

Ruffin Canyon Enhancement Planning

DRAFT Workshop #3, Notes

February 25, 2017; 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Shawn Canyon Trail Trailhead



Stakeholder Attendees

San Diego Canyonlands- Eric Bowlby, Executive Director; Lauren Kahal, RECON Environmental Volunteer/Note taker; Michael Cassidy, Restoration Technician

City of San Diego- Jason Allen, Senior Open Space Ranger

Ruffin Canyon Stakeholders

Milos Belceвич

Lepa Belceвич

Pat Herron

Monica Fuentes

Cindy Moore

John Raifsnider

Gus Wirth

Phil Ovellette

Ron Shepard

Kevin Johnston

Tom Leech

Mike Fennell

Dick Rol

Mary Johnson



Workshop Notes

- 5 members from the Escala community in attendance (including from the Verandas and Bungalows areas of Escala)
- Common themes among stakeholder interests include: nature, access to nature, convenient and safe access, removing invasive plant species and promoting native species
- The portion of the trail that doubles as a City sewer access road should be no more than 8 feet wide to meet City standards
- Question from stakeholder – could we install water sources throughout canyon to aide wildlife during periods of heat and drought?
- Stakeholder asked to note the Serra Mesa Garden and Orchard **on the map?**
- Support for installation of signage at the fork in the trail to direct canyon users to Ruffin Canyon Trail, Shawn Canyon Trail, Taft Middle School, Mission Valley, etc.

- Unnatural erosion from runoff leaves incised channels throughout the canyon
- Puncheon Bridge could be installed to cross the incised channel/ravine near the intersection of Ruffin Canyon Trail and Shawn Canyon Trail. It can be tethered in place to withstand floodwaters
- Bridge would need to be wide enough for vehicles/equipment to access the sewer manhole if within the portion of trail that is collocated with sewer access road
- Stakeholder noted that the bridge at Bonnie Hough Habitat Garden needs maintenance
- When the trail begins travelling in the creek, general stakeholder consensus is that the cobble and uneven surface of the drainage is undesirable
 - Note one canyon user who was not a part of the stakeholder group stopped to note his support of the current trail conditions
- The point where the trail meets the creek is where the new/relocated trail would branch off from its existing alignment, traveling through the uplands on the eastern hillside and out of the drainage. Would be relatively level/not steep
 - To discourage people from walking on the drainage and decommissioned portion of the trail, proponents would plant native plant species
- There is a wide bench between Shawn Canyon and the smaller offshoot canyon where there is already a wildlife or lesser used social trail, where the relocated trail may be located
- Trail would not travel too far up the ridge
- Stakeholders agreed a trail alignment under existing trees and shade in the uplands is desirable
 - Could site the trail so that existing trees do not have to be removed, perhaps just pruning/trimming
- Locations higher up the slope would have better views
- The potential trail alignment may already be mapped in GIS; however, the portion of the proposed trail nearest Escala would need to be revised, (brought down lower below dog park or Fig Tree Park).
 - Escala stakeholders present did not see a concern if the trail were to be located beneath the park, at the edge of the landscaped line on the slope (aprx. 30 feet below fence line)
 - Trail may even benefit Escala's landscaping crew. Could collaborate with the landscaping crew to gain approval of native species to be planted on edges of trail. May even be able to screen the trail from Fig Tree Park with native plants.



- If Escala does not engage with San Diego Canyonlands and the City to revise their easement, the trail would have to meet at the drainage near the bottom of the canyon to link up with the existing, Escala easement
- This would mean the trail would continue along the same path, which consists of large cobble that is rough to walk on and often unsafe, and within the sensitive wetland area
- Note that the southern portion of drainage currently has smaller cobble due to the large amount of recent rain flows and is easier to walk on than other portions of the trail, but it is expected to return to the larger cobble in the future (conditions are dependent on rainfall)
- The main purpose for the trail realignment is to relocate the trail out of the floodplain and out of the sensitive wetland habitat making it safer, convenient and more enjoyable for all users.
- Escala residents agreed that Escala Master Board would likely agree to an easement relocation if the City allowed them to lock their pedestrian gates from dusk to dawn.
 - Gate lock would be one-way: public would be free to *leave* Escala anytime (in case they are still using trail as it gets dark)
 - Gate already exists but is currently always open; Escala’s security guards would be responsible for locking/unlocking and any maintenance/enforcement
 - Senior Ranger Jason noted concern with potential for security guards to harass/deter the public from using the trail
- There is about a 4-6 month time-frame in which to make a decision between the two alignments and begin to use the City funds earmarked for the CEQA process. Escala stakeholders will work to bring the issue to the Master Board.
- The group met a sixth Escala resident hiking in the canyon with his son that had intended to join the stakeholders for the field visit. He indicated strong support for the new trail. He lives in the Villas area of Escala.
- SDCL GIS staff took GPS coordinates for a trail segment that would descend the eastern slope and reconnect to the existing Escala easement.

