

**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Minutes of June 7, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chris Khoury  
Rich Risner  
Kelly Clemeshaw  
Maggie Brown  
Liz Gabrych  
Victoria Touchstone  
Jeremy Blakespear  
Jennifer Disser  
Julie Klein  
Udo Wahn  
Sharon Fogg  
Pam Heatherington  
Pat Whitt  
Jeff Barnouw  
Bill Adelson

**REPRESENTING**

CAC, Chair  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
Del Dios Town Council  
Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley  
League of Women Voters  
Rancho Bernardo Planning Board  
San Diego Bicycle Coalition  
San Diego Mountain Biking Assoc.  
San Diego Trails Alliance  
San Dieguito Lagoon Committee  
San Dieguito Planning Group  
Sierra Club  
Torrey Pines Community Planning Group  
Coastal Property Owner  
Eastern Property Owner

**VISITORS/STAFF PRESENT**

Shawna Anderson  
Dewanda Vandermost  
Nathan Lacy  
Mark Carpenter  
Kristina Leyva  
Paul Bernstein  
John Anshus

San Dieguito River Park JPA  
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KTU+A  
Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley  
Lake Hodges resident  
Lake Hodges resident

**Introductions and Announcements**

Chair Khoury called the meeting to order at 10:36 AM.

Guests introduced were Paul Bernstein and John Anshus from the Lake Hodges neighborhood. Also introduced was the newly hired environmental planner for the JPA, Nathan Lacy and the KTU+A principal consultant, Mark Carpenter.

**Approval of Minutes- 5-3-24**

Jeff Barnouw moved to approve the minutes of May 3, 2024 with a correction to Discussion Item 2 changing the last name of Bob from O'Neil to Dudley and to add the word "maximum" to the 280 feet lake level. Pam Heatherington seconded the motion.

All members were in favor.

Abstain: None

**Chair's Report** – Chair Khoury reported on the topics discussed at the last JPA meeting, which included the CAC motion regarding the Lake Hodges water level. He stated the JPA Board's intent to have the Hodges lake level on the agenda at the July or August JPA meeting pending confirmation from City

Public Utilities staff attendance. Chair Khoury clarified the procedure for making public comments at the JPA Board meeting.

**Executive Director’s Report** –Director Anderson reported on the following:

**Recent Activities:** The joint JPA/Conservancy volunteer appreciation party was held at Sikes Adobe where appreciation awards and signed framed photographs were presented to retiring CAC members Phil Pryde and Jan Fuchs (presented to Jan’s daughter).

An equestrian ride event was organized by the Conservancy with the Ramona Trails Association staging at Sikes Adobe.

**Cactus Wren Restoration Project:** Work has started on this project at Bernardo Mountain Preserve, funded by a SANDAG EMP grant. The project aims to plant new cacti to support the endangered Cactus Wren species.

**Watershed Explorer Summer Camp:** This camp, funded by a State Outdoor Equity grant and organized for underserved youth in Escondido, was filled within a day. It includes visits to various sites down the watershed and ends with an overnight camping experience at Surprise Farms in Ramona. Future outdoor equity grants are being considered.

**Southern California Edison Wetland Restoration Project:** The annual monitoring of this project at the lagoon by UCSB monitors was reported. The project has not met all success criteria and has not received any mitigation credits yet. The 2023 results can be found on their website.

**Project Review Committee Updates:** Several proposed projects will be reviewed by the PRC, including the Notice of Preparation for the LOSSAN Double Track. The process is in the early stages of the CEQA EIR process.

**Membership Issues:** The issue of quorum was discussed, and outreach to non-attending organizations is planned. The CAC memberships of C3 (Citizens Coordinate for Century 3), the San Diego Farm Bureau, Walkabout San Diego, and the Julian Community Planning Group have been suspended until they identify CAC representatives.

**Public Comment** – Vicky Touchstone from Rancho Bernardo Planning Board shared that there is a public scoping meeting scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> in Del Mar regarding the SANDAG LOSSAN project with details available on their website.

Paul Bernstein from the Lake Hodges neighborhood shared talking points regarding the Lake Hodges water level and encouraged attendance at the next JPA meeting to offer public opinion.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **1. Coast to Crest Trail Gap Presentation – Sutherland Segment**

Director Anderson provided background information on the CTC Gap project funded by the Conservancy and JPA Get-to-71 campaign that raised over \$2,000,000 for the study, design, and environmental for two long gaps in the Coast to Crest Trail.

One gap is the East San Pasqual Valley gap, which extends five miles from Hwy 78 and Bandy Canyon to Boden Canyon The other gap is the Sutherland Gap, an approximately eight-mile,

rugged backcountry gap from Black Canyon Road near Lake Sutherland to Santa Ysabel West Preserve. The goal is to get the project to a level where it is ready to build or close to being ready to pull permits, and then to seek funding for construction. Director Anderson expressed confidence in the project's competitiveness for grants and progress towards completion of the Coast to Crest Trail.

Mark Carpenter, the project consultant from KTU+A, provided an in-depth presentation with video and maps to explain the process of trail selection and the many factors that are considered in the design for the Sutherland Segment of the Coast to Crest Trail.

- Various trail routes studied by the JPA team and explanation of the preferred trail alignment
- Complexities of several landowners and agencies that the trail will traverse
- City water quality buffer areas around Lake Sutherland.
- Biological mapping and surveys to identify potential sensitive species and habitats to avoid conflict areas and develop a mitigation strategy. Water crossing areas including a low flow crossing planned for Bloomdale Creek
- Identified areas for gathering spaces and primitive campsites
- Next steps include additional consultation with City and other landowners, impact analysis and potential mitigation, campsite design concepts, and preparation of construction cost estimates.

There were discussions about other issues such as the city's buffers, the environmental review process, and the timeline for securing funding and completing the project. Also discussed was the issue of bikes not being allowed on the trail adjacent to Boden Canyon, which is owned by the California Fish and Wildlife Service, and the challenge of hunting currently permitted by the city on northeast side of Lake Sutherland.

## **2. Committee Reports**

- a. **Project Review Committee** – Upcoming meeting scheduled for June 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:30PM at the JPA Headquarters.
- b. **Trails Committee** – Jennifer Disser reported the committee has not met since the last CAC meeting. The Committee is planning a trail user survey for June 20<sup>th</sup> and June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Volunteers are needed, especially for the eastern trail sections. The survey involves counting visitors, capturing zip codes, and type of user. A preparatory meeting for volunteers will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM via Zoom.
- c. **Interpretation Committee** – The committee did not meet recently. The next scheduled meeting will be in July.

## **INFORMATION**

**Horsepark Trail (oral report)** – Director Anderson reported that there are ongoing issues related to trail repair. There was a recent letter exchange between the JPA and the CEO of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Agricultural District, Carlene Moore. The JPA board met in closed session to address the matter.

**Osuna Trail Segment of CTC Trail (oral)** - Director Anderson reported the project is moving forward and the City of San Diego is finished with our application and preparing staff report but hearing has not been scheduled. A milestone has been reached, although construction timing remains uncertain. Seasonal restrictions due to wildlife (birds) impact the timeline.

**Coast to Crest Gaps Planning Studies (oral)** – Information was provided under Discussion/Action Item 1.

**Other Park Updates (oral report)** – no report

**Correspondence** – none

Bill Adelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Maggie Brown seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 pm.