



A G E N D A and MINUTES

COASTAL GREENBELT AUTHORITY



Wednesday, January 13, 2021 - 3:00 p.m. *Virtual Meeting*

Mary Feagraus, Chair

Park Neighbors, Non-voting Members

Tiffany Ackley

City of Aliso Viejo, Council Member

Farrah N. Khan

City of Irvine, Council Member

Vacant

City of Laguna Hills, Council Member

Ron Rivera, Parks/Recreation Director, Alternate

City of Laguna Niguel

Grace Leung, City Manager

City of Newport Beach

Scott Smith, Deputy Director, Public Works

City of Irvine, Alternate

William A. Phillips, City of Aliso Viejo

Council Member, Alternate

Dennis Chiotti, Casey Gnad Alternate, City of Irvine

Sean Levin, Deputy Director, Recreation/Sr. Services

Alternate, City of Newport Beach

Staff:

Justin Schmillen – Recreation Manager

Derek Breaux – Recreation Supervisor

Voting Members

Mary Feagraus, Chair

Environmental Groups

Cynthia Conners, Vice Chair

City of Laguna Woods, Council Member

Toni Iseman

City of Laguna Beach, Council Member

Lisa A. Bartlett

Board of Supervisors, 5th District

Tom Maloney

Member at Large

Kate Clark, Alternate

Environmental Groups

Ed H. Tao, Alternate

City of Laguna Woods, Council Member

George Weiss, Alternate

City of Laguna Beach

Sergio Prince, Alternate

Board of Supervisors, 5th District

Gene Felder, Alternate

Member at Large

Please Note Cover Page with additional information regarding meeting participation.

Those persons addressing the Authority are requested to give their names for the record. Except as otherwise provided by law, no action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the following agenda. However, items may be taken up in a different sequence. Written materials must be received 24 hours in advance to ensure consideration by the Authority. A limited number of staff reports are available at the Authority meeting. The public may address the Authority on items of public interest that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Authority during the public participation section of the meeting.

Pursuant to the provisions of California Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, issued on March 17, 2020, the Coastal Greenbelt Authority will be conducting its meeting remotely. While there will not be a physical location for the meeting, the public is invited to observe the meeting by dialing +1-415-655-0001, using Access/Event Code 177 114 0518 or online at the link below (Password 177 114 0518)

<https://ocgov.webex.com/ocgov/onstage/q.php?MTID=e77c0480d41a26bb0653f8bcfaeab7d1e>

Any member of the public wishing to speak should submit the following information no later than noon the day of the meeting to Richard.Schaffer@ocparks.com or 949-923-2200:

1. The email subject line or voicemail must state the following: Request to Provide Public Comment at Coastal Greenbelt Authority Meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.
2. Name of Person Requesting to Speak
3. Organization Represented or City of Residence
4. **Phone Number/ Screen name that will be used to access the meeting** (important)
5. Specify Agenda Item Number or Topic

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for this meeting shall notify OC Parks at 949-923-2200 or Richard.Schaffer@ocparks.com by 3pm on the Friday preceding the meeting. Please provide your name and contact phone number or email.

Chair Fegraus: Thank you to OC Parks staff – Joanne Veedor, Rick Schaffer and IT staff for their efforts with this virtual meeting.

Also welcome to new CGA members Council Member Ed H. Tao – Alternate for the City of Laguna Woods and Council Member George Weiss – Alternate for the City of Laguna Beach.

1. ROLL CALL

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are welcome to address the Authority on items of public interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Authority and are not listed as an agenda item.
NONE

3. MINUTES

Meeting Minutes, November 10, 2020. Corrections/Additions
Recommended Action: *On a motion by Conners with a second by Felder, the minutes of November 10, 2020 were unanimously approved with one correction (Prince was not present).*

4. CGA MEMBERS AND PARTNERS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

- A. Laguna Canyon Foundation Update by a LCF representative. *Hallie Jones, ED shared the following: Challenging time for staff and volunteers but December volunteer hours were still 40% from previous December – field staff and volunteers worked on restoration projects following all health protocols. Question from the public on the Arundo in Aliso Creek and permits for that section of the creek – need a response from OC Public Works.*
- B. Natural Communities Coalition Update by a NCC representative. *Darin Loughrey shared the goals of the NCCP/HCP as working to balance nature and recreation, welcome to new staff member, Mendel Stewart, Natural Resources Coordinator. NCC publishes a quarterly newsletter – to receive the newsletter contact Darin at dloughrey@occonservation.org*

- C. Update by City of Laguna Beach regarding open space in Laguna Beach. *Councilmember Iseman noted the city is in lockdown, very difficult for tourist industry, mask compliance is working for residents, but more difficult with compliance by tourists. Question by Prince has the graffiti been taken care of at the Alta Laguna knoll site – yes OC Parks, LB County Water District removed all graffiti. Clark asked about land use designation for certain parcels in Laguna Canyon – need to check the files.*

- D. Update regarding the City of Irvine’s Open Space Preserve. *Smith shared the December 28, 2020 trail closures due to rain; invasive pest inspections starting soon; wildlife corridor maintenance/planting from Irvine Boulevard to Aster; increased usage of trails; updating signage.*

- E. Update on the City of Newport Beach’s Open Space. *Breaux shared Buck Gully closure for IRC to do trail maintenance and restoration on illegal trails from the urban areas; two bobcats sighted; Big Canyon - with Public Works restoration of area – clearing for planting 10,000 native plants, redirect creek to flow naturally into Newport Bay; had to pull staff from the field due to COVID.*

- F. Update regarding Open Space from Aliso Viejo. *Not Available.*

- G. Update regarding Open Space from Laguna Niguel. *Not Available.*

5. OC PARKS STAFF UPDATE

- A. Park Operations – All Departments Update – *Norton noted there is an uptick on the homeless encampments in the inland areas, working with OC Sheriff Homeless Authority. Among other issues there is always a concern about fire. Prince stated that the Fifth District Supervisor promotes the OC Fire Watch, OC Parks appreciates this support.*

- B. Spotlight on Laguna Coast Wilderness and Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Parks: *Park staff will highlight recent accomplishments, activities and upcoming events.*

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park Update: *Supervising Park Ranger Matt Stegner shared the following: Pacific Pocket Mouse project – working with project partners to increase the size of the mice enclosure to help their viability; removed 2 miles of unauthorized trails in December with the CA Conservation Corps; large attendance numbers – this high volume of use does degrade the trails necessitating more maintenance, parking lots full almost every day; question of how to be sure there isn't any illegal substance growth in Los Trancos Canyon – surveys by drones ascertained there isn't any; Laura Cohen – Resource Specialists has a virtual tour available for the Martin Luther King holiday.*

Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park Update: *Ranger Sean Bengstrom shared the following: outstanding attendance – November 32,400 visitors and December 34,900 visitors; active wildlife with sightings of white-tailed kite, bobcats and 14 mule deer over one weekend; Visitor Center update – interpretive exhibits should be completed by late February; limited rain so far has helped to keep trails in good shape; but working on 5 Oaks Trail, and Aliso Creek East will be closed due to SOCWA sludge pipeline construction. Questions by CGA members: with attendance so high is there damage to trails? – probably, also crowded trails, more first-time users and remote rescues. Is there a set capacity to stipulate closing the park? – No. Any smoking violations? – No. Hikers and Cyclist numbers – more in one category? – No, more in both categories.*

6. RECEIVE AND FILE MATTERS

- A.** Report by Clark/Fegraus on Irvine Wildlife Corridor – Update on activities.
Recommended Action: Receive and File *Clark shared the progress despite the pandemic restrictions made by the Laguna Greenbelt Wildlife Corridor Working Team: established the Science Advisors and a schedule to meet every two months to discuss specific subjects; February's meeting of the Science Advisors will focus on the human misuse and intrusions into the wildlife corridor; working on a document to help guidelines for planning/design/construction near open space areas; developing a virtual tour of the wildlife corridor using drone footage, videos, graphics and maps for various audiences – technical, public agencies, education; recent press coverage of video of fire at Irvine Boulevard and images of coyotes returning to the burned area. Questions: Do we have a wildlife survey which focuses on the health of the wildlife? Loughrey, NCC answered that they are working with Utah State University on a study of the health of the reserve, Mendel Stewart, NCC's Natural Resources Coordinator is helping to develop the study metrics. Continue item to March meeting.*
- B.** Update Caltrans Laguna Canyon Road Project.
Recommended Action: Receive and File *Norton, OC Park stated there is no new information. Continue item to March meeting.*

- C. Fire Safety at LCWP and AWCWP during Coastal Red Flag Days Update**
Recommended Action: Receive and File *Norton noted that the Protocol, as shared at the last CGA meeting, leaves decision making to each site manager based on conditions at each site.*

Motion to Receive and File Agenda Items 6. A, B, C *On a motion by Felder with a second by Iseman it was unanimously approved to Receive and File Agenda Items 6. A, B, and C.*

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Report by staff on Trails Sub-Committee review of a Proposed Pilot Project for Trail Use Designations.

Recommended Action: Make recommendation to OC Parks Commission to support pilot project. *OC Parks Staff Pam Passow presented the proposed Pilot Project Trail Use Designations with a focus on the suggested changes for LCWP and AWCWP. Proposed changes for AWCWP include Lynx Trail change from multi-use to Bikes only downhill, no other users downhill; Cholla Trail change from multi-use to Bikes uphill only, but other users remain the same (bidirectional). For LCWP – Laguna Ridge Trail change from hiking/biking to bikes only downhill. Old Emerald Trail – change from hiking/biking to bike downhill only, hiking remains bidirectional.*

Questions and Concerns: *Who determined which trails for change of use? OC Parks staff and visitors; Project schedule? First report after 3 months, at 6 months a decision to conclude or extend project; Who makes the final project approval? OC Parks Commission. Concern with enforcement: who will enforce the new designations? OC Parks Staff with hopefully assistance from Laguna Canyon Foundation staff and volunteers; Enforcement starts with education, users helping each other, signage encouraging reporting of illegal use. How often are hikes injured by bikers? Not often, more an issue of crowding on the trails. Also noted that each trail and its condition will be assessed before starting the project. Main concerns: enforcement, education and reporting and additional OC Parks staff responsibilities.*

CGA members asked that this item remain on future agendas for status reports.

Concern if the pilot program becomes permanent that actions be taken to make sure the park's governing documents reflect these changes through a public review process (General Development and Resource Management Plans).

On a motion by Conners with a second by Iseman it was unanimously approved to send a letter to the OC Parks Commission with our support of the pilot program, but also that all future actions on this item are reviewed by the CGA before final actions, and that education, signage program are provided as Outreach and sensitive resources are protected.

Continue item to March meeting.

B. Election of Officers for 2021 – Chair and Vice Chair

Recommended Action: Nominations and Motion to elect 2021 Officers. *On a motion by Clark with a second by Conners, Mary Fegraus was nominated as Chair, and Cynthia Conners as Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.*

8. CGA MEMBERS COMMENTS AND REPORT

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

Felder noted that the February 1 meeting of the Laguna Canyon Conservancy will feature Hallie Jones, Laguna Canyon Foundation, as the speaker.

Question of when the Open Space Ordinance in Laguna Beach expires? 2028?

Question by Prince – any new e-bike decisions for OC Parks? Not at this time.

9. MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT to March 10, 2021 at 3 P.M. Location to be

Determined. *On an unanimously approved motion by Conners with a second by Fegraus the meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m. to the March 10, 2021 meeting at 3 p.m. Location/type of meeting to be determined.*