

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES
PRESERVE MANAGEMENT/PUMP PUBLIC FORUM MEETING
MARCH 4, 2015

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

ATTENDANCE

City Staff: Carolynn Petru – Deputy City Manager
 Cory Linder – Recreation and Parks Department Director
 Ara Mihranian – Community Development Deputy Director
 Sean Larvenz – Public Works Maintenance Superintendent
 Katie Lozano – Recreation and Parks Department Administrative Analyst

PVPLC Staff: Danielle Lefer – Conservation Director

Director Linder welcomed attendees and initiated the forum.

Preserve Maintenance

Review of Active Habitat/Trail Projects: Director Lefer reported that PVPLC is currently planting in the Peacock Flats area, Abalone Cove Reserve, Vicente Bluffs Reserve, and Lunada Canyon.

Unauthorized/Spur Trail Closures: Director Lefer reported that PVPLC now has a full time staff member to focus on trail issues. He and the Volunteer Trail Crew are currently focused on unauthorized trail closures in the Rim Trail area. Work is also focused on Flying Mane Trail, Abalone Cove Reserve, and Paintbrush Trail.

Unauthorized/Spur Trail Closure Plan for Preserve: Director Lefer reported that PVPLC continues to work on a Trail Management Plan to include effective unauthorized trails closures.

Review of Trail Crew Activities: Director Lefer reported that the Volunteer Trail Crew is working to delineate Rim Trail, and on water flow and spur trail issues on Flying Mane and Pirate Trails.

Monument Signage, Entry Kiosks, and Welcome Signage: Director Lefer reported that PVPLC is working on a monument and signage plan. A consultant will create the plan over the course of approximately 14 weeks, and the public will be invited to give input on the plan.

Yield Signage: Director Lefer reported that yield signage is currently in the design phase, and the management team is looking forward to having it in place.

Toyon/Peppertree Grading Follow-up: Director Linder reported that the City is working on a plan to correct the grading conducted on Toyon Trail, and will be coordinating with PVPLC soon on the plan.

City Preserve Maintenance Logs: Analyst Lozano reported that City maintenance logs are available at the front table. Some instances of note over the past quarter are an uptick in

sick/dead seals/sea lions on City beaches, bike jumps scheduled for removal at San Ramon Reserve, and a lot of graffiti. Sick seals/sea lions should be reported to the City. It is against the law to come within 50 feet of them or touch them. The public must keep their distance.

Public Comments/Questions

Mike Jost commented on the future connector trail between Three Sisters and Filiorum Reserves, and the necessary mitigation.

Eva Cicoria shared the need to be cognizant of the dense healthy vegetation in the area of a potential connector trail. She also asked if PVPLC was aware of special plants/habitat currently on Ailor Trail.

Director Lefer reported that the Preserve Trails Plan calls for a connector trail at this location, and that it will be carefully designed to limit habitat damage and create a safe trail for use. Creating an official trail will hopefully stop users from creating their own connector trails.

Diane Smith asked that the City and PVPLC make it clear to the public that when Preserve lands are purchased through grant funding, strings are attached that require promoting tourism. She strongly disagrees with promoting the Preserve for tourism, and is concerned about the growing number of people that currently use it. She is also concerned about the impact social media has on the increasing number of people abusing the Preserve.

Deputy Director Mihranian corrected that the Preserve was purchased with a combination of state, federal, and private funds. It is owned by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, and it is jointly managed by the City and PVPLC. When grants funds are used, deed restrictions result, including expectations on how Preserve land is used (i.e. preservation of resources and public access). Enrolling the 1,450 acres of Preserve has protected it from development. Deputy Director Mihranian also shared that social media is also a concern for the City and PVPLC in regards to the crowds it draws, and that other public land managers are also facing this issue. In 2004, when the Preserve was formed, social media was not the same platform it is today, and the City and PVPLC are working to get appropriate information out through social media.

Peter Shaw expressed concern that the damage the City caused on Toyon Trail has not yet been corrected after four months. More responsive action from the City would demonstrate their dedication to protecting the trails. He is also concerned about the project procedure in place that would allow such an egregious mistake.

Director Lefer commented that a new project procedure has been put in place that should prevent such errors from happening in the future. It includes more direct oversight of work.

Director Linder reported that the Recreation and Parks and Public Works Departments have conducted site visits to the Toyon area, and both departments are dedicated to working together on the best solution for the area.

Eva Cicoria expressed concern with Public Works' sensitivity to habitat when working in the Preserve. She requested that the proposed Toyon solution plan be shared with the public.

Diane Smith reported problems with graffiti, trash, dog feces, and dogs off-leash at Ocean Trails Reserve. She feels the City should not add more trails or projects until the City proves it can maintain what it has.

Mike Jost requested the City and PVPLC use a transparent approach for evaluating and improving trails for closures.

Director Linder shared that the City is working on a revised plan for dealing with garbage in the Preserve, and that trail improvements and closures are a team effort with goals of repairing damage and overall improving areas.

Peter Barrett expressed concern that 3 trees were cut down in the Peacock Flats area.

Director Lefer indicated that the trees were non-native and part of a specific restoration area. Their removal was partly to keep the invasive species from spreading in the restoration area.

Preserve Operations

Ranger Report and Enforcement Priorities: Analyst Lozano reported that enforcement priorities remain in the coastal reserves and Portuguese Bend Reserve because of their heavy use, and in San Ramon Reserve to watch for bike jump building activities and to monitor motorized vehicle use on the adjacent L.A. County public land. Activity has remained somewhat consistent with previous quarters. Commonly reported incidents included dogs off-leash and unauthorized trail use.

City Preserve Public Use Logs: Analyst Lozano shared that the City's public use logs are available at the front table, and that use has been consistent over the past quarter.

Review of Volunteer Trail Watch Reports: Director Lefer reported that the Volunteer Trail Watch currently has approximately 30 active volunteers. More common reported issues over the past quarter are dogs off-leash and use of unauthorized trails.

Managing Private Entry Points to the Preserve: Analyst Lozano and Director Lefer reported that the PVPLC and City are working together to manage private entry points into the Preserve. Resulting management concerns include spur trails from private communities into the Preserve and security concerns from the private communities when members of the public use the spur trails to enter their private communities. PVPLC and the City are currently working with the Portuguese Bend Community to enhance the authorized access point into the Preserve, and close the unauthorized access points and spur trails.

Motorized Vehicle Access to the Preserve: Analyst Lozano reported that the City and PVPLC are working together to identify and close motorized vehicle access points into the Preserve. Initial focus is on the Portuguese Bend Reserve. Two access points have been closed by the Public Works Department, and two additional access points are scheduled for closure.

Public Comments/Questions

Analyst Lozano clarified that the canopies were set up to support a Saturday Junior Ranger hike and activity to educate youth and parents on the importance of the Preserve, and that the proposed Gateway Park is located in a different location.

Deputy Director Mihranian clarified that the point at which the canopies were set up is already a well-used authorized access point to the Portuguese Bend Nature Reserve, though parking is not available nearby.

Eva Cicoria clarified that the purpose of such programming is to educate the public on the significance and importance of the Nature Preserve, rather than to increase recreational use. Social media has had an unexpected consequence on the level of Preserve use. She also requested that MRCA Ranger reports be posted online more promptly.

Peter Shaw asked for an update on an easement near the Vanderlip Trail.

Deputy Director Mihranian indicated that the property owner is not interested in granting an easement. However the property is now for sale, and the City is looking into the feasibility of purchasing it.

Deputy Director Mihranian indicated that Ranger reports would be posted more promptly and that the City will be launching a new website in the upcoming weeks, and City staff emails will now be @rpvca.gov rather than the old @rpv.com.

Mike Jost commented that though it's common to see concentrations of cars parked at the top of the Portuguese Bend Reserve on weekends, use is more dispersed during the week, and use also gets dispersed throughout the Reserve so that it's not common to feel "crowded."

Preserve Interpretive Activities

PVPLC-led nature walks: Director Lefer shared that a schedule of PVPLC nature walks is available at the front table and on the PVPLC website.

Los Serenos de Point Vicente Docent-led Nature Walks: Analyst Lozano shared that a schedule of Los Serenos de Point Vicente nature walks is available at the front table and on the City's website.

Junior Ranger Program: Analyst Lozano shared that the City's Junior Ranger Program continues to be very popular and often sells out. It is a great way to teach youth and parents about this valuable and amazing resource and to get children hiking in the outdoors.

Public Comments/Questions

None.

Director Linder thanked everyone for attending and expressing their ideas and concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.