



San Diego Canyonlands
BALBOA PARK Conservancy
City of San Diego Parks & Recreation
DRAFT MEETING NOTES

El Prado – Visitor Center
Tuesday August 21, 2018 9:15pm to 10:15pm

Attendees: Balboa Park Conservancy: Tomas Herrera-Mishler (made introductions), Jackie Higgins, Rene Smith (via telecom); Casey Smith City of San Diego, Deputy Director of Developed Parks, Eric Bowlby Executive Director of San Diego Canyonlands

1. Eric Bowlby provided a **brief statement about San Diego Canyonlands (SDCL)** and their “Friends Group” volunteer stewardship program and the Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP) program. He mentioned the successful ~20-years of collaboration with City Open Space Division. SDCL is celebrating their 10th year as a non-profit. In the prior nine years, Eric ran the Sierra Club Canyons Campaign.
2. **The SDCL Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP)** committee meets at Noon (Brown Bag Lunch) every third Tuesday of the month at Vicki Estrada’s (Landscape and Architects) office. Vicki is the Chair of the CEP Committee and on the SDCL Board.
 - Balboa Park Conservancy would be welcome to attend these meetings when Florida Canyon or other Balboa Park open space, such as Marston Canyon, are on the agenda.
 - Eric will provide the SDCL Canyon Enhancement Planning program brochure to the group.
 - Eric indicated that the Stakeholder Workshops for CEP in Florida Canyon will begin soon.
 - Casey indicated he could help with using the “19th Hole” (the Balboa Park Golf Clubhouse) for the upcoming CEP meetings for Florida Canyon.
3. Jackie shared that she is a Landscape Architect and has managed restoration projects including Coastal Sage Scrub and Maritime Succulent Scrub and coastal wetlands. She did the environmental sensitive habitat monitoring during the seismic retrofitting of the 1st Ave. bridge over Maple Canyon, and is familiar with the urban erosion and invasive species challenges in that canyon.
4. **Other Canyons** Casey mentioned the other canyons, such as Switzer and Juniper Canyons where SDCL and City have collaborated. He mentioned the collaboration to stabilize the severely eroded Maple Canyon stream, in Bankers Hill with a series of “weirs and runs”. Eric is working with Tershia d’Elgin and a team of consultants to create a Strategy Toolkit that is “scalable” to address the erosion problem in dozens of urban canyons/streams. SDCL has raised ~\$300,000 toward planning and permits for the project.

Marston Canyon Rene informed us about the work of the Friends of Marston Canyon and Al Mansur (group leader). Marston is also a part of the park. The stairs heading down from Richmond are unsafe and the bridge was washed out due to erosion some time ago.

 - All agreed accessibility is an important goal.
 - BalboaPark.org has a park-trails map.
 - Casey mentioned that SDCL has a Master Right of Entry to access City land to implement projects including trails.

5. **Programmatic Master Permit for Canyon Enhancement Planning/Projects** Eric mentioned that SDCL is working with the City to establish a Programmatic CEQA document and Master Permit for Canyon Enhancement Projects, including trails, wetlands, and uplands restoration, throughout the City. **This Master Permit would cut the time and cost of permitting in half. It could be used by other entities for City-approved projects, as well as SDCL and the City.**
6. **Florida Canyon:** Eric displayed a Socio-Infrastructure map of Florida Canyon showing the myriad of social trails. Casey has a map of the official trails in Florida Canyon and **Eric requested the PDFs and the GIS/Shape files for these trails.**
- Florida Drive Partial Closure Plans** Eric has promoted and informed residents regarding the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan and the proposed partial closure of Florida Drive to vehicle traffic between Morley Field Drive and Zoo Place.
- Balboa Park Conservancy are supportive of the plan.
 - Outreach and messaging to inform the community is important, a must.
 - Eric mentioned the idea of a temporary closure to ground-truth the circulation impacts and the idea of raising funds for a traffic study. SANDAG studies show traffic counts on Florida Drive and other major roads in the area.
 - SDCL has conducted outreach to build a “Friends of Florida Canyon” and they maintain a contacts list.
 - The idea of a Native American interpretive trail in Florida Canyon is something all parties have envisioned!
 - The Conservancy is currently meeting with Vicki Estrada and a contact with a group of Native American to evaluate the Native American’s interest and capacity to participate in the restoration of Florida Canyon.
 - All agree that additional riparian habitat would enable the planting of native trees and support the City’s goal to have 35% tree canopy by 2035 as well as provide water quality benefits.
 - Eric said this kind of project should be a good fit for CA Prop 1 grants.
 - **He added that CA Prop 68, passed by voters, will fund trail projects.** SDCL will be meeting with the Urban Corps to collaborate on this relatively new funding opportunity.
 - Urban Corps is currently contracted by the Balboa Park Conservancy to plant 500 trees in the park.
7. **Matching Grant** Eric mentioned that SDCL has a 100% Matching Grant up to \$125,000 to create a \$250,000 Replenishing Canyon Project Fund to help SDCL with cash flow when implementing projects with awarded state and federal reimbursement grants. **\$70,500 has been raised to date** toward this goal.
- Eric requested that the Conservancy help with outreach and networking to raise funds for the Matching Grant challenge and contributions toward the Master Permit for canyon enhancements. Conservancy agreed to keep canyon projects in mind when researching grants and will collaborate on grant opportunities as they become available that align with the mutual goals.

CEP Mission/goals: The over-all goals of CEP are to promote visual and physical canyon access, connections into communities, restoration, conservation, environment-based education, and ecologically sensitive recreation. Per San Diego's General Plan (2008), we seek a balance between human enjoyment of the canyons and restored/thriving nature within the canyons/creeks.