

**MEETING NOTES**  
**City of San Diego**  
**OPEN SPACE CANYONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**January 12, 2023**

Meeting held at:  
Virtual Zoom meeting

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present:

**Parks & Recreation**

Chair Erika Ferreira (*OS Div. Deputy Director*)

**Community Planning**

Jeffrey Stevens (*Mira Mesa PG*)

**Development Services Department**

Rudy Bilan, *Associate Planner*

**Environmental Organization**

Eric Bowlby (*SDCL*)

Frank Landis (*CNPS*)

**Recreational Organization**

Domingos Dias (*Mtn. Bike Comm.*)

**Stormwater Department**

Anastasia Brewster (*Senior Planner*)

**Planning Department**

Daniel Monroe (*MSCP*)

**Public Utilities Department**

Kelsey Hall (*Senior Planner*)

Megan Hickey (*Principal Water Res. Spec.*)

**SDG&E**

Lisa Murphy (*Land Rep.*)

**Engineering and Capital Projects**

Maya Mazon (*Biologist III*)

**Member at Large**

Deborah Knight

Roger Lewis

GUESTS:

Erika Weikel (*OSCAC liaison*)

Marye Sanchez

Anne Fege

Tershia d'Elgin

Yarnell Balcazar

Nick Dorner

Mark Berninger

Kayla Edwards

Yamall Balcazar

Paul Kilburg

Nathan Otto

Sara Allen

Catherine Rom

Terrell Powell

Elham Lotfi

Kayla Edwards

Laura Carlson

Clayton Tschudy

Christine Rothman

Kristy Forburger

Dirk Smith

Cheryl Jenkins

Members Absent:

Matt Adams (*Building Industry Association*)

Brian Widener (*Streets Dept.*)

Disabled Community Member (vacant)

Community Member Chair (vacant)

Prepared by:

Erika Weikel

City of San Diego, Park & Recreation  
Department

202 C Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Diego

619-235-526

## CALL TO ORDER

OSCAC Chair Erika Ferreira called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM.

Introductions: Parks and Recreation Department Open Space Division Deputy Director and OSCAC Chair Erika Ferreira gave an update on Open Space Canyon staff changes. Prior Senior Park Ranger Michael Cassidy took a lateral transfer to Balboa Park and Park Ranger Erika Weikel from Tri-Canyons promoted to Senior Park Ranger at Open Space Canyons.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Item 1 – Approval of Meeting Notes from October 13, 2022.

Meeting notes were approved with one change to previous meeting minutes to clarify that the priority of Brush Management Zones (BMZ) is to first trim and or clear non-native plants. Eric Bowlby asked the BMZ clarification to be accepted. Comment seconded by Deborah Knight. Meeting notes were approved by consensus.

### Item 2 – OSCAC Brush Management Update – Erika Ferreira, OSCAC Chair and Open Space Deputy Director

Erika Ferreira shared that currently several departments are in a brush management audit. At the conclusion of the audit recommendations are normally given regarding the work that has been occurring. The audit is being conducted by city auditors.

Clayton Tschudy asked if BMZ work is suspended while the audit takes place. Erika Ferreira stated work is continuing as normal during the audit.

Nathan Otto, city auditor, introduces himself.

Clayton Tschudy on behalf of Canyonlands thanks Erika Ferreira for BMZ's proactive support.

Erika Ferreira stated this topic will stay as ongoing and updates will be given every quarter.

### Item 3 – Status Reports – Kelsey Hall, Senior Planner & Dirk Smith, Senior Planner, PUD

Kelsey Hall discussed working on long-term access, engineering, biology and technical studies to support canyons. Technical studies are to evaluate erosion on access paths and to provide recommendations for improvements. A current project on erosion include an access trail in South Tecolote, which will have a jurisdictional study done before work commences.

Dirk Smith says they are evaluating Juniper Canyon to see if a redirection of flow study will be needed. San Clemente Canyon/Marion Bear Memorial Park has some minor improvements that are still being worked on.

Maya Mazon, biologist with Engineering Capitol Projects (ECP), responded to a question about why there would be a redirection of flow study in Juniper Canyon. Maya stated the study would determine the feasibility of relocating the sewer lines outside of the canyon.

#### Item 4 – Maple Canyon Updates – Daniel Yelsits, Associate Engineer, Capital Projects

Daniel presented a power point which gave an overview of Maple Canyon and discussed the existing drainage conditions in and around the canyon. He explained Maple Canyon has active erosion that has led to loss of habitat, degrading aesthetics, flooding, runoff and street flooding. The project will take place in 2 phases.

**Phase 1** – The replacement and improvement of storm drain systems in and around Maple Canyon.

**Phase 2** – The restoration and stabilization of Maple Canyon floor and stream bed.

Eric Brawley asked for clarification about the design of the new storm drains. Daniel Yelsits responded that this design is taking into consideration the frequency of visitors the canyon has and will provide aesthetics that blend into the natural surroundings.

#### **Project Schedule**

- The bidding process has concluded, and the construction contract is in the process of being awarded.
- Estimated Construction Schedule – Summer 2023 to Fall 2025
- Once construction is complete, there will be a long-term maintenance and monitoring period for revegetation.

Eric Bowlby asked if they have a permit. Daniel confirmed permits have been obtained from Regional Water Quality Control Board, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Army Corp of Engineers and clearance with US Fish and Wildlife.

Eric wanted to know if there is any project that has used the same storm drain design. Daniel responded that he believed there are no other projects in current construction or have been constructed with this exact solution.

Eric follows up saying they had proposed an alternative plan for the storm drain pipes, internal ring energy dissipaters, and he would like to see this design considered in future canyon projects. Eric asked if anyone knew what happened with the proposal to do one trial for the internal ring dissipation system. Nick Dorner responded that there were several conversations regarding this technology, but examples were never found of where this technology was used.

Debby Knight asked for drawings to better visualize the design. Daniel informed her that construction plans will be included on the city's website and offered his email for further questions [Daniey@sandiego.gov](mailto:Daniey@sandiego.gov)

Debby K. wanted to know if the 5-year maintenance plan is for habitat restoration and who will be responsible for the restoration maintenance after 5 years. Daniel confirmed the 5-year plan is for habitat restoration, plant monitoring, maintenance and that the community has expressed interest in aiding Parks and Recreation in the continued maintenance of plants in the future.

Debby asked who will sign off on the project after 5 years. Daniel Y. said a sign off will be performed by the project biologist, the city inspector and include City of San Diego Parks and Recreation.

Clayton Tschudy asked for clarification as to why a Site Development Permit (SDP) was not needed for jurisdictional water. Maya Mazon explains that at the time a rule change had occurred, and the Army Corp was not taking jurisdictional control over ephemeral drainage. She stated they provided proof to Army Corp through studies that Army Corp required. These areas are not city wetlands and therefore did not trigger a SDP.

Item 5 – Storm Water Department In-Process Mitigation – *Anastasia Brewster, Senior Planner, Stormwater Department*

Anastasia outlined the stormwater department mission statement, the mitigation team purpose and the compensatory mitigation definition.

She shared eleven current sites throughout San Diego and noted that these sites are either in the design or permitting stage. The current sites are San Dieguito Lagoon East, El Cuervo Del Sur Phase II, Los Peñasquitos Phase II, Montongo, Pacific Beach Drive Storm Drain Improvement & Wetland Restoration, Sefton Field, Pacific Highway, Jamacha Canyon Stream Rehabilitation, Hollister Quarry, Otay Reed and Smythe-Bandola.

Debby Knight confirmed that Storm Water Department will be getting mitigation credits for this and asked for more detail regarding who will maintain this area after 5 years. Anastasia said they are in a conversation with Parks and Recreation Department regarding transferring responsibility. Debby stated that Parks and Recreation Open Space doesn't get funding for that and can't handle the added responsibility. Debby suggested that Public Utility Department (PUD) should fund Open Space to do long-term maintenance. Anastasia added that PUD does pay for long-term maintenance. She clarifies that these projects are presented by the storm water department, that the PUD department has different mitigation sites.

Item 6 – Ruffin Palm Removal - *Clayton Tschudy, Executive Director of San Diego Canyonlands (SDCL)*

Clayton reviewed this project which took place in a San Diego River Watershed Canyon. This project was funded by San Diego River Conservancy to remove 600 Mexican fan palms. This was a multi-year project and involved West Coast Arborist, a helicopter contractor, San Diego Canyonlands Field Teams, City of San Diego Park Rangers and Urban Corps of San Diego Teams. Clayton described the planning, funding, compliance and permitting processes.

Debby Knight wanted to know how the City of San Diego can go about reducing the number of Mexican fan palms in the city. She suggested the city could set an example by removing Mexican fan palms on their property. Clayton responded that he could not speak for the city but stated that San Diego Canyonlands (SDCL) will have a presence in the canyons for years to come as the canyons still contain a massive palm seedbank. Erika Ferreira commented the City of San Diego is grateful for the partnerships and grants that allow for this work to occur. Debby asked how can we make this a city-wide issue? Erika F. stated we always advocate for more funding as it relates to our canyons or open spaces.

Jeffrey Stevens wanted to know how it is decided which canyons will receive palm removal. Clayton explained that available funding, partnerships and support from multiple agencies contribute to the selection process.

Frank brought up fire hazard and insurance. He asks if fire risk could be used as a reason to remove palms, and to bring down insurance. Clayton agreed and says SDCL has been targeting canyons which are at a greater risk for fire.

Item 7 Open Space Canyon Ranger Update- Erika Weikel, Senior Park Ranger, Open Space Division

Senior Park Ranger Erika Weikel gave an update to recent changes in park ranger staff for Open Space Canyons. She discussed the impact ranger staff have had on responding to Get It Done (GID) reports, as well as trail clearing, debris removal and community contacts. Erika talked about past outreach, upcoming restoration events and updating canyon kiosks in the next few months.

Future Agenda Items

A request was made for a discussion on the replacement and or refurbishment of storm drainpipes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Erika Ferreira provided the information that as of Feb. 10, 2023 all meetings will be held in person per the city attorney. Location of meeting will be decided per further discussion.

NEXT MEETING

April 13, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Intentionally left blank.