



Maple Canyon Enhancement Planning

Workshop 1, Notes

October 28, 2015, 6:00pm to 8:00pm



Activity Room
2567 Second Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103

Stakeholder Attendees

San Diego Canyonlands Staff

Eric Bowlby, Executive Director

Dave George, GIS/Ecologist

Miranda Hyldahl, Programs Coordinator

Ariel Jacome-Lopez, Intern

Maple Canyon Stakeholders

Ranger Jason Allen, City Open Space Division, Senior Ranger

Roy McMakin, Maple Canyon Friends Group Leader

Mike Jacobs

Don Liddell

Jeanne Rawlings

John Lamb

Douglas Hill

Kurt Schmidt

David Taylor

Sally Fall

Susie Hayes

Ben Baltic

Ann Garwood

Nancy Moors

Brent Woods

Francis Czermer

1. Eric Gave Introductory Comments & Introduced CEP Process:

- Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP) Brief History
- 1) Build Stewardship Groups, 2) Assemble Existing Conditions Maps, 3) Outreach and Stakeholder Planning Workshops, Create Enhancement Action Plan, Seek Support, Funding and Permits, Execute Action Plans/Projects

2. Stakeholder Introductions and Brief Comments

- **Susie Hayes**- Founding board member of San Diego Canyonlands, new Bankers Hill resident, wants to improve canyon access, Quince and Third trail is steep, could use improvements
- **Roy McMakin**- Maple Canyon Friends Group leader, canyon neighbor
- **Mike Jacobs**- Interested in seeing what happens with winter rainfall runoff in the canyon
- **Nancy Moors**- Canyon neighbor, Bankers Hill Community Group member
- **Ann Garwood**- Pick up a ton of trash, slope W. of 4th Ave., suggests hand rail from Third Ave down to steps, founder of Bankers Hill Community Group, founder of Hillcrest Town Council
- **Sally Fall**- Canyon neighbor, suggests bridge needs repainting, get rid of tumble weeds
- **Jeanne Rawlings**- Canyon neighbor, concerned about runoff and trail disappearing, wants accessible path into canyon
- **John Lamb**- Canyon neighbor, always loved canyon, concerned about erosion
- **Doug Hill**- Canyon neighbor, loves that the canyon is well-used
- **Ben Baltic**- BH Community Group Pres., "Maple Canyon is a jewel waiting to be polished"
- **Kurt Schmidt**- Canyon neighbor, what will winter rainfall bring? Is Quince St. bridge City's responsibility? (A. Yes, Street Division); Concerned about non-native, poisonous castor bean
- **Dave Taylor**- San Diego resident, loves being able to hike in canyon, values access, interested in multi-canyon connections for hiking, e.g. take nature trails to the coffee shop
- **Jason Allen**- Senior Park Ranger for Maple Canyon, 10.5 years experience with City's canyons, recognizes transient issues are problematic, he is point of contact to field and direct canyon issues, asks that we be patient with city staff, there's 3000 acres in over 40 different canyon locations to manage with three rangers
- **Ariel Jacome-Lopez**- San Diego Canyonlands intern, studying the hydro-modification problems in canyons with a focus on Maple Canyon
- **Francis Czerner**- Canyon neighbor, architect, loves canyon, uses and enjoys current renegade trail from Maple St park (near Waldo Waterman monument)
- **Brent Woods**- Canyon neighbor of 20 years, interested in keeping Maple Canyon safe and beautiful for people to enjoy, would like canyon to be a model for restoration and what can be done with inner-city canyons in San Diego
- **Don Liddell**- Canyon neighbor, takes a holistic perspective of the canyon, believes erosion is most important issue, "the more erosion there is the less canyon there is"

3. **Eric Reviewed Opportunities and Constraints in Maple Canyon** www.sdcanyonlands.org/cep
Information included in detail on CEP website, Scroll down to Maple Cny. "Summary-Introduction..."

4. Eric Reviewed Canyonlands Enhancement Plan Goals:

Information included in detail on CEP website, Scroll down to Maple Cny. "Summary-Introduction..."

- Balance conservation of resources with open space enjoyment and nature education;
- Stakeholder raised question regarding paper streets. Does City have a right to pave a road through canyon- Eric answered, the City does have a "right of way" but the City would have to go through environmental review and get approval from multiple agencies, Water quality impacts associated with filling a natural drainage would be a major issue, + Community opposition

- Stakeholder asked if there is any way to take advantage of the coming El Niño season and use the water- Eric responded that we have habitat restoration planned for this fall/winter
- Stakeholder asked if plantings are used to help prevent erosion- Eric answered that they are
- Eric showed photos of a trail pinch-point between the creek channel and a steep slope that could sever the north/south trail connection if it washes away. Ranger Jason indicated there may be some things we could do to redirect erosive flows along the path itself

5. Eric Reviewed Existing Conditions Maps

- a. Orientation to website and explanation of content of existing conditions mapping, www.sdcanonlands.org/cep (scroll down to Maple Canyon);
- b. Geotopo Viewshed Map: Slope, Views, Stream, Drain Conveyance Structures, Erosion;
- c. Socio-infrastructure: Ownership, City/School/Right-of-way/Private, Trails, Sewer Access;
- d. Vegetation Communities.

6. Group Reviewed Socio-Infrastructure Map showing possible new trails

- **Stakeholder comments / questions about Curlew Street Cul-de-sac Trail Suggestion:**
 - Suggested stroller and/or wheelchair access might be possible at South end of canyon;
 - It's important to talk about more than just getting into the canyon, we also need to talk about using canyon for pedestrian transportation, connections to neighborhoods, for example Hillcrest/Bankers Hill to Little Italy - Curlew St. trail could be a good connection!
 - Stakeholder agreed, and stated the value of being able to get from a home to a coffee shop without using any streets but only canyon trails;
 - This renegade trail is well used, has gentle slope and is an easy way to get down the hill;
 - How do we build a new trail with switchbacks that people will use instead of short-cutting down the hill as they do now? A. Plants and other barriers are used;
 - Suggestion for planting cactus to keep people on approved/built trail;
 - Avoid (with this trail as example) putting posts or ropes or other infrastructure in the canyon, keep the visual "escape to nature" intact; Renegade trails represent a desire to access canyon, be careful of taking out trails without providing access in their place;
 - **There was full consensus for the Curlew Cul-de-sac Trail.**
- **Stakeholder Statements and Questions about Signage:**
 - Signs and kiosks are better placed at entrances, rather than in the middle of the canyon;
 - Ranger stated that the brown regulation signs are at canyon entrances;
 - Can we install "friendly" signs for things we **can do** alongside regulation signs?
 - Ranger stated that the more infrastructure we install the more maintenance will be required; there's limited ranger staff to maintain. Sometimes temporary railings can be used while restoration is underway;
 - Eric talked about the different options to deal with maintenance of infrastructure- Maintenance Assessment District, Establishing a slush fund with the City, Sustaining volunteer canyon stewardship programs;
 - Stakeholder suggested we request more ranger staff/time for maintenance, could go to City Council district and ask that more rangers be put in the budget;
 - Do we need permits for signage?

- Ranger stated that we need signage approval from Open Space Division, and that restoration area signage and all regulation signs are permitted. He also stated that information kiosks are a good way to represent what is happening in the canyon but if there is a lot of potential for vandalism/graffiti that the kiosk could become a maintenance issue. Ranger also suggested a possible online kiosk using QR code.
- **North End of Canyon**
 - Stakeholder brought up that all work is currently being done at the South end of the canyon and that invasive plants such as tumbleweed and castor bean are all over in the North end and that when it rains weed seeds and debris gets washed down through the canyon to the south end- we need to fix problem at the source. Stakeholder also talked about the erosion problem at the North end of the canyon due to a broken draining pipe that won't get fixed until 2017;
 - Eric talked about California Coastal Conservancy (CCC) grant and its importance to planning rehabilitation of all of Maple Canyon and that SD Canyonlands will apply for Prop 1 funds from the CCC to implement those plans. Currently, small projects in the south end of the canyon will continue;
 - Stakeholder: The problem at the top of the trail is an acute problem because the trail could get blown out with rains this season and the problem at the bottom of the trail is an extreme problem where the sediment and runoff meets at the South end;
 - Eric: agreed, next cleanup we'll meet at Quince and Third St and clean North end. Ranger Mika may be able to pick up trash from Quince and Third streets;
 - Ranger stated that part of the North end that stakeholders may be talking about is private property.
- **Maple Street Park, Waldo Waterman Monument Trail Suggestion -Stakeholder Comments**
 - Lots of canyon neighbor families would be in favor of this trail because the renegade trail is too steep for small children;
 - One stakeholder stated that this trail is not necessarily a great idea, and believes we should aim for less trails, more restoration;
 - Stakeholder stated they believe this is the most important of the proposed trails;
 - Eric stated that this trail would be the only access into the canyon from the East side;
 - This trail would provide great access and would be a great to tie in the history with a Waldo Waterman Park, suggested a historical plaque, possible ADA access at trailhead;
 - Suggested we create a meeting/gathering spot with benches, informational kiosks, and a trash can at this trailhead;
 - Eric stated that benches and trash cans could have some push back and create a maintenance issue;
 - Ranger: If the Waldo Waterman pocket park is created it would be within the Community Parks Dept. jurisdiction; they would be responsible for maintenance- Open Space Division would have trouble maintaining the trash cans and benches;
 - Should get a Community Parks Department representative to join this CEP process;
 - No one knows what is going on with Waldo Waterman park;

- Original discussion was- Should we install the Waldo Waterman trail at all. It is an important point that currently there is no official access point on the East side of the canyon and that if we do not create access, there will continue to be renegade trails. The solution to renegade trails is to provide good, safe access points. This is a good spot with the potential park and would directly tie in to the canyon. A stakeholder is not in favor of installing trash cans/benches/fences or dams in the canyon.
- Agreed that the park would provide great access and that current trail is very dangerous;
- Stakeholder said there would not be consensus in favor if someone opposes the trail. There should be a way to provide access on the East side. This trail was discussed during Waldo Waterman pocket park planning and it makes sense but it is a tougher engineering sell than the gentle slope on the other side. This trail is in a more difficult spot. Stakeholder clarified they're not saying don't do it, but this trail isn't a slam dunk.
- This trail option is the closest access point to the central hub of Bankers Hill;
- Eric asked if any other stakeholders were in opposition to this trail- no one spoke up.
- **Stakeholders were in favor of trail at Maple Street Park with one stakeholder as a "maybe"**

- **First Avenue Bridge Trail Suggestion, Stakeholder Comments**
 - The transit stop shown near the First Avenue Bridge on the map is no longer there;
 - If kids are using this trail to get to school it would be good to promote that, another stated there isn't a nearby school, not many kids use it;
 - Stakeholder said they don't see people using this trail, there is a fence blocking it;
 - The renegade trail gets used by homeless population that is sleeping under the bridge.
 - **A discussion regarding an alternative access on a paper street (Front St.) ensued.**
 - Is Front Street a paper street? Stakeholder thought there used to be access but it had recently been blocked by a fence;
 - This Front Street access point is very steep and eroded and it is not used;
 - Stakeholder stated that Front Street access is narrow and there is a straight drop down. Several stakeholders confirmed that it's a cliff.
 - **First Street would provide good access and visibility** and would broaden usage of the canyon from the First Avenue Bridge.
 - Ranger said the City looked at this potential trail; it's not currently used because there is only a small gap in the fence and an electrical pole. It has a steep drop, but once you get down 15-20 feet there is potential to install switchbacks that could potentially cross under the bridge. There is potential here and he is not saying no.
 - Stakeholder: "Not wild about this trail" and asked how many access points do we need? This is not an attractive option but if we lose the main trail to erosion during the rains, we may need more access points.
 - The First Avenue Bridge is very well lit. Do we want to encourage night access?
 - **The First Avenue trail option continued to have mixed opinions, not really close to consensus.**

- **Overview Discussion**
 - Stakeholder asked if we have conflicting objectives. Discussed access versus restoration objectives, stated that they are not advocating for one or the other but there is a paradigm. Stakeholder stated that they agree we need to provide enough access, and believes the renegade trails show a demand for access and we can control that demand.
 - Ranger stated that through this process we want to get stakeholders' general ideas, and that not everything suggested at the workshop will ultimately be possible.
 - If we normalize access and usage we will thwart homeless usage.
 - In Juniper Canyon, there is more usage on good trails and there's not many encampments, but in the parts with poor access and less usage there is a homeless population.
 - More access equals less of a homeless population but also stressed that we don't want Maple Canyon to turn into Balboa Park with thousands of users.
 - Stakeholder: In favor of the Curlew Street Cul-de-sac trail, maybe Waldo Waterman Trail, but not in favor of the First Avenue bridge

7. **Next Meeting & Stakeholder Field Trips**

- Eric suggested that the next stakeholder meeting be a field visit and that we walk from the Quince St. bridge/trail entrance to the suggested First Street bridge, and then to the Curlew Cul-de-sac, consider the potential need and see how long each hike takes.
- **Next Meeting: 12/5/15 from 9:00am-11:30am; Meet at Quince and Third Street**
- Eric stated that we need rep. from the Uptown Planning Group for stakeholder workshop;
- Don Liddell (former Uptown Planning Group member) stated that he would advocate for someone from the group to step up.
- Stakeholder suggested that we do field visits once a month during winter to observe effects of the rainfall and erosion;
- Ranger: We cannot fully control nature; if the current trail from Quince and Third gets blown out we could look at moving the trail to above the current location- but there may be private property issues.
- Ranger talked about the 9 - 15 storm drains that drain into the canyon and the previous plans to slow runoff and erosion and bring the water pipe to the bottom of the canyon.