

Minutes: Plateau Management Committee 12/07/2022

Online meeting

Committee Members Present:

- Richard Kim, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Dustin McLain, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Alex Marks, Metropolitan Water District
- Zack Principe, The Nature Conservancy

Reserve staff reports:

- Visitor center and interpretation, Rob Hicks Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Ranger Patrol and activities, Bill Evans Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Reserve Management, Hailey Laskey Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM)

Guests:

- Kalee Koeslag, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Kim Klementowski, Center for Natural Lands Management
- Susan North, The Nature Conservancy
- Bruce Weimer, Guest
- Ana Weimer, Guest
- Steve Lusky, Guest
- Christine Owns, Guest
- Marge Hegdahl, Guest
- Laurel Lamont, Guest
- Benjamin Euler, Guest
- Kim Kranz, Guest
- Paul Lanhardt, Guest
- Nolan King, Guest
- Rhonda Gutierrez, Guest
- Kristen ?, Guest
- Elizabeth Chandler, Guest

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Richard Kim.

2. Public comments: 10:05

Kim Kranz: Return to sunrise to sunset closing hours. Laure L: Made a request for reopening

Benjamin Euler: Made a request for reopening

Rhonda Gutierrez: Made a request for reopening and a return to sunrise to sunset closing hours.

Steve Lusky: Made a request for reopening and a return to sunrise to sunset closing hours. He voiced concerns over the Murrieta side and the potential impact to sensitive species.

Kristen ?: Made a request for reopening and a return to sunrise to sunset closing hours.

Liz Chandler: Made a request for reopening and a return to sunrise to sunset closing hours.

Bruce Wiemer: Spoke on the reserve being set aside as a reserve for the natural resources and not exactly for as a park for public recreation.

Dustin McLain: Read letters from Letty Marquese, Debbie Parnakian, Jamie Purinton and a Rhonda Gutierrez. All made a request for reopening and a return to sunrise to sunset closing hours.

3. Approval of 09/07/2022 minutes:

Richard asked if the minutes were nominated for approval. Alex Marks moved to approve. Dustin Mclain second. All approved and the motioned was carried.

4. Staff reports:

Visitor Center and Interpretation - Rob Hicks:

Sylvan Meadows visitation= 7535

Vernal Pool Trail= 2,213

Closed contacts= 87

3rd Grade Program=847

Other Groups= 109

Pushing 1,000 volunteer hours over last 3 months

Ranger Patrol and Activities - Bill Evans:

We are continuing to interact with the public by education and directions with their visits. The public is getting more aggressive and angrier towards staff and volunteers asking why we are not opening.

We have been continuing to repair bridges, elevated pedestrian crossings. This project is completed for the tovashal, granite loop and waterline road. We are continuing to have possible hazard trees that had burned and later appeared to be in good condition worsen and will need to be dropped. That work should be completed by the new year. We have been working to clear and reestablish the existing trails.

Blake and a dedicated group of volunteers have been working hard towards reopening.

New maps have been reworked to add the closed section of the vista grande trail and will be ready soon. Fencing and signage has been made and is being installed. We are awaiting new kiosk plans for the visitor center and Tovashal trail heads. Justin an interpreter has volunteered to help with those. We will also be working with Hailey to install some additional fencing.

Additional trail patrol training classes will be offered in January for those who missed the previous classes.

Reserve Manager Report - Hailey Laskey

Precipitation Since October 1, 2022: 3.54 inches (2.5 inches from November 7 storm)

Since the last PMC meeting, Reserve Management has been planning and preparing for future projects while also spending the time reporting on last season's projects. Planning and preparing for projects include creating maps, preparing datasheets, conducting literature searches, and purchasing materials for those projects. These projects for the FY 23 Scope of Work include:

- Visitation Study – Engaging the volunteers to assist with counting visitors on Sylvan Meadows, deploying a camera and an infrared sensor to help calibrate the sensor.

These sensors will be placed at all trailheads to track visitation. In tandem with visitation, we plan to track illegal trail usage, off-trail usage, and other vandalism/impacts to natural resources.

- Grassland Enhancement Plan – This project will look at the best ways to enhance native grassland species through either burning, mowing, grazing, or chemical means, or any combination of methods in tandem with seeding.
- Nighttime Amphibian Driving Surveys -- This project will be conducted on dry and wet evenings with considerable measurable precipitation starting in January. We will document roadkill and assess how species are using roadways within the Tenaja Corridor.

Additional tasks conducted between September and December included:

- Wrapping up the FY 22 Annual Report of stewardship activities, which is still in the review stage from partnering agencies
- Writing up the annual summary of activities for the Wildfire resiliency grant
- Processing and organizing data (e.g., wildlife camera data, photo point monitoring data, other miscellaneous observation data)
- Supporting CDFW on an illegal cannabis clean-up on Sylvan Meadows
- Met with colleagues to discuss cattail pond management and draft an artificial pond vegetation management plan
- Managed vegetation within the artificial ponds
- Met with CAL FIRE to prepare for 2023 prescribed fire activities
- Purchased, maintained, and organized equipment
- Reviewed research requests for Engelmann oak acorn collection and a phenology study from the Foundation
- Met with SCE to discuss green hazard tree removal within streams, this is an ongoing conversation
- Participated in the CNLM Science and Stewardship workshop to connect with coworkers on land management activities
- Attended and presented on grassland management at the California Native Plant Society Conference in San Jose
- Ongoing tasks include:
 - Weekly collaboration with CDFW for tasks at the SRPER
 - Most tasks within this time fell under maintenance of equipment and facilities
 - Reported activities and expenses monthly to contract manager (TNC) and internally for CNLM

5. Reopening update (Hailey Laskey, Dustin McLain)

Dustin spoke on additional signage and will be reworking on maps. Hailey mentioned the hope of Cal fire working on burn piles in December. Richard spoke on wildfires in general and the issues of erosion control, invasive species such as stink net and the necessary rehab work for areas like the arroyo toad habitat. He spoke briefly of evolving biomass issues in general.

A discussion between the Committee members and when and how to open was conducted. After much discussion it was made clear that they would need to discuss in further detail and set up a special meeting to decide to open or place item on agenda for next PMC meeting in March 2023

6. Roundtable

Richard gave the update of the vegetive management plan is still in the works.

Dustin McLain made reference to supporting the Reserve Manager and the overall Reserve objectives taking into account a public use component. Getting the correct plan together first would be easier than having to retract a half-baked plan all together.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.

Next meeting on March 1st, 2023 at the Lake Skinner Recreation Area – Alamos School House, 37701 Warren road, Winchester, Ca 92596 or online via Microsoft Teams