

Switzer Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP)



Agenda, Workshop 1

August 24, 2017 - 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Expressive Arts San Diego, 3201 Thorn Street, San Diego, CA 92104

1. Attendees:

Dan Davey	Joel Devine	Cara D'Angelo
Aric Henschen	Lise Diamond Devine	Eric Bowlby
Carrie Schnieder	Vick Granowitz	Lauren Kahal
Cia Barron	Josh Bey	
Heather Greenberg	Ranger Jason Allen	

2. Eric Bowlby provided a brief Introduction to the Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP) Process, Opportunities and Constraints

- **Public lands** can be planned for enhancement: City Open Space, City Park Land, Street Right of Way (ROW) or "paper streets"; Private property owners if interested/willing, may involve their land.
- Eric listed the Governmental Agencies and the City having regulatory jurisdiction over the **Environmentally Sensitive Lands** (ESL) in Switzer Canyon. The lands in Switzer Canyon are part of the City's habitat preserve. San Diego County is an internationally recognized "hot spot" for biodiversity.
- Eric discussed the activities of the Switzer Friends Group over the years and showed a "before and after" photo and some maps of the restoration areas.

3. Stakeholder Introductions and Brief Comments

- Roundtable: **What vision do you have for the canyon?**
This is list of comments made by individual stakeholders.
 - Continued use for passive recreation and with children and dogs
 - More access points
 - Retain eucalyptus and palms; while in support of native species, don't want canyon restored to preexisting conditions that do not contain tree cover
 - Evolve tree canopy from eucalyptus to native trees over time to convert "side-by-side" to a more native habitat type and maintain park character (slowly restore to native woodland along stream – adaptive management technique)
 - Increase water retention capacity and wetland vegetation enhancement
 - Preserve views of tree canopy
 - Generally protect the canyons
 - Noticed that City's brush management efforts cause erosion; non-native seasonal dry brush is an issue
 - Retain Switzer Canyon's historical significance – keep the large Canary Island palms in East Switzer, rail road tracks; look into possibility for preserving as historic resource; add educational signage to kiosk on the history
 - Create history map layer, e.g sites of old house, trestle bridge
 - Balance habitat restoration with neighborhood benefits
 - Preserve resources of canyon and use as a community space
 - Create restoration plans for all areas that are disturbed or less than "good" quality rank
 - Graffiti and litter are an issue – especially as you get toward the kiosk
 - Kiosk displays; kiosk maintenance plan
 - Integrate trail signage with Balboa park trail signage
 - Oak adoption opportunity in canyon – Carrie passed around a sign up to adopt an oak and bring water to newly planted oaks
 - Connect canyons throughout city with trails
 - Remove utility poles on 30th St. hillside

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- Trail Discussions:
 - Corner of Redwood & 31st: **planned trail in Community Plan Update (CPU)**, many mature nonnative and native trees still there; when the trail is constructed preserve those trees (large scrub oaks down there as well)
This location is very steep and very overgrown. The group discussed a nearby existing trail that is much less steep and heavily used on Redwood near 32nd St.
 - Ranger Jason confirmed trail (sewer access) on Redwood near 32nd St. is in good conditions and trimmed.
 - Potential to place steps along steeper areas but otherwise not many improvements needed
 - Two trailheads about half a block away from each other (Redwood/31st and Redwood/32nd) Do we need both?
 - Wide consensus: improvements to the trailhead at Redwood/32nd is preferred and the planned trailhead at 31st is not necessary
 - Stakeholders will review these locations during a field visit
- Creating easier and more visible trailheads might = more vandalism?
 - More traffic/use of trail might discourage transient/vandalism
 - Ranger Jason noted that more people using canyons for recreation can actually reduce criminal activity in canyons
 - Add “if you see something say something” signage on kiosks
 - As long as we’re still meeting the goal of community plan to increase access to open space, can make adjustments to the approved trails
- Trail area to east of 30th street is also approved in CPU, but is currently a renegade trail that goes to cul-de-sac/alleyway as well as down the canyon slopes; many erosion problems along the slope there. Need plan to address erosion and stabilize slopes as part of any trail improvements.
 - Reduce erosion of hillsides.
 - Deterrence strategies to “close” unapproved trails – install brush/cholla (however, can be problematic in brush management zones)
 - Group agrees trail just east of 30th street would be priority to avoid erosion problems with renegade trails. Don’t necessarily need to address the top use trail that goes to cul-de-sac/alleyway (this is a brush management zone)... few people using it;
 - Use vegetation that will stabilize slopes on 30th Street (as well as others) so erosion problems don’t continue
- Also stakeholders agree with access on west side of 30th Street (both this and location to the east of 30th are on the CPU planned trail shown on Figure 6 CPU approved trails map)
- Prioritize the trailhead east of 30th street first. Would create a loop from Burlingame trail
 - Eric said there is a potential to build all at once if funding is raised.
- Other items discussed:
 - Rope swing? Not likely viable, it’s a liability for city/Canyonlands. Additionally, it is inconsistent with primary efforts to preserve canyons/provide sanctuary for native species
 - Nature play area? Again, MSCP lands would restrict this kind of thing from happening. Potentially in other canyons that are outside of the MSCP.
 - Eric mentioned the children’s nature play area at Morley Field

4. Next Meeting & Stakeholder Field Trips (Saturday Sept. 9th 9:00am to 11:00am meet at 32nd and Redwood)

- Next stakeholder meeting: field visit potential trailhead locations
 - Eric will send out a Doodle poll to determine date in September or October
- Timeline: complete CEP process -> get approval from planning groups -> complete the Canyon Enhancement Plan -> get City’s approval -> resource agency approval (because in MSCP) -> CEQA takes a year (Canyonlands is working on master permit/program EIR for this that would streamline process)
 - Could be 1.5-2 years before we can implement the CEP for Switzer Canyon