

## **Minutes: Plateau Management Committee 06/02/2021**

Online meeting

### **Committee Members Present:**

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

### **Reserve staff reports:**

- Visitor center and interpretation, Rob Hicks report read by Bill Evans, Park Ranger, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Ranger Patrol and activities, Bill Evans, Park Ranger, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Reserve Management, Hailey Laskey/TNC

### **Guests:**

- Mitch Daudert, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Ginger Greeves, Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Education foundation
- Bruce Weimer, Guest
- Danielle Stewart, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**1. Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Richard Kim.

### **2. Public comments:**

None.

### **3. Approval of 03/03/2021 minutes:**

Richard asked if the minutes were nominated for approval. Zack moved to approve. Dustin gave a second to the approval. All approved and the motioned was carried.

### **4. Staff reports:**

*Visitor Center and Interpretation - Rob Hicks:*

Multi-Use Trail head has been staffed every day to welcome visitors and to remind them of rules and regulations. Staff and volunteers are also able to monitor Hidden Valley trail head and prevent entry. Vernal pool trail head also continues to be staff as well.

The rebuild at the visitor center of the stage and infrastructure is going well and is nearly complete. The visitor center cohosted the teacher forum also hosted by the foundation on 05/22/2021. This occurred outside with everything going well and getting everyone excited for the inevitable opening.

### ***Ranger Patrol and Activities - Bill Evans:***

We are continuing to interact with the public by education and directions with their visit. Ranger Evans led several small trail patrol classes on 04/17/2021. This attended by 6 volunteers. The goal is a clear understanding of what we ask and how we can support their effort to help in a way that is beneficial to both parties. On-going education opportunities for all other volunteers soon are being planned.

On 04/15/2021 a 18-year-old man had a bike accident on Sylvan meadows road. He walked back to the lot and an off duty emergency room nurse assisted him and he later left site driving himself out.

On 04/24/2021 we reopened on Sunday and Saturday from 8 am - 2 pm. No major issues have occurred with the opening. As guest's visitation is winding down as has occurred in the past due to the season, so too is volunteer involvement. On the Murrieta side we have had the fence cut twice and those spots have since been repaired.

### **Reserve Manager Report - Hailey Laskey**

#### **Invasive Species Management**

Stinknet—With the help of Kim's staff, CDFW, and the TNC interns we have mapped and treated almost 500 occurrences of stinknet within 700 acres of the Tenaja Fire scar. Only one stinknet plant was found outside of the Tenaja Fire scar in the grasslands of Sylvan Meadows. The plant was removed.

Early Detection Rapid Response—I conducted Early Detection and Rapid Response surveys for high priority invasive species to assess range expansions or introduction of new invasive species. I found sahara mustard (*Brassica tournifortii*) on Los Gatos Road approaching Colorado Mesa. I mapped the occurrence and have plans to spray it next winter. I mapped and removed onionweed (*Asphodelus fistulosus*) within the Hines plot, as well as one Stinknet plant within the prescribed fire pre-treatment area. I mapped and have plans to remove fennel in upper Cole Creek.

## **Habitat Management**

Vegetation Transects—With the help of the TNC interns and CDFW I have completed surveys of 34 grassland vegetation transects. I have continued to assess the long-term trends of vegetation cover in the grasslands. There has been a slow decrease in native grass cover and an increase in non-native grass cover in the grasslands over the last 20 years. Prescribed fire had short term benefits to opening bare ground and increase native forb cover, however it has not increased native grass cover. In April I met with Kim to assess the potential to introduce sheep into the grasslands. Unfortunately, we were not able to get sheep this year, but it is likely this could occur next year.

Prescribed Fire—CAL FIRE and CNLM only have plans to conduct a controlled burn within the Hines Management Unit located in the Tenaja corridor the second week of June. This burn was planned for last year, but fire season started very early and canceled the event. The prescribed fire is to treat the yellow star thistle thatch that has accumulated over the last 10 to 20 years. If the prescribed fire is successful. The thatch will allow for easier access to treat subsequent yellow star thistle with herbicide.

Mowing—CDFW and I have continued to mow plots that have been mowed each year like the 4 corners, grasslands at the 90 degree, the 12 acre plot along Hidden Valley Rd, and the grasslands around the Adobes.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, I was mowing the road adjacent to the 4 Corners plot at the intersection of Punta Mesa, Fault Line and Monument Hill Rd. The tractor started a fire on Fault Line Road at approximately 10 am. The fire was quickly extinguished by a CAL FIRE prop plane with one drop of retardant. The retardant drop was ordered by the responding engine because there was no safe way to access the fire without the drop. The drop extinguished the entire fire. The fire scar is 1.7 acres. The grass was still green, and the marine layer was still burning off, however the coastal breeze had picked up. CAL FIRE Captain Matt from station 75 and I investigated the fire origin but did not find any rocks. We believe it was like a friction fire within the mower. The fire burned non-native annual grasses and native grasses. The fire did not cause any significant damage to the habitat.

## **Priority Species**

Chocolate Lily Permanent Plots—I surveyed for chocolate lilies within suitable habitat for the species. With the help of the TNC interns, I established 7 permanent plots to monitor the occurrences over time. Three of the occurrences are along trails--two legal and one illegal. I will analyze the results of that data soon.

*Brodiaea filifolia* permanent plots—I surveyed for *Brodiaea filifolia* within suitable habitat for the species. With the help of the TNC interns, I have established 2 permanent plots, and plan to

establish one more permanent plot on Colorado Mesa next week. The Cole Creek population did okay this year with over 300 individual plants found.

Water—With only 7.31 inches of rain this year, the tributaries to Cole Creek are dry and Cole Creek water levels are very low. TNC and CNLM have agreed to keep one constructed pond filled with water until water levels in Cole Creek are more favorable.

Arroyo Toad Habitat—CDFW has continued to maintain the vegetation within the Arroyo Toad habitat on Sylvan Meadows. On May 23, I held a Team Stream volunteer event with 12 volunteers. Volunteers helped rake thatch previously cut by CDFW, pull weeds, plant oak trees, and water plants. I will continue to treat the vegetation, water the plants, and pull weeds in the habitat.

### **Research Access**

Joanna Tang of UCSB is scheduled to collect seed in the vernal pools sometime this month.

Dr. Winston Vickers is wrapping up his mountain lion hair snare trap study within the next few weeks. It was more difficult than they expected to retrieve hair samples. Lions were not enticed by roadkill meat, and avoided hair snares while entering the cubbies to investigate the road kill meat. He plans to host a symposium in the Winter with the results for the region.

### **5. 2021-2022 CNLM Reserve Management Work Plan and Budget – Hailey Laskey**

See attached plan.

### **6. Native American Traditional Gathering Agreement Discussion- Hailey Laskey**

A discussion was held on time frames, species lists and limitations. An example of State of Ca parks and rec permit to collect was given to the committee for consideration. The committee voted on moving forward in creating a form and a policy. Dustin motioned for approval and Zack seconded the proposal. Motion to approve passed.

### **7. CNLM accepting donations for Natural Resource Management outside of previously approved donations.**

A brief discussion was held. Zack motioned for approval and Dustin seconded the proposal. Motion to approve passed.

### **8. Roundtable**

A brief discussion on the marijuana grow site. Zack spoke on the ongoing well project. Ginger invited the committee to SRPNEF meetings. Mitch spoke of being back up to full staffing at the plateau. Additional discussion was held on bridges.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:23 AM.

**Next meeting on September 1st, 2021 at the Lake Skinner Recreation Area – Alamos School House, 37701 Warren road, Winchester, Ca 92596 or online via Microsoft Teams**