

ORANGE COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

FROM: Pam Passow, Operations Deputy Director, OC Parks **DATE:** August 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Trails Subcommittee Member Selection and Proposed Third Quarter Agenda

Member Selection

The Trails Subcommittee (Subcommittee) is a technical working group that is advisory to the Parks Commission and serves as a public forum for discussion of matters involving the extensive and complex County regional trails system. The Subcommittee is currently comprised of one hiker/naturalist, two equestrians, and one mountain biker, in addition to two Commission representatives – Chair Koos and Commissioner Shawver, serving as Chair and Alternate Chair of the Subcommittee, respectively.

Following the vacancy of an at-large Subcommittee member's seat, on March 5, 2020, your Commission reviewed the applications of two individuals with trail volunteer experience and hiking interests and recommended those individuals be interviewed. Interviews were conducted in July, and Virginia Webber is being recommended by both the Subcommittee Chair and Alternate Chair to fill the vacant Subcommittee seat.

Ms. Webber is a hiker, Irvine Ranch Conservancy volunteer, Crystal Cove Alliance volunteer, and public/interpretive program guide. Additional information on Ms. Webber is provided in the application attached to this staff report. Appointment of Ms. Webber would support a balanced representation of the various trail user groups and complete the Subcommittee membership.

Proposed Third Quarter Agenda

The Subcommittee meets quarterly, and its next meeting is anticipated on September 24, 2020. In accordance with Subcommittee Guidelines, which were revised by your Commission on June 6, 2019, Subcommittee agendas require the approval of both its Chair and Alternate Chair and review by your Commission. The upcoming third quarter agenda contains an important discussion matter regarding development of a trail management policy for the County parks system.

OC Parks manages 60,000 acres of County parkland comprised of urban, wilderness, and historic parks, beaches, harbors, 150 miles of paved bikeways, and 350 miles of unpaved riding and hiking trails. These 350 miles of unpaved trails are utilized by a variety of users – such as hikers, bikers, equestrians, and birdwatchers – and meander through

Orange County wilderness and open space, sensitive habitat, and areas protected under conservation easements and permits with regulatory agencies.

With over 14 million visitors per year, County parks and trails experience challenges inherent when a large number of users recreate in a finite space. Trail concerns related to crowding, speed, safety, trail etiquette, widening of existing trails, and creation of unauthorized trails have been raised by the public, advocacy groups, and Parks staff. Long-term trail use modifications may be necessary to address these concerns. Additionally, existing operational activities, including rerouting trails, designing new trails, and decommissioning unauthorized trails, are conducted to maintain and preserve native habitat while balancing that with providing recreation opportunities in Orange County.

The County General Plan outlines a Master Plan of Regional Riding and Hiking Trails (Trails Master Plan), that was initially adopted by the Board of Supervisors (Board) in 1965 and amended and updated multiple times over the years. The Trails Master Plan provides a general overview and information on the purpose, constraints, and opportunities germane to County riding and hiking trails. Staff also currently rely upon existing environmental law and industry best practices to determine work to be done on trails. While these tools are useful in helping guide decisions affecting trails in the County parks system, a comprehensive department-wide policy does not currently exist that provides specific processes and assessments that staff must undertake prior to modifying or determining trail use and/or configuration. Staff intend to formalize and publicly review trail management practices and procedures that have been utilized over the past 20 or more years, as well as update them to address current trail use patterns, technologies, and activities.

Historically, OC Parks has managed the trails to be enjoyed by all, making multi-use trails throughout the park system. When the system had less users, this system worked well, and trail users were good about sharing the spaces. With the increase of users on our trails in recent years, we are seeing more conflicts on the trails and more frustration from the users. During this process, OC Parks would like to explore if more of the trails should be single use, one way, or limited use to help enhance the experience for the different user groups.

As indicated in the proposed third quarter agenda, a Subcommittee discussion is scheduled on this topic. The discussion is intended to include the following: 1) background on existing trail system guidelines (including the Natural Community Conservation Plan, General Development Plans, Resource Management Plans, etc.); 2) an overview of trail management practices; and 3) a discussion on overarching trails policy: whether trails should be for all/multiple users or specific uses. Based on Subcommittee review and feedback, an updated policy document will be developed that will be made available for public review and comment in the future. Furthermore, changes to existing trail management guidelines may be necessary to align current practices to the updated policy. The policy, and potentially other documents, would later be provided to the Subcommittee for final review and recommendation to the Parks Commission for concurrence.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Select Virginia Webber to serve as an at-large member on the Trails Subcommittee.
2. Concur with the Trails Subcommittee proposed Third Quarter Agenda.


Pam Passow

Attachments: Virginia Webber Application
Proposed Subcommittee Third Quarter Agenda
Subcommittee Guidelines, Version 6/6/2019



APPLICATION FOR OC PARKS TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

The OC Parks Commission makes appointments to the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee. The purpose of this application is to provide the OC Parks Commissioners information regarding your experience and interests. Please provide the information requested by answering the questions below as clearly and concisely as possible.

Information provided in this document may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

DATE: July 7, 2016

FIRST NAME: VIRGINIA

LAST NAME: WEBBER

STREET ADDRESS:

51 SCONSET LANE

CITY:

IRVINE

ZIP:

92620

EMAIL:

WEBBER.VIRGINIA@GMAIL.COM

PHONE:

949-300-5838

PHONE 2:

OCCUPATION:

Please briefly answer the following questions:

1. Describe your experience and qualifications that would make you an effective Trails Subcommittee member.

I am a long-time resident and community volunteer, and am committed to using public resources to enable well being and connectivity within our county. I try to inspire public support and understanding of the unique properties of our open spaces and trails -- and articulate its value -- by writing for local publications about the land.

2. Describe your involvement in recreation and outdoor-related groups and activities in Orange County, CA.

I have been a volunteer trail guide for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy since January 2011, and volunteer for Crystal Cove Alliance. I lead public programs on trails for the IRC and its partner organizations (interpretive, fitness, and family oriented outdoor programs for Irvine, Newport Beach, and Orange County Parks). I also try to engage public understanding and support of the local open space by staffing outreach booths and events.

3. Provide names of all non-profit groups you are affiliated with that relate to parks, trails, open space management and/or preservation.

Irvine Ranch Conservancy and Crystal Cove Alliance



OC Parks Trails Subcommittee

OC Parks Headquarters
Irvine Ranch Historic Park
13042 Old Myford Rd., Building 5
Irvine, CA 92602-2304

4. What topics concern you that relate to the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee?

I think balancing access and usage with conservation of our sensitive and rare local habitat is a concern for the Trails Subcommittee, but also an opportunity. I would like to see connectivity between the built and unbuild environments.

5. What trail user group would you represent on the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee? (Multiple selections are allowed, however, note the primary area of expertise.)

- Hikers
- Trail runners
- Equestrians
- Mountain Bikers
- Road Cyclists
- Other:

6. Are you a recognized representative of any type of trails and/or environmental group? Yes No
If yes, which ones?

I have been publicly identified by my volunteer association with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy and Crystal Cove Alliance, but do not officially represent either group.

7. Why do you want to be a member of the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee?

In more than five years of leading diverse participants on public programs on local trails, I have consistently witnessed unexpected pro-social properties of local trails and public programs. Our public trails are part of a unique and iconic landscape, and are also means to greater community connectivity. There is a cross-pollination that occurs on trails, between diverse stakeholders, whether they be cyclists and hikers or residents from different cities. I hope to see this opportunistic connectivity continue to be enabled by our local trails and open spaces.

~~Subcommittee members are asked to make every effort possible to attend each meeting. The Subcommittee~~
has a minimum of four (4) quarterly meetings per year at OC Parks Headquarters located at:

13042 Old Myford Rd
Irvine, California 92602-2304

Can you commit to attending all or the majority of these meetings? Yes No

The OC Parks Trails Subcommittee will conduct open meetings in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) and will use Roberts Rules of Order as a guide for parliamentary procedure. If selected to serve on this subcommittee, you agree to read and abide with the Brown Act and the subcommittee's parliamentary procedures.

Members contribute according to their specific interests or expertise. This may include gathering information, making recommendations, and providing project updates to the Parks Commission and/or OC Parks Trails Subcommittee. Field trips, research, and attending occasional meetings of related organizations may also be necessary.

Thank you for your interest in the OC Parks Trails Subcommittee. **The OC Parks Commission will review all applications at their next regularly scheduled meeting and an OC Parks staff member will contact you immediately afterwards.**

Please contact Rory Paster, OC Parks Trails Coordinator at (949) 923-3716 if you have any questions, or would like to discuss membership obligations prior to submitting your application. Please email your application to Rory.Paster@ocparks.com or mail to 13042 Old Myford Rd, Irvine CA 92602-2304

AGENDA

I. ROLL CALL

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At this time, members of the public may address the Subcommittee on items of public interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee and are not contained in tonight's agenda.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR (Item A)

The following item(s) will be approved by one motion unless a Subcommittee member requests to pull a specific item.

A. APPROVE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 23, 2020

IV. DISCUSSION CALENDAR MATTERS (Item A)

A. OC PARKS TRAILS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Initiation of a process to formalize and publicly review trail management practices and procedures, and update them to address current trail use patterns, technologies, and activities.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss and provide comments related to a trails management policy for OC Parks.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORT

At this time Subcommittee members may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters and ask questions of staff, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

OC Parks Trails Subcommittee Guidelines

April 7, 2016

Revised June 6, 2019

I. BACKGROUND

The mission of OC Parks, a department within the County of Orange, states that “as a steward of significant natural and cultural resources, OC Parks manages and operates a system of regional parks, beaches, harbors, trails and historic sites that are places of recreation and enduring value”. The Orange County Parks Commission (Commission) was established by the County Board of Supervisors to act as an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors and the Director of OC Parks (Director).

OC Parks and the Commission require a working group to assist in matters involving County trails and bikeways and in planning an appropriately designed, operated, and maintained regional trail system that will achieve OC Parks’ Strategic Plan goal of maintaining a safe and healthy environment for the public and as outlined in the County General Plan.

To meet this need, the Commission, at its April 7, 2016 meeting, voted to approve the establishment of a Trails Subcommittee (Subcommittee) and the guidelines contained in this document.

II. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Subcommittee is to provide support and act as an advisory body to the Commission on matters involving County trails and bikeways.

III. DUTIES

When requested by the Commission or Director:

- A. Review and provide comments and recommendations to the Commission for updates to the County’s Master Plan of Riding and Hiking Trails, Master Plan of Bikeways, and various documents and maps related to County trails and bikeways.
- B. Provide input regarding the prioritization of proposed trail and bikeway connections, gap closures, acquisitions, and improvement projects during the annual OC Parks budget development process.
- C. Serve as a forum for public input and communication regarding County trail use, operations, and maintenance that would facilitate a constructive balance between various trail user groups, including but not limited to hikers, equestrians, cyclists, and runners.

- D. Assist with OC Parks data gathering objectives, as needed, such as providing trail counts and reporting trail issues.
- E. Promote and encourage responsible trail use.
- F. Provide a forum for the public to provide comments and feedback with respect to planning, design and maintenance of trail/bikeway projects.
- G. Review and make recommendations to the Commission on plans and specifications for proposed regional trails and off-street bikeway improvements.
- H. Review and make recommendations to the Commission on policies and procedures for trail use and management, including enforcement methods.
- I. Provide recommendations to the Commission on active transportation events and special use of trails and bikeways.
- J. Perform specific tasks as authorized by the Commission or Director.

IV. LIMITATIONS

The Subcommittee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Commission. It shall have no independent duties and no authority to take actions that bind the Commission or the County of Orange. No expenditures or requisitions for services and supplies shall be made by the Subcommittee.

V. MEETINGS

- A. The officers of the Subcommittee shall consist of a Chairperson and an Alternate Chairperson and shall be appointed by the Commission. The Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson positions shall be a term of one year or until a successor is appointed by the Commission.
- B. Meetings of the Subcommittee shall be held quarterly between the hours of 7pm and 8pm at OC Parks Headquarters, 13042 Old Myford Rd., Irvine 92602.
- C. Each meeting shall be open to the public, and the Subcommittee shall give notice of its meetings and conduct those meetings as required by law.
- D. A quorum constitutes more than one-half of the Subcommittee members, including at least one Commissioner, for the transaction of business at a meeting. At any regularly called meeting lacking a quorum, the members

present may constitute themselves a “committee of the whole” for the purpose of discussing matters on the agenda of interest to the Subcommittee members present, but may not take any action. The committee of the whole shall automatically cease to exist if a quorum is present at the meeting.

- E. If a member is absent from two regular quarterly Subcommittee meetings in any 12-month period, the position shall automatically be vacated, and a successor shall be appointed to fill the remainder of that member’s term.
- F. Any vacancy in the Subcommittee shall be filled by the Commission at its next regular meeting. The successor to any vacancy shall hold office for the balance of the unexpired term of that office.
- G. Each member of the public appearing at a Subcommittee meeting shall be afforded two minutes in his or her presentation, unless the Chairperson, at his or her discretion, permits further remarks to be made. Any person addressing the Subcommittee may submit written statements, petitions, or other documents to complement his or her presentation. The Chairperson shall manage public comment and meeting duration as appropriate to accomplish the goals of the Subcommittee. If member of the public wishes to speak for more than 2 minutes and is not granted permission by the Chairperson, a Subcommittee member may make a request for additional speaking time in the form of a motion to the chair; and if the motion is seconded, a vote shall be taken to determine if additional speaking time will be granted.
- H. All meetings held by the Subcommittee shall be conducted in compliance with the Brown Act, California Government Code Section 54950 et seq., and its requirement that public commissions, boards, and councils and other public agencies conduct the people’s business openly.
- I. All Subcommittee members shall comply with the provisions of the Political Reform Act of 1974, California Government Code Sections 1090 et seq. and 87100 et seq., concerning conflicts of interest.

VI. AGENDAS

The Chairperson and Alternate Chair, in consultation with the Director, shall determine the items to be placed on the Subcommittee agenda.

OC Parks’ Trails Coordinator shall prepare the agenda for each meeting in consultation with Planning & Design Staff, Director, Chairperson and Alternate Chair. Material intended for placement on the agenda shall be delivered to the Trails Coordinator on or before 12:00 p.m. on the date established as the agenda deadline for the forthcoming meeting. The Trails Coordinator may withhold placement on the agenda of any matter that is not timely received, lacks

sufficient information, or is in need of staff review and report prior to Subcommittee consideration.

Agenda items can be initiated by the following:

Orange County Parks
Commission OC Parks Director
OC Parks Trail Coordinator

Any proposed agenda item not initiated by the Commission or Director that requires a significant amount of OC Parks' staff time for research and preparation shall be approved by the Director prior to being accepted by the Trails Coordinator for placement on the agenda and action by the Subcommittee.

Unless otherwise determined by the Commission or Director for a particular agenda or agenda item, all Subcommittee agenda items shall be approved by both the Commissioners that serve as the Chairperson and Alternate Chair prior to release of the agenda to the Subcommittee members and public.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

The Subcommittee shall consist of seven regular members appointed by the Commission, with one sitting Commissioner serving as Chairperson. All members shall live in the County of Orange during their term on the Subcommittee.

A. COMMISSION MEMBERS

Two Commission members shall be elected to serve on the Subcommittee. One shall serve as Chairperson, and one shall serve as Alternate Chair. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Commission.

B. OTHER MEMBERS

Five members from the community shall be selected to serve on the Subcommittee by the Commission based on a review of applications in which interested parties are asked to describe their involvement and expertise in trails and bikeways

There is a desire to establish a subcommittee that provides a balanced representation from various geographic areas of the county, as well the various trail user groups (pedestrians/hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, road cyclists) and environmental organizations. Since many existing and proposed trails are located within open space, wilderness and preserve areas, it is preferred that members have an understanding of the environmentally sensitive conditions and constraints associated with implementing trails in wildland areas.

Members of the Subcommittee (including the Commissioners) serve at the will and pleasure of the Commission. Therefore, they may, at any time, be removed from the Subcommittee, with or without cause, by a majority vote of the Commission whenever, in its discretion, the best interests of the OC Parks shall be served thereby.

C. COMPENSATION

Membership on the Subcommittee is strictly voluntary and no compensation, benefits, or reimbursements are included or offered to the members (this includes parking passes/fees, park/attraction entrance fees, park use fees etc.).

Upon expiration of their term or removal from office, such members shall not be entitled to any compensation or any other benefits that may have been granted during their term.

VIII. TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for each non-Commission member shall be two years with a maximum of three consecutive terms (six years total).

The term of a Commissioner is limited to his or her service on the Commission.

Appointments and renewal of appointments to the Subcommittee shall be voted on by majority vote of the Commission during a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

IX. GOVERNANCE

A. The Subcommittee shall provide a draft agenda to the Commission at least one week prior to the Subcommittee meeting for review.

B. The Subcommittee shall provide an update to the Commission regarding the Subcommittee meeting at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting subsequent to the Subcommittee meeting.

X. TERMINATION OF SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee may terminate upon any of the following circumstances:

A. The dissolution or termination of the Commission.

B. The Board of Supervisors may, by majority vote, terminate the Subcommittee at any time.

C. The Commission may, by majority vote, terminate the Subcommittee at any time.

D. Five year review and extension: Upon formation, which shall mean the date of the Commission's meeting where the Subcommittee has established its full membership as described herein, the Subcommittee shall automatically terminate five years thereafter unless a majority of the Commission votes to extend the Subcommittee for an additional five years. This process shall be repeated unless and until the Subcommittee is terminated.