

MEETING NOTES
City of San Diego
OPEN SPACE CANYONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
October 13, 2022

MEETING HELD AT:

Virtual Zoom meeting

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Parks & Recreation

Chair Erika Ferreira, *OS Div. Deputy Dir.*

At Large

Deborah Knight

Transportation Dept. Streets Division

Brian Widener, *City Forester*

Environmental Organization

Eric Bowlby (*SDCL*)

Frank Landis (*CNPS*)

Recreational Organization

Domingos Dias - (*Mtn. Bike Comm.*)

Stormwater Department

Anastasia Brewster, *Sr. Planner*

Planning Department

Dan Monroe, *Sr. Planner MSCP*

Development Services Department

Rudy Bilan, *Associate Planner*

Community Planning Group

Jeffrey Stevens

Vicki Touchstone (*Alternate*)

SDG&E

Lisa Murphy

E&CP

Maya Mazon, *Associate Planner*

Public Utilities Department

Water/Wastewater

Dirk Smith, *Sr. Planner*

Kelsey Hall, *Sr. Planner*

GUESTS:

Diego Lynch

Tershia d'Elgin

Marcia Garcia - SDFD

Paul Kilburg

Laura Ball

Mark Berninger

Kristy Forburger

Catherine Rom

Kay Stewart

Amy Rouilliard

Anne Fege

Michael Cassidy (*OSCAC staff liaison*)

PREPARED BY:

Michael Cassidy

City of San Diego, Park & Recreation
Department

202 C Street, 5th Floor, San Diego
619-235-5262

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Matt Adams - *BIA*

Disabled Community rep. (vacant)

CALL TO ORDER:

OSCAC Chair Erika Ferreira called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Item 1 – Approval of Meeting Notes from August 11, 2022.

Meeting notes were approved by Debby Knight and Frank Landis.

Item 2 – OSCAC Brush Management Policy and Implementation - Laura Ball, Project Officer II, Open Space Division and Marci Garcia, Code Compliance Supervisor, SDFD

Laura Ball and Marci Garcia gave a presentation on the City of San Diego Brush Management Policy and the implementation in City of San Diego Parks and Rec. Open Space areas.

Laura shared that the brush management program is thinning and pruning of native and naturalized vegetation to reduce fire hazard around structures, reduce fuel loads to assist fire fighters protecting life and property when fires occur. The program is required by San Diego Municipal Code §142.0412 and is designed to minimize impacts to undisturbed native or naturalized vegetation.

Parks and Rec. manages 917 acres of open space land located within the Brush Management Zone (BMZ) which is the land located within 100 feet of habitable structures while streets manage 173 acres of undeveloped Right of Way within the BMZ.

Marci Garcia, SDFD, stated that San Diego Fire and Rescue Department is responsible for enforcing the Brush Management regulations through the Wildland Management Enforcement Section (WMES). Marci described the WMES 5 programs. Marci stated that SDFD is the only agency authorized to write “fix it” tickets and they do not perform any of the work. Marci described SDFD roles in both private and public property.

Laura Ball described the Parks and Recreation Department’s Brush Management program and implementation on city owned Open Space lands. Erika thanked Laura and Marci. Erika also commended city staff on the partnership and collaboration between Transportation Department, San Diego Fire-Rescue and Parks and Rec. that is required by program.

Frank Landis stated that there is a disconnect between the Municipal Code, the work performed and what is recommended by CalFire. Frank motioned to get a report on what the differences are.

Anne Fege shared a power point during the public comment. Anne stated there were concerns with the following: Training and oversight of crews, consistent application of vegetation priorities, excessive removal, coordinating with departments and requested that SDFD update their Brush Management video. Anne suggested solutions could include reaching out to council, tying in the Climate Action plan, and having a staff member for direct coordination.

Kay Stewart shared a personal experience with the group. Kay's property management company does not understand their responsibility as landowners regarding brush management on private property.

Debby Knight shared an experience with another private landowner and the issues they had with their contractor and the property boundaries. Debby wanted to find out if maps could be posted regarding city owned Brush Management crews scheduling. Erika explained that posting brush crew schedule maps is challenging because there are too many factors involved (funding, nesting surveys, etc.) to post accurate crew schedules.

Item 3 – Status Reports - *Dirk Smith, Senior Planner, PUD and Kelsey Hall, Senior Planner PUD*

Dirk Smith provided a background of the Canyon and Sewer Access and Long-Term maintenance programs.

In FY22, Redirection of flow (ROF) studies were completed in Ridgeview/Webster area and was determined to be feasible. ROF studies for Golden Hill area at Huckleberry Canyon, Juniper Canyon, Adams Ave. and HWY 163 Corridor were determined not to be feasible.

Operations and Maintenance Support program repairs access roads so emergency repairs can be made when necessary. Switzer Canyon had an emergency repair to the access road. The cracked sewer pipe in the Tourmaline area was also repaired. Dirk mentioned that there were some recent repairs: valves were repaired nearby Lake Hodges that broke and CA-163 and 6th Ave. had a spill that required a recover operation and repair.

Kelsey Hall presented the Annual report on mitigation sites. PUD completed 1 project and have 5 additional ongoing projects. Existing mitigation sites are meeting the success criteria and are maintained long term in perpetuity. The stadium mitigation site is nearing the end of its 5-year maintenance and monitoring period and will transition into long term maintenance program.

Debby requested notification for San Clemente Canyon projects. Dirk will follow up with Debby with the scope.

Item 4 – MSCP Annual Report - *Daniel Monroe, Senior Planner, Planning Department*

Dan Monroe presented the 2021 MSCP Annual Report. In 2021, the reported total Habitat Gain was 238 acres 145 occurred in the MHPA and 93 outside the MHPA. The total Habitat Loss was 212 acres with 23 acres inside the MHPA and 189 acres outside the MHPA. City of San Diego has met 97% of the 2047 goal of 52,727 acres. The report contains the management actions such as native plant propagation, invasive species removal, signs installed, fences repaired and more.

Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) are prepared by the Parks and Recreation Department's Open Space Division. NRMPs are currently being prepared for Crest Canyon, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, Otay Valley Regional Park and Pacific Highlands Ranch/Gonzalez Canyon.

Frank Landis shared a map of Carroll Canyon and asked for suggestions regarding encampments near Vernal Pools. Kristy is aware of the issues and is working with agencies to see what can be done. Mark Berninger shared there are ongoing plans to clean up the areas and partner with the landowner to secure it.

Item 5 – Open Space Canyons Ranger District - Michael Cassidy, Senior Ranger, Open Space Canyons

Mike gave a presentation with updates on the Canyons Ranger District. He talked about last fiscal year plantings and provided updates on their status. Mike explained that the current vacancy is expected to be filled in the upcoming months. Mike explained that volunteers can register for events on Better Impact and that OSC Rangers and contractors will be planting more native vegetation as part of ongoing habitat restoration efforts in the coming months.

Item 6 – Future Agenda Items

Brush management will stay on the agenda to provide updates. Stormwater Department mitigation projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

NEXT MEETING

January 13, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.