

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 — 3:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Fegraus, Vice Chair McCary, and Members Orgill, Clark, Litschi, Osborne, Felder, and Horne were present. Members Foley, Maloney, Conners, and Weiss were absent.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

No comments were received from the public.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A)

The following item on the consent calendar will be approved by one motion unless an Authority Member requests to pull a specific item.

A. APPROVE AUTHORITY MINUTES FOR THE JULY 12, 2023 MEETING.

*Motion: Member Osborne
2nd: Vice Chair McCary
Unanimous vote to approve*

IV. AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND PARTNERS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

A. LAGUNA CANYON FOUNDATION (LCF) UPDATE

Jacky Cordero, LCF Interim Executive Director, shared the following: Effective Friday, September 8th Jacky Cordero was appointed by the LCF Executive Committee as the Interim Executive Director. LCF is conducting a search and hopes to have the position confirmed by early 2024. Hallie Jones accepted a position with Crystal Cove Conservancy as their Executive VP and Chief Program Officer. Congrats to Hallie! The LCF Gala is scheduled for Friday, October 6, 2023. Two new City of Laguna Beach fuel modification/restoration contracts coming up for approval. Five new recruitments are underway: Field Educators, Field Technicians, Trail Technician, Conservation Specialists, and Conservation Coordinators.

B. LAGUNA BEACH OPEN SPACE UPDATE

No update at this time.

C. NATURAL COMMUNITIES COALITION (NCC) UPDATE

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Jim Sulentic, NCC Executive Director, shared the following: the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan program was approved in 1995; program includes extensive vegetation surveys with the last one on the Nature Reserve of Orange County in 2014; a new aerial vegetation survey is scheduled for 2023–2024 with AIS – Aerial Information Systems which will provide an opportunity for comparison with the 2014 study; long time NCC business manager Kathy Tucker is retiring.

D. IRVINE OPEN SPACE PRESERVE UPDATE

Casey Gnad, City of Irvine Open Space Administrator, shared the following: Grand Opening of the Bommer Cattle Camp well attended; active use of trails; recruitment of additional rangers; working with IRC on managing the northern section of over 1,000 acres; southern section — installed all the mile markers “Know Before You Go”; city council ruling on e-bikes — not allowed in open space, education planning for the new ruling; on-going Year 1 of 4 restoration of Bommer Canyon.

E. NEWPORT BEACH OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

F. ALISO VIEJO OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

G. LAGUNA NIGUEL OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Jeff Kirby, City of Laguna Niguel Recreation Supervisor, was unable to stay for the meeting, but noted before the meeting started that there were no updates at this time.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File Agenda Items IV.A–G.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File Agenda Items IV.A–G

V. OC PARKS STAFF UPDATE

A. PARK OPERATIONS — ALL DEPARTMENTS UPDATE

Mike Wilson, OC Parks Interim Deputy Director of Operations, shared the following: Active ranger recruitment – 12 attending Ranger Academy now with graduation in January 2024; also starting a new recruitment period in

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October; OC Parks has 11% position vacancies; Job Offers have been sent out for Resource Specialist position at Laguna Coast Wilderness Park; current recruitment for the Deputy Director of Operations; Joanne Veedor, long time OC Parks staff has left OC Parks; The Trail Use Designation Project final draft is expected soon from Utah State University — it will be shared at the Trails Subcommittee and at the Authority.

B. LAGUNA COAST WILDERNESS PARK (LCWP) AND ALISO AND WOOD CANYONS WILDERNESS PARK (AWCWP) SPOTLIGHT

1. LCWP Update

Brad Barker, OC Parks Supervising Park Ranger II, shared the following: recent weather stats — 2 ½” rain, some big trees down, but no major damage, LCWP closed for 3 days; less visitors recently; great candidates for Resource Specialist position; will start fuel modifications around the Nix Nature Center in the next few weeks; with the lack of a Resource Specialist there has been a decline in activities for the public; new field ranger from Mason Regional Park assisting — looking for a new Ranger II from the Ranger Academy graduates.

2. AWCWP Update

Adam Martinez, OC Parks Supervising Park Ranger I, shared the following: staff changes — ranger transferred to Laguna Niguel Regional Park, new ranger Nikee Chambers previously with State Parks, down 4 positions — park maintenance, office technician; OC Fire Authority finished grading all trails including Canyon Acres — Wood Canyon near Mathis has also been graded; Visitor Center exhibits all in place, a new monument sign and interpretative exhibits.

Mike Wilson, OC Parks Interim Deputy Director of Operations, noted that Orange County and OC Parks are concerned about the staff vacancy rate and have been finding alternative methods to recruit and retain employees such as starting incoming new hires at higher pay steps.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File Agenda Items V.A–B.

Motion: Member Orgill

2nd: Vice Chair McCary

Unanimous vote to Receive and File Agenda Items V.A–B

VI. DISCUSSION CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A–E)

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A. TRAIL USE DESIGNATIONS PILOT PROJECT IN LCWP AND AWCWP UPDATE

Staff will provide an update on the Trail Use Designations Pilot Project that occurred within LCWP and AWCWP.

Mike Wilson, OC Parks Interim Deputy Director of Operations, earlier stated that the Authority will receive an update when it is available.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File and Continue the Item

B. LAGUNA CANYON ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

City of Laguna Beach Staff, if available, will share an update on its Laguna Canyon Road Improvement Project following a report presented at the November 15, 2022 City Council Meeting and further planning.

Mark Trestik, City of Laguna Beach City Engineer, noted no update at this time, but within the next year there will be public workshops on the design.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File and Continue the Item.

Motion: Member Orgill

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File and Continue the Item

C. LAGUNA CANYON ROAD WIDENING AND SAFETY PROJECT UPDATE

OC Parks or Caltrans Staff will share an update on Caltrans' Laguna Canyon Road Widening and Safety Project.

Brian Kurnow, OC Parks Interim Planning & Design Division Manager, noted there are weekly calls with CALTRANS; questions of fencing, ownership after the 2020 abandonment, part of NNCP/HCP, etc.

Public comment regarding the OC vehicles observed on site — which division of County and why they were there? The Natural Communities

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Coalition will check if the parcel is still in the Coastal NCCP, and/or NCCP credit and mitigation actions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File and Continue the Item.

Motion: Member Osborne

2nd: Vice Chair McCary

Unanimous vote to Receive and File and Continue the Item

D. IRVINE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR UPDATE

Receive information about the Science Advisors Series, Partner Charter, and other activities.

Member Clark shared the following: Laguna Greenbelt Inc. has received a grant to help with promoting the Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor; 3,000 recipients on the wildlife corridor email list; developing educational materials featuring Binx as the ambassador — story book is on Twitter and well received; Actively seeking signatures for the Partner Charter: Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor Partner Support — no financial pledge or other requirements except to support the concept of the wildlife corridor. The cities of Irvine, Laguna Beach and Laguna Woods were urged to sign on.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File and Continue the Item

E. HABITAT SUSTAINABILITY AND LCWP TRAIL MAP REVIEW

Further review of LCWP Trail map and new trails implemented since the approval of the LCWP General Development Plan.

Authority Members discussed parts of the General Development and Resource Management Plans. It was agreed that an addendum would be the best document for updating the plans. It was suggested that a Spring 2024 tour of the remaining new trails and changed trails would be appropriate; also to indicate early in 2024 to OC Parks a request for a budget item to cover the addendum.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Continue item to consider opportunities for next tour of new trails, also other sections of the GDP which require updating.

Motion: Member Osborne

2nd: Member Orgill

Unanimous vote to continue review of documents, plan for another trails tour and to inform OC Parks of the need for a budget for the GDP addendum

F. LAGUNA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN STUDENT CENTER DEVELOPMENT

City of Laguna Beach Staff, if available, will provide a report of the proposed developments at the Laguna College of Art and Design Student Center and any possible impacts to AWCWP.

No presentation by City of Laguna Beach regarding this project. Took public comments: great concern regarding light and noise, disruption of wildlife corridor activity and connectivity to adjacent open space areas. Noted that the project has been underway for many years; the City of Laguna Beach is the adjacent landowner, but the city did not require a Public Notice to the open space groups — environmental groups in Laguna Beach, OC Parks, Coastal Greenbelt Authority, and Natural Communities Coalition. Speakers were from CANDO and Laguna Canyon Conservancy.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File and Continue the Item, if appropriate.

Motion: Member Orgill

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File and Continue the Item

VII. AUTHORITY COMMENTS AND REPORT

At this time Authority Members may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Members may also suggest items for the July 12, 2023 meeting agenda.

Chair Fegraus noted that Member Maloney would like to step down as the Member At Large, appointed by the County Board of Supervisors Fifth District Supervisor. Maloney also serves as the Authority representative to the Natural Communities Coalition. Member Felder shared a complaint from a bike rider about e-bikes in the wilderness park and the fire danger. This could be a possible agenda item with OC Fire Authority presenting the information.

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VIII. ADJOURNMENT TO NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Motion: Member Orgill
2nd: Vice Chair McCary
Unanimous vote to adjourn