the name of the trail is followed by a directional arrow and then a list of the designated uses for each trail segment.

It should be noted that the PVPLC has limited funding and is not able to update all the trail markers in the Preserve, but are initially focusing on Portuguese Bend Reserve because of its higher levels of use and availability of funding through a grant. If the City Council identifies this management tool as a high priority, the Council may wish to consider expediting the process by funding the updating of existing trail marker signs at a cost of \$70 per sign. Using the same Parks, Trail and Open Space Maintenance budget line item in the FY13-14 budget referenced above for the "Preserve Rules" signs, staff recommends allocating \$10,500 to update the trail markers.

Trail Closures

To effectively deter Preserve visitors from accessing unauthorized trails or areas, a commonly used management tool is to close the trail or area in a way that makes it an unattractive option. Such methods include effective and well placed signs, disguising or blocking access to the trail through barriers (posts and cable) or brush, and screening the area from a Preserve visitor's line of sight. These management tools are currently being

used by the PVPLC at various locations in the Preserve. It should be noted that this management tool has a tendency to require on-going monitoring because of disobedient trail users and can be costly to the PVPLC if improvements have to be continuously replaced or repaired. However, to counter such behavior, City and PVPLC staff are working closely with the Rangers to strategically monitor key areas of the Preserve and ensure that unauthorized spur trails remain unattractive through the use of the described trail closure management tools, such as replacing brush and repairing signs if removed or vandalized.

Adopt a Trail Program

The PVPLC will be implementing an “Adopt a Trail Program” within the next few months. This program will allow PVPLC volunteers to adopt a specific trail segment to assist the PVPLC in maintaining the condition of a trail, closing and monitoring any unauthorized spur trails, replacing signs, and addressing vandalism associated with trail closure measures, among other things. This program will also help to augment the trail closure management tools described above.

Installation of Temporary Security Cameras

In the past, the City has asked the Sheriff’s Department to install a hidden temporary camera that can be used to monitor locations, particularly for vandalism. The camera has been successfully used to capture destruction of trail closure mechanisms. It should be noted that it is unlikely that the camera will be able to capture information that will allow the City to issue a citation; however, the camera is helpful to determine certain trends, such as what time damage tends to occur, so that law enforcement may better target the area in question. The Lomita Sheriff’s Station currently has two such cameras available to the City on a limited basis, if not already being used by the Sheriffs for other criminal investigations.

Volunteer Trail Patrol Program

Many agencies have success with volunteer trail patrol programs used to educate the public on proper open space use. Through such programs, volunteers educate the public, provide valuable information to law enforcement personnel on incident trends and the condition of an open space area, and provide a uniformed presence to deter misuse. Most agencies recruit volunteers from the multiple user groups that are active in an area to promote cooperation between the user groups, and so that volunteers can effectively reach out within their own user group to correct behavior.

With this mind, City staff and PVPLC began to develop a Volunteer Trails Patrol Program for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. In order to ensure that the various user groups (hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians) were engaged, an informal advisory team was assembled with representation from each of these user groups to assist in the development of the Program. Since the October 2nd City Council meeting, the team has met on several occasions to discuss the Program and to exchange information gleaned from several agencies’ existing volunteer programs.

The Volunteer Trails Program has been developed into a handbook that is attached for the

Council's review (see attachment). Essentially, the approving agencies for the Program would be the City and PVPLC. A Volunteer Coordinator would be selected by the PVPLC, with input from the City to administer the Program. At this time, Barbara Ailor has been selected as the Volunteer Coordinator because of her knowledge of the Preserve and her commitment to perform the roles and responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator would serve as liaison between the City and PVPLC, and the volunteers. The volunteers themselves would consist of hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The City and PVPLC would ultimately approve the program before its implementation, and would remain the approving entities because of their roles as land owner and habitat manager/conservation easement holder, respectively, and would work cooperatively to make sure the Program is balanced and in line with the agencies' goals.

Staff recommends that the volunteers be covered through the City's insurance provider, the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority (CJPIA), for general liability and Workers' Compensation. The cost of this coverage would likely be covered under the City's existing policy with CJPIA. However, depending on the Program's actual claims experience and other factors, the additional coverage could have an estimated annual cost of \$1,000 for 30 volunteers.

Converting Un-programmed Interpretive Hours to Preserve Patrol Hours

In order to increase Ranger patrols of the Preserve without increasing the City's contract cost, staff recommends converting the Ranger's un-programmed interpretive hours to Preserve patrol hours. There are currently 500 interpretive hours that staff does not anticipate using through the duration of the current MRCA contract. As such, staff seeks Council concurrence to convert these interpretive hours to patrol hours, which would equate to approximately 6 additional patrol hours per week. Even with the conversion, the City would still be able to offer the popular Junior Ranger and Night Hikes programs at their current levels.

2. Potential Methods to Further Reduce Trail Use Conflicts

In addition to the management tools described in the previous section that are either being currently implemented or will be implemented in the near future, the following are additional management tools that have been identified and could potentially help to further reduce trail user conflicts, but have certain limitations that prevent them from being implemented at this time.

Increasing the Ranger Patrol Hours

As previously noted, the City contracts with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for enforcement services in the Preserve. The current 3-year contract is for 7,680 patrol hours and 1,335 interpretive hours. This averages to 46 patrol hours and 8 interpretive hours per week. The MRCA Rangers also patrol 70,000 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), and have shared that the level of patrol time in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve is similar to what is provided in the SMMC when considering the ratio of ranger hours and Preserve acreage. However, all open space areas are unique

and present their own management and enforcement challenges.

The Rangers have a varied schedule in order to monitor activity during different times, and so that their schedule is not predictable. They typically patrol five days each week, and this almost always includes both Saturday and Sunday, when Preserve use is heaviest. Many factors determine how and where a Ranger patrols during a specific shift, including weather, time of day, input received on Preserve issues, types of violations the Rangers are targeting, and ocean tides. While Rangers patrol all eleven Reserves that comprise the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, they spend most of their time in areas with higher levels of use, or where violations are anticipated. Rangers patrol on foot and by vehicle, depending on the violation they are addressing.

The Rangers' primary goals are to patrol the Preserve to achieve rule compliance through education and enforcement and to keep the City apprised of the conditions and types of activities taking place in the Preserve. They promote public safety, are wild land firefighters, are in communication with emergency response agencies, and make valuable recommendations to the City on enforcement and the safety of Preserve visitors.

Rangers receive direction from the City, and several tools and information sources are used to prioritize their patrols, including public input, issues reported to the City (via email, voicemail, or the Ranger Hotline), Ranger observations, and City and PVPLC observations. Calls to the Ranger Hotline (310-491-5775) and other reports from the public are especially helpful to prioritize patrols, because public and Ranger observations make it possible to understand trends in the Preserve, so that patrols can be designed to most effectively encounter and correct Preserve misuse. The Ranger Hotline is not intended to address violations reported in real time. Rather, it allows the City to establish violation and use trends, and it also provides the public with an opportunity to speak directly with a Ranger for Preserve information.

If the City Council believes that additional Ranger patrol time is needed in the Preserve, beyond the proposed conversion of un-programmed interpretive hours discussed previously, the City Council may choose to increase the current contract with MRCA for additional patrol hours. In this case, the contract cost increase would be negotiated with MRCA, but would include scheduled increases in the Rangers' fully burdened hourly rate that are included in the current contract. The current rate is \$58.80 per hour through June 30, 2013, which will increase to \$60.56 per hour for the period between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. It should be noted that one of the reasons that led to the formation of the Volunteer Trail Patrol Program, as previously discussed, was to assist the Rangers in observing certain activities and behaviors in the Preserve, through the added presence of volunteers, without significantly increasing City costs.

The Sheriff's regular Deputies (crime cars) do not patrol the Preserve, but will respond to particular violations as appropriate, including illegal parking, illegal drugs, and violence. The CORE Team Deputies do patrol the Preserve, but on a limited basis, as their schedules and other duties allow. A significant increase in the amount of time spent in the Preserve would not be available without reprioritizing the work of the CORE Deputies, or adding another member to the team. The current annual cost for a grant deputy is \$175,000. However, the

Western Avenue/PVDS Bicycle Patrol included in the FY13-14 budget has allowed the CORE Team to spend additional time patrolling the coastal portions of the Preserve on an overtime basis. Through this special program, which has a total budget of \$30,500, the CORE Team has been spending between 2 to 6 hours per week in the Preserve. The majority of the time has been spent in Abalone Cove, Sacred Cove and the area around the archery range, although the Team also travels on Burma Road through the Portuguese Bend Reserve, since they access the coastal area on all-terrain vehicles from Del Cerro Park.

Increasing the City's Violation Fines

At the October 2nd City Council meeting, the PVPLC and some members of the public suggested that the City consider increasing its fines to further deter illegal activity in the Preserve.

With the exception of fires/open flames or aircraft (such as paragliders), which are classified as misdemeanors, all other violations of RPVMC Chapter 12.16 (Streets, Parks and Recreational Facilities) are identified as infractions in the City's adopted Bail Schedule (Resolution No. 2010-20). The City's established fine for an infraction (such as dogs off-leash, after hours use, littering, nudity, etc.) is \$50 for the first offense, \$100 for the second offense within 12 months, and \$200 for the third or more offense within 12 months. The City's fine for a misdemeanor is \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second offense within 12 months, and \$500 for the third or more offenses within 12 months.

At this time, staff does not recommend increasing the City's fines for several reasons:

- Based on staff's research, City fines are comparable to those charged by other local agencies.
- Many of the violations are not unique to the Preserve and also apply to other public property and parks within the City.
- In order for citations to be effective and the fines collected, adequate signage must be in place to reduce the likelihood of citations being dismissed or the fines being significantly reduced in court.

Rather, staff recommends first using the Volunteer Trail Patrol Program to increase public education and awareness of activities taking place in the Preserve; and, improving Preserve signage and trail closures.

Nonetheless, if these methods do not prove to be effective, the City Council could consider amending the City's Bail Schedule to increase fine amounts and/or reclassifying some violations. However, staff would strongly advise caution in reclassifying an infraction to a misdemeanor, as a misdemeanor is a more serious offence that goes on a person's record. People receiving a misdemeanor may be more likely to vigorously challenge it and the court may be less inclined to uphold the citation if it is perceived to be disproportionate to the offence.

Implementation of a Bicycle Bell Program

At the October 2nd Council meeting, CORBA representative, Troy Braswell, informed the City Council that CORBA had applied to the California Trails and Greenways Foundation for a grant to implement a bell program within the Preserve. Essentially, this program would provide mountain bikers with bells to help alert equestrians and hikers of the mountain bikers' presence. Since that meeting, Mr. Braswell informed staff that CORBA did not receive the grant. Additionally, staff's research has shown that ringing a bell may spook a horse, and that bell programs are not advised in the Preserve for that reason.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ishibashi Trail Update

At the October 2nd Council Meeting, based on public testimony and Council comments, Councilman Knight asked staff to monitor the Ishibashi Trail in the Portuguese Bend Reserve and to provide the City Council with a follow up report on trail user conflicts, reckless trail use, and habitat damage. Since October 2nd, PVPLC Keepers, while performing maintenance in the Reserve, witnessed bikes traveling down Paintbrush Trail, and Paintbrush spur trails very fast and continuing onto Ishibashi Trail in an unsafe manner on three separate occasions (October 3, 2012; January 4, 2013; and, February 3, 2013). One of these instances nearly resulted in a Keeper being hit by a mountain bike. In addition, on October 3, 2012, the City received a call through the Ranger Hotline reporting a mountain bike jump located on Ishibashi Trail. Rangers have reported limited misuse of Ishibashi Trail since October 2012, and attribute the improved behavior to increased Ranger presence in the area, heightened awareness of concerns on Ishibashi Trail, and PVPLC installation of measures to slow bicycles on the trail and close off spur trails.

Trails Oversight Committee and Public Input

At the October 2nd meeting, there was some Council discussion on the possibility of forming a committee to oversee the Preserve. At this time, City staff does not feel that such a committee is necessary. This is because, as described in the PUMP document that was transmitted to the Council on March 5th (see Section 5.c); a process has been defined to engage the public by the City and the PVPLC. Specifically, when public use issues are brought to the PVPLC's attention, the PVPLC will either take the appropriate action to address the issue in accordance with its mandatory or permissive obligations under the Preserve Management Agreement or request the City to take certain action if the issue falls under the City's Preserve responsibilities described above or in the Preserve Management Agreement. If issues brought to the City's attention directly fall under the City's Preserve responsibilities, staff will take appropriate action. These issues will be addressed at the monthly team meetings between the City and the PVPLC.

In addition, the PVPLC will use reasonable efforts to ensure public involvement and participation in the management and periodic evaluation of the Preserve. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to, PVPLC's participation in the Annual Report presentation to the

City Council; involving members of the community as “keepers” to provide regular monitoring of the Preserve; soliciting public comments through outreach such as comment boxes, mailings, events and workshops; and inclusion of members of the public on committees that the PVPLC may from time to time establish.

In summary, staff believes that the present system of soliciting public input on City/PVPLC Preserve management activities and Preserve enforcement issues from Preserve users and adjacent residents via the City’s website, Ranger Hotline and the PVPLC Keepers program provides more opportunity for public input than periodic committee meetings that may only be attended by a few. Furthermore, staff believes that instituting the Volunteer Trail Patrol Program described earlier in this Staff Report will provide additional public input to staff via the reports of the Program’s volunteers. It should also be noted from past experiences, a formal oversight committee would require a significant amount of added staff time and/or diversion from other assignments.

CONCLUSION

To reduce trail use conflicts within the Preserve, staff recommends a combined effort between the City and PVPLC that includes implementing a Volunteer Trail Patrol Program, improved signage and spur trail closures within the Preserve, and converting un-programmed MRCA interpretive hours to patrol hours. Staff proposes updating the Council on the success of this team effort in 2014 when the Council reviews the PVPLC’s annual Preserve Management report.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the discussion herein, staff has identified the following costs that may be incurred by the City for implementation of certain management tools to reduce trail user conflicts.

Additional Signage

The cost for the City to install “Preserve Rules” signs at the 58 entry points is estimated to be approximately \$14,000. This cost will be absorbed by an existing budget line item for Parks, Trails and Open Space Maintenance. Further, if the City Council believes that the City should augment the PVPLC’s efforts to update the trail markers, an additional \$10,500 could be allocated from the FY13-14 budget, through the Parks, Trails and Open Space Maintenance Fund.

Volunteer Trail Patrol Program

Annual costs are anticipated to be \$10,140 for a Volunteer Trail Patrol Program with 30 volunteers. Costs include training, background checks, general liability and Workers’ Compensation coverage through the City/CJPIA, printing costs, miscellaneous costs (i.e. food for quarterly volunteer meetings), and uniforms. Costs do not include staff time. To offset a portion of the program’s cost, the City Council may wish to consider requiring individuals to pay a one-time set fee to participate in the Volunteer Trail Patrol Program in the amount of \$50-\$100 per individual. A lower annual fee may also be considered

thereafter to cover the cost of continuing training, replacement uniforms, etc.

Attachments

- Draft Volunteer Trail Patrol Program Handbook
- PVPLC Correspondence dated March 11, 2013

Attachment #1

Draft Volunteer Trail Patrol Program Handbook



RANCHO PALOS VERDES



Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Volunteer Trail Patrol

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

MISSION

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OVERSIGHT

VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL ACTIVITIES

VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

SUPPLIES

RULES OF CONDUCT

Adopted by City of Rancho Palos Verdes:
Revision dates: N/A

____, 2013

Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Volunteer Trail Patrol

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes (the City) created the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve (the Preserve) with the aid of federal, state and local government funding, as well as substantial private contributions organized by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC), to set aside scenic open space lands to be dedicated to the preservation of threatened and endangered species indigenous to the Palos Verdes Peninsula but at risk of loss due to development and other human activity, as well as to protect unique scenic vistas, natural landscape and cultural resources. Use of the Preserve for education and science, and enjoyment of the Preserve for recreation, are encouraged but are permitted only as they are consistent with the conservation mandate of the Preserve. In addition to the rules created by the Preserve's governing documents, several species of flora and fauna in the Preserve are protected by federal and state laws.

The Preserve consists of approximately 1,400 acres of open-space lands all located in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, and divided among 11 different Reserves: Abalone Cove, Agua Amarga, Filiorum, Forrestal, Ocean Trails, Alta Vicente, Portuguese Bend, San Ramon, Three Sisters, Vicente Bluffs and Vista del Norte.

PVPLC, which since 1988 has led the community-based effort to protect open space lands on the Peninsula, is named as the "habitat manager" under the Preserve organizational documents and as such oversees the conservation mandate of the Preserve, while principal responsibility for public safety and enforcement of rules in the Preserve falls to the City. In furtherance of protecting the Preserve, the City contracted with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to have its rangers patrol the Preserve and if necessary issue citations and make arrests.

MISSION

The mission of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Volunteer Trail Patrol Program is to serve as eyes and ears of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy with a view to 1) protect the natural resources of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, including the flora and fauna as well as the geology, topography and scenic landscape, and 2) enhance the safety of, and promote an enjoyable experience for all Preserve visitors.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Foster volunteerism in support of the mission.
- Increase compliance with laws, rules and policies governing the Preserve (the Rules) by visitors in the Preserve.

**Palos Verdes Nature Preserve
Volunteer Trail Patrol**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Obtain information to assist the City, PVPLC and enforcement personnel, including the MRCA rangers in prioritizing their focus.

OVERSIGHT

The VTP Program is overseen by the City, PVPLC and a Volunteer Trail Patrol Coordinator.

Volunteer Trail Patrol Coordinator

- Serves as the liaison between the City, PVPLC and VTP members.
- Signs Volunteer liability waiver and release form.
- Develops recruitment procedures and assists the City and PVPLC with recruitment, screening, and selection of volunteer trail patrol applicants.
- Schedules volunteers and instructors for required training, which may include field programs, and documents completion of training.
- Maintains volunteer record system.
- Conducts periodic field evaluations of VTP members.
- Working with the City, PVPLC and MRCA rangers, identifies volunteer needs and places volunteers where needed and evaluates whether more volunteers are required to provide adequate coverage of places and times. Also helps to identify patterns with respect to Rules violations that might make placement of resources more effective.
- Identifies supply needs of volunteers and handles distribution and inventory of supplies.
- Makes recommendations for future modifications to the VTP program.

City of Rancho Palos Verdes

- Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the VTP Program in protecting Preserve resources and compliance with Preserve rules.
- Provides fingerprinting and background checks.
- Works with PVPLC, MRCA, and the VTP Coordinator to focus places and times for volunteer patrols.
- Hosts a web portal for tracking Volunteer Trail Patrol member work hours and reports.
- Shares reports of Incidents (defined later in this Description) and information reports with PVPLC and the VTP Coordinator via the City's web portal.

**Palos Verdes Nature Preserve
Volunteer Trail Patrol**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

- Provides input to City regarding effectiveness of the VTP Program.
- Selects the VTP coordinator with input from the City.
- Helps the VTP Coordinator recruit volunteers.
- Works with the City and the VTP Coordinator to focus places and times for volunteer patrols.
- Receives copies of Incident and information reports.

VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL ACTIVITIES

The Volunteer Trail Patrol patrols the Preserve under the direction of the MRCA rangers, the City and PVPLC and observes and reports various types of activities and conditions, such as the following (as used in this document, Incidents):

- Violations of Rules within the Preserve, including but not limited to:
 - off trail and unauthorized trail use/failure to follow permitted trail uses and right of way rules;
 - use of motorized vehicles;
 - damage to or vandalism of property, including graffiti and damaged or removed signs or post-and-rope and other barricades;
 - dogs off-leash and owners failing to pick up waste; and
 - smoking, and lighting of fires.
- Needs for medical attention, fire protection, law enforcement or other emergency services within the Preserve, and
- Hazardous trail conditions within the Preserve.

When a Volunteer Trail Patrol member encounters an Incident, the member:

- Communicates with enforcement personnel via the ranger hotline or other first responders as necessary.
- Where appropriate and consistent with the member's training, documents the Incident with photos that are then included with reports.
- If the VTP member has received necessary training and certification, assists visitors who require first aid or other forms of help during patrol.
- Where appropriate and consistent with the member's training, uses the Incident as an opportunity to provide education to the visitor about the Preserve and its rules.

The Volunteer Trail Patrol members also:

- Submit reports of each patrol to the VTP Coordinator via an online report form on the City website.

**Palos Verdes Nature Preserve
Volunteer Trail Patrol**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Meet once each quarter. Meetings will include general updates and current trends and developments as well as educational presentations on a variety of topics. Topics may include post-fire ecology, local flora and fauna, geology, and PVPLC activities. Quarterly meetings will contribute to the program's total number of volunteer hours.
- Follow procedures established for the VTP Program by the City and PVPLC, as implemented by enforcement personnel and the VTP Coordinator.
- Set the tone for visitors to the Preserve by complying with the Rules at all times, both during volunteer times and when using the Preserve outside of volunteer hours.
- Gain a working familiarity with PVPLC's mission and vision statement, the Rules and any educational materials provided in the course of VTP training.

The Volunteer Trail Patrol is NOT:

- Authorized to issue citations, chase or detain visitors, threaten prosecution (other than to advise visitors whether a particular behavior or action could subject the visitor to citation), use physical force or otherwise engage in any activity generally reserved enforcement personnel.
- A substitute for first responders (e.g., fire, paramedics, law enforcement)—the Volunteer Trail Patrol reports incidents and provides assistance only to the extent the VTP member has appropriate and specialized training.

VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum eighteen years of age.
- Commits to patrol a minimum of four hours per month, which may include weekends and/or holidays, for not less than one year.
- Completes a Volunteer Application and interview process.
- Signs a Volunteer Agreement, Waiver and Release form and completes fingerprinting and a background check.
- Successfully completes a Volunteer Trail Patrol training program and field evaluation.
- Is willing to be assigned to patrol specific areas.
- Is in adequate physical condition for their assigned activity.
- While on patrol, wears the proper uniform or other appropriate clothing and safety gear and carries the appropriate supplies.
- Maintains own supplies except as set forth later in this Program Description.

**Palos Verdes Nature Preserve
Volunteer Trail Patrol**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Provides own method of patrolling Preserve.
- Able to provide own transportation to and from the Preserve.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Training is an integral part of the Volunteer Trail Patrol program. Training will be completed as part of the induction of volunteers into the program, and on an as-needed basis to disseminate new information and improve and expand patrol capabilities. New volunteer training provides the VTP member with an overview of the Preserve, the Rules, patrol procedures and routes, and other information. Special situation training for medical emergencies and personal safety may also be provided. Additional classes may be offered, such as biological, historical and cultural aspects of the Preserve.

Initial training consists of a classroom session conducted by one or more representatives of RPV staff, PVPLC, the MRCA ranger, and qualified volunteer instructors. Thereafter, each volunteer must complete a field evaluation performed by the VTP Coordinator or designee to evaluate the following:

- Soundness of the volunteer's supplies;
- The volunteer's knowledge of the Preserve trail system and the Rules; and
- The volunteer's ability to meet the requirements of the VTP Program commitment.

SUPPLIES

Volunteers will be required to carry certain supplies to ensure they are prepared for a variety of situations. These include:

- Supplies provided through the VTP Coordinator:
 - Open space trail maps and brochures
 - Communication card with phone numbers for enforcement personnel and emergency support
 - Patrol log forms
- Supplies provided by the volunteer:
 - Pack for supplies and water
 - Uniform (t-shirt or vest and cap)
 - Camera
 - Cell phone
 - Adequate water for patrol
 - Note pad or other form of recording Incidents, information and other activities
 - Own means of patrolling the Preserve if by horse or mountain bike

RULES OF CONDUCT

All VTP members must comply with the following rules of conduct at all times:

**Palos Verdes Nature Preserve
Volunteer Trail Patrol**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Volunteers will not accept any compensation, gift, payment of expenses or any other item of monetary value which may create the appearance of private gain in connection with their work as members of the Volunteer Trail Patrol Program.
- Volunteers will contact the VTP Coordinator with suggestions, comments or problems.
- Volunteers will follow instructions given by the VTP Coordinator or employee of PVPLC, RPV, or the MRCA Ranger. If instructions conflict, notify the VTP Coordinator.
- Volunteers will be courteous, respectful, and tactful when interacting with others. No form of discrimination will be tolerated.
- Volunteers will not patrol while in possession of or under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any other intoxicating or mind-altering substance.
- Volunteers will not use offensive language.
- Volunteers will observe precautions for personal safety, posted rules, signs and safety instructions.
- Volunteers will not abuse access to information, facilities, equipment or materials.
- If a volunteer displays inappropriate behavior the City and/or PVPLC reserves the right to dismiss the volunteer without warning for any cause.

Attachment #2

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Correspondence dated March 11, 2013



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

March 11, 2013

Dear Honorable Mayor Brooks and City of Rancho Palos Verdes City Council Members,

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy would like to express concern about the impact of unauthorized trail use on the Preserve. The mission of the Land Conservancy is to “preserve land restore habitat for the enjoyment and education of all.” The land set aside as the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve was acquired with the generous support of the community as well as governmental sources to preserve and increase the conservation values that are supported by these lands. Our commitment to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes in our management agreement, and specifically to complete successful habitat restoration over a 50-year time span, is significant and requires great resources and community involvement in order to be successful.

Both the Land Conservancy and many community constituents are disappointed regarding the habitat impacts and visual/aesthetic impacts of unauthorized trails on the Preserve, and concerned about visitor safety and reduced enjoyment of the Preserve due to vandalism and improper use of the Preserve. As our constituency sees less value placed on addressing these issues, and by implication less value placed on protecting this community asset, it may impact the ability of the Conservancy to raise funds which are vital to meeting the conservation goals of the Preserve.

Improper use, and vandalism to the Conservancy’s efforts to address the effects of improper use, has continued since the October 2, 2012 City Council meeting. Our volunteer KEEPERs have observed, and while in the field received reports of, bicyclists coming down Paintbrush and Paintbrush unauthorized trails very fast, and continuing onto Ishibashi trail, in an unsafe manner. We also have received reports of people almost being hit by bicyclists.

An appropriate system of encouraging compliance in the Preserve requires three legs for support: good signage, education and an active law enforcement presence.

The Land Conservancy actively supports education about the Preserve in multiple ways, including our volunteer training and stewardship work days, development of production of trail and informative brochures, hosting an informative website, participation in community outreach events, hosting regularly scheduled interpretive nature walks, the operation of two nature centers which provides the community access to interpretive staff and hosting all Peninsula third graders through a nature education program. All of these educational outreach activities allow us to raise awareness about the Preserve and the conservation values of the Preserve.

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The Land Conservancy is collaborating with the City of RPV to develop regulatory signs that will be posted at all trailheads. One of the goals of improving signage is to provide the rangers with a better ability to cite people who are not following posted regulations. We are very pleased to be a part of this process and look forward to the installation of the trailhead regulatory signage.

The Land Conservancy is also focusing on reducing unauthorized trail use by improving signage, including placing "Area Closed" signage on non-authorized trails and adding signage to improve trail delineation. In addition, a new volunteer program ("Adopt-a-trail") creates a group of volunteers committed to assisting with closure of key unauthorized trails by assisting staff in maintaining unauthorized trail closures by replacing brush or repairing broken cables and signage.

We feel that we are developing a positive foundation toward compliance through present and future educational efforts and signage. However, we are not in a position to provide active law enforcement. That is something the City must do, as without the threat of consequences, the other efforts do not succeed.

The Land Conservancy relies on the City for law enforcement, both to protect the Preserve and to protect the investment that the community, through its contributions of time and money, has made to the Preserve. The Volunteer Trail Patrol is a useful tool to provide eyes and ears to support the Ranger's activities and to provide better information about uses in the Preserve, but they lack enforcement/citation power.

The size of the Preserve, its proximity to homes, and the complex schedule of infractions that occur, require a greater ranger presence. One option would be increasing ranger presence in a given area for limited periods of time to focus on problem areas. Another option is using other law enforcement, such as the Los Angeles County Sheriff, to provide enhanced, short-term enforcement. The City also has the power to increase fines in the Preserve as a deterrent to rule breaking. Also, given that the Land Conservancy and other community-based groups, such as the Los Serenos docents, already provide nature based interpretation, converting some of the Ranger's interpretive hours to enforcement time might provide a good solution.

The Land Conservancy urges City Council to increase enforcement on the Preserve. If a decrease in unauthorized activities and/or reckless activity cannot be achieved through these types of proposed measures (including the Volunteer Trail Patrol), it may become necessary to look at alternatives to the current user designations for the existing trail system or other, more strict rules governing Preserve use.

Sincerely,



Andrea Vona
Executive Director



Ken Swenson
PVPLC Board member and Stewardship Committee Chair