



Gonzales Canyon Enhancement Planning Stakeholder Meeting #2
November 12, 2014, 9:00am to Noon
West Gonzales Canyon Open Space Gate off of Old El Camino Real
DRAFT Notes - Field Visit #1

Stakeholder Attendees

Ed Christensen, Senior Park Ranger
Shawna Anderson, Principal Planner for the San Dieguito River Park
Natalie Borchardt, Senior Ranger for coastal areas of the San Dieguito River Park
Linda Zlotnik, Resident
Andra Davis, Resident, Gonzales Canyon Friends Group
Karen Billing – Carmel Valley News
Laura Ball – San Diego Open Space

San Diego Canyonlands Staff

Eric Bowlby, Executive Director
Freddy Arthur, Field Supervisor

9:00 am stakeholders met at the Open Space Gate off Old El Camino Real (east side)
Parking was safest and available on the west side only.

1) **The purpose of this field visit was to explore and review proposed trail connections from Gonzales Canyon to the San Dieguito River Park** open spaces and River Park trails. Below is a link to the San Dieguito River Park's trail page. The table at the bottom has columns indicating if mountain bikes & equestrians are allowed for the different portions of the Coast to Crest Trail.

<http://www.sdrp.org/wordpress/trails/>

Summary: User limitations are enforced by the Park Rangers for a variety of reasons. For example, trail use is limited to protect the endangered Least Tern nesting areas near the lagoon. The Coast to Crest (CTC) trail is for three user groups, hikers, bicyclists and equestrian, but users are restricted from some non-CTC trails in the park. The CTC trail amenity exists at the lagoon from Jimmy Durante Blvd. to ECR. Both mountain bikes & equestrians are not allowed on the Crest Canyon, Dust Devil, and Clevenger Canyon trails. Mountain bikes ONLY are not allowed at Volcan Mountain, and horses are not allowed on the Kreitzer Bridge at Lake Hodges and are limited at some of the San Dieguito Lagoon trails.

2) The group examined a large map of the canyon, the adjacent open-space preserves and developments.

- It was mentioned that hikers park on Drakewood Terrace and then drop straight through the woods to the Sword Way trail, rather than using the Sword Way trailhead.
- They discussed the City's planned replacement of the bridge along El Camino Real widening it from 2 lanes to 4 lanes; some in the community have suggested leaving the old bridge in place for non-motorized use only, **but the plan is to demolish the old bridge.**
- Shawna Anderson mentioned the proposal of a cantilever on the bridge, or some structure to separate cars/trucks from hikers, horses and bikes. The city will not absorb the cost of a cantilever

but perhaps the funds could be raised. She explained that the new bridge would have a bike lane, plus sidewalk, but would not accommodate an equestrian crossing or separate bike path.

- Shawna Anderson also mentioned having contacts in the equestrian community to join the stakeholder group and for outreach.
- The trail south, connecting to Penesquitos Lagoon trails is broken up at the Seabreeze development; rough terrain there was mentioned. Ed said the existing trail ends at the cement bike path at the 56, ... the other side isn't built yet.

3) The planning trail tour began by crossing to the west side of Old El Camino Real (ECR) and hiking south to a trail entry point on the south side the Rancho La Bella development project.

- Crossing ECR at this point is dangerous because the hill obscures the view of people crossing. Laura Ball suggested we should consult the traffic control department for safest road crossing location.
- The trail loops around the Rancho La Bella (RLB) development and turns to the north behind the development.
 - The gravel trail along the perimeter of Rancho la Bella has a cement culvert between at the bottom of the slope on the right. Rain run-off from the slope is captured in this culvert. It was visually obvious that recent rain had filled the culvert with mud, which had been scraped out and re-deposited on the slope.
 - The question about what vegetation was proposed for these slopes came up.
 - Open Space property behind RLB is a beautiful hillside, ripe for restoration, with good access for restoration activities including vehicles.
 - Hilltop has a view west to a seasonal pond area, planned for fresh water marsh restoration. This separated marsh could possibly see inundation during floods that flow through the Wildlife culvert.
 - The future Armenian Church has an area for mitigation on the east side of the culvert under ECR.
- The trail links to a dirt path on City-owned property, that heads down to the ECR Wildlife Corridor culvert.
 - At the culvert the stakeholders assessed the silt build up which has reduced the overhead clearance. It has filled in with about 12" of sediment making it too low for horse or bike riders.
 - Stakeholders discussed the Wildlife Agency rationale for using this underpass only for wildlife.
 - The wildlife culvert has deer and other animal tracks. It is very mushy, both on the approach, through the culvert and on the other side. In rainy season, any trail under ECR would be impassable.
 - Trails for human use should be on higher ground.
- Across El Camino Real is a SANDAG-proposed salt marsh restoration project to the left (west) of the power lines; to the right, east of the power lines, is a fresh water marsh restoration project.

4) The stakeholders walked back through the culvert to the south side of ECR and hiked along a relatively wide, partially gravel, winding pathway and sidewalk heading north toward San Dieguito Rd. (SDR).

- The sidewalk is wide enough for a lane for riders for some distance but as it approaches SDR it narrows and edges closer to the ECR.
- We discussed an optional dirt road trail at the bottom of an eight-foot slope immediately to the south, away from the busy road. This existing dirt road runs parallel to the sidewalk. It appears to be within the Lutheran Church Property lines, and unless there is an easement, a possible agreement with the owners would need to be explored. **Easement research is required.**

- The idea of taking a right at the intersection, heading east on San Dieguito Road, to provide a "less busy, non-intersection" option for crossing San Dieguito Road, was discussed.
 - In order to access the CTC Trail from Gonzales Canyon, a river crossing is necessary from the south to north side. The new ECR bridge could provide that crossing.
 - The new ECR bridge will include an east/west trail undercrossing, on the north side of the river, to allow the CTC Trail to continue east to the Polo Fields.

5) On return to the Open Space gate we took an alternate route that went north of the RLB property. This road wasn't as steep as expected.

- Once back at the Gonzales open space gate off of ECR, Ed, Eric, Andra, Freddy and Linda hiked up the access road to the trail link to view the deep sinkhole that all but cuts off an eroded connector trail below a steep, manufactured slope. We walked further down into the canyon in search of natural soil to scout for possible trail re-routes and possible opportunities for a bridge to cross the sinkhole.

6) Next Gonzales Canyon Enhancement Planning Stakeholder Workshop:

GONZALES CANYON ENHANCEMENT PLANNING (CEP) WORKSHOP #3

**Save the date! Our next stakeholder workshop will be held
January 12, 2015, from 10 am to 12 pm
at the Carmel Valley Library**

Bring your ideas to help us prioritize improvements in the canyon. We will plan what trails to close, what trails to improve, what trails to build, if needed, and other enhancements. We will create an action plan and work to raise funding to permit and implement those plans!

Please join us in this process!

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Bowlby
Executive Director
San Diego Canyonlands
619-284-9399
eric@sdcanonlands.org

***The Mission of San Diego Canyonlands is to promote, protect
and restore the natural habitats in San Diego County canyons and creeks.***