

MEETING MINUTES

Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve / West Coyote Hills Planned Community Trails and Open Space Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Saturday, November 1, 2008

Committee members: Ginger Britt, Teri Brodowski, Monika Broome, Jim Donovan, Steve Eldredge, Walter Fisher, Chuck Greening, Bob Hayden, Chris Heusser, Kay Miller, Gardner O'Brien, Irene Parker, Dottie Pendleton, Jacob Staggs, Bud Welch.

Committee resources: Roger Bell, trail builder; Jim Meyer, Trails4All; Steve McCormick, planner; Kavita Rodrigues, LEED AP/sustainability expert.

Pacific Coast Homes' representatives: Jim Pugliese, project manager; Scott Starkey, committee facilitator; Janet McNeill, community relations.

Overview: Fifteen committee members representing a variety of interests and backgrounds attended the first trails and open space advisory committee meeting. The meeting was held at the West Coyote Hills property and included a hike along old oil field roads that are potential trails within the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve and the West Coyote Hills Planned Community.

During the hike, the committee stopped at various locations to discuss possible trail uses and constraints. After the hike, the committee convened for lunch and held a brainstorming session where the following topics were discussed:

TOPIC 1 – AREAS NEEDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

The following suggestions were offered by the committee as issues that should be considered in the design of the trails and open space plan.

- **Shade** – Investigate different types of trees and shrubs, such as Coast Live Oaks and Mexican Elderberries that could be planted along trails to provide shade. Also consider shade structures at various points on the trails.
- **Trail surface** - Dirt and decomposed granite were suggested as good trail surfaces.
- **Trail length** – Some suggested additional trails should be added to the existing plan; others thought there were too many trails in the existing plan.
- **Trail usage** – How to best accommodate hikers, bikers and equestrians was a major discussion point, with suggestions that multi-use trails be used along the perimeter of the preserve, with opportunities for specific trail uses within the interior of the preserve.

- **Trail location** – Various areas were highlighted as possible new trails to provide additional connections with existing trails. Habitat constraints could limit the potential for blazing new trail connections.
- **Educational programs** – The overall trails and interpretive nature center program should be designed with education in mind and should encourage sustainable lifestyles.
- **Dogs** – Should there be constraints?
- **Micro connectivity** – The new trails should be designed to connect seamlessly with bikeways and sidewalks within the plan to create an interconnected system.
- **Macro connectivity** – The new trails should connect users with the City’s existing trails along with regional recreational facilities, such as Laguna Lake and Ralph Clark Park.
- **Water features and public art** – The potential to enhance the aesthetics of the trails and open space with water features or public art should be considered.
- **Potable water** – Remember to include fountains for trail users and horses.
- **Safety security and rules** – Security and monitoring of the trails should be considered.
- **Maintenance program** – The long-term maintenance costs should be calculated.
- **Restrooms** – Sufficient restroom facilities should be incorporated.

These focus areas will be studied and discussed in detail during upcoming committee meetings.

TOPIC 2 – POTENTIAL NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The committee considered individuals and groups who should be contacted to see if they’d be interested in joining the committee. Recommendations included:

Biking community – While equestrian riders, hikers and runners were well represented, there is a need to get additional representation from the bicycle community. Suggestions included: local bike shop owners, Fullerton’s Bicycle Users Sub-Committee, [CORBA](#), [Warrior Society](#), and Hans Keifer.

Project opponents – Several members suggested they’d reach out to the group opposing the project to see if they can encourage their participation. Some opponents declined initial invitations to participate.

Education community – A suggestion was made that the two school districts have representation on the committee. [Inside the Outdoors](#) is an outdoor education group we should consider partnering with.

TOPIC 3 – TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The committee brainstormed the following discussion topics for future meetings, where experts would provide a general presentation on the topic followed by a discussion specific to West Coyote Hills.

- The biology of the property
- The history of the land
- Potential trail building materials
- Education and how the project can help with [Nature Deficit Disorder](#)
- Property and trail maintenance

NEXT MEETING

When: Saturday, December 6, 9am to 11am

Location: To be determined

Current agenda items:

- Discussion of the biology of West Coyote Hills. Potential speakers could include Brock Ortega with [DUDEK](#), a CSUF Botanist, and/or a [Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority](#) biologist.
- Review photos of possible trails surfaces and widths.
- Discuss trail routes and uses.
- Review Micro and Macro connectivity by reviewing trails maps of the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve and West Coyote Hills Planned Community along with regional maps to determine how the systems can be best integrated.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Starkey

Additional feedback resulting from November 1 meeting minutes

Process: It seems to me we first need to identify critical areas of interest within the preserve itself which will then determine the location of interior trails.

Nature Preserve/72-acre Nature Preserve: I was concerned that the Interpretive Center / the 72 acre Preserve got a little lost in the discussion. While the emphasis was on trails, it is important to remember / know the intent of the preserve and to design trails that support that intent. It is to have people experience nature, to know, understand, value, treasure, and respect the natural environment. I heard so much about the needs of the joggers and multi-use trails that I came away thinking "you don't mean in the preserve itself, do you"? Multi-use trails are great and necessary but the Preserve is just that. An area to be preserved.

Paths or trails: The word trails might need some definition (or not) but I almost see "paths" within the preserve and "trails" on the exterior of the preserve and throughout the remaining open space. Paths within the preserve would be narrow -- two people wide - and very natural. Yes, Peters Canyon = good example, Nix Nature Center trails; Debs Audubon Center (Regional Park) all have "paths / trails".

Trail uses: Bikers on the same trail as walkers and horseback riders is too dangerous. I personally have encountered numerous near misses with bikers on the existing horse trails. I would recommend separate trails if possible.

Trail surface: In past Fullerton developments, they compacted the soil to more than 90%, layer this ground-up rubble (composite) material on the surface, and over-groomed them. This type of surface does not feel or look natural, thus making one feel like they are not out in the wild or away from the city. Also, this composite trail is harder than undisturbed dirt. Also, I feel very strongly about allowing dogs on the trails.

Trail surface: Dirt will erode during rain storms and cause ridges making the surface uneven and dangerous. Bark may offer an alternative to decomposed granite.

Dogs must be allowed: I won't use the trails unless I can take my dog for protection.

Dogs on a leash: As a mountain biker that uses the Fullerton Loop now, about twice a week, I see a real need to enforce the city ordinance on having dogs on a leash... numerous times I've experienced incidents where loose dogs (yes, their owners were with them) chased me... I finally had to dismount, pick up a stick and threaten the dog to back off... dog owners should be able to enjoy the trails with their dogs... but keep the critters on a leash!

Distance markers: We forgot to mention trail signage and distance markers. Whenever I lead a hike, the first question is "how far did we hike?"