

## **Minutes: Plateau Management Committee 09/01/2021**

Online meeting

### **Committee Members Present:**

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

### **Reserve staff reports:**

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

### **Guests:**

- Robert Williams, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Mitch Daudert, Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District
- Kim Klementowski, Center for Natural Lands Management
- Ginger Greeves, Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Education foundation
- Bruce Weimer, Guest
- Steve Lusky, Guest
- Marge Hegdahl, Guest
- Erin Fairfax, Guest

**1. Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am by Richard Kim.

**2. Public comments: 10:05**

None

**3. Approval of 06/02/2021 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:***

We continue to train new volunteers. We've been able to have onsite training sessions limited to only new volunteers with each day limited to 30 participants. Besides allowing volunteers to better serve the public with a more knowledge of the plateau, we're also trying to keep the enthusiasm going that was created by the busy spring months after the heat of summer slowed down visitation. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to begin training tomorrow for the third-grade program. Most of the attendees will be our returning docents, some of whom we haven't seen in a year and a half so we're really excited.

A brief discussion was held on schools returning to off site programs. Ginger mentioned Murrieta had mentioned putting off programs until spring. Ginger said the foundation was working on funding. Questions from the public

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

We are continuing to interact with the public by education and directions with their visit. I have spoken with 4 groups in the process of catching tarantulas to take home. All were educated and the tarantulas were released.

We have had several ongoing education opportunities for volunteers. With the heat and a large percentage of volunteers going on vacation in August we have not been able to open the vernal pools to the adobe trails. We hope to resume in September.

On 06/02/2021 and again on 08/25/2021 two small fires were started on the roadside by the vernal pools parking lot. The fire on 06/02/2021 occurred in two small areas and the one on 08/25/2021 was a 30' by 30' burn.

On the Murrieta side we have had the fence cut and those spots have since been repaired. Signage that has been taken down has been replaced. A small number of people continue to go through the fencing.

Questions were given by the public on these fires and the larger Chaparral fire that occurred in late august 2021. The Chaparral fire occurring on some CDFW properties.

Richard asked for a motion to approve public announcements on location-based events in the future. Dusting moved to approve; Zack seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and it carried.

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

### ***Reporting***

I have been working on compiling and summarizing the previous fiscal years activities into my Annual Report.

#### **Prescribed Fire**

CAL FIRE and CNLM conducted a prescribed fire on the Hines parcel in the Tenaja Corridor on June 9, 2021. The prescribed fire treated 60 acres of yellow star thistle adjacent to homes, oak woodland, and the Cleveland National Forest. This area is very close to where the Chaparral Fire is burning today.

### ***Wildfire***

On July 3 there was a small wildfire on the Northeast portion of the Reserve in De Luz. The wildfire burned chaparral, and CAL FIRE cut fencing. The acreage of the fire is unknown.

On June 18th, there was a 1.7-acre wildfire at the Vernal Pools that Bill and I responded to. We were able to prevent the construction of fire lines through the Vernal Pool and also prevent retardant or foam from being used to put out the fire. The cause of the fire is unknown.

On August 27, 2021, there was a small wildfire near the Vernal Pool trail head in the early morning. The acreage and impacts will be assessed in the next week.

Chaparral Fire Update—Mic Sebastian of CAL FIRE contacted me on 9/1/2021 to inform us that there was no wildfire on the Hines Property, but there were firefighting activities that impacted the Hines Property. A bulldozer widened the road to allow more cross traffic access around the houses and to create a buffer to prevent fire from spreading into the canyon toward Tenaja Falls.

### ***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. CDFW has also continued adding water to troughs around the Plateau.

## ***Outreach***

CNLM met with Jamie Parsley of the Foundation to review potential projects for teachers and students on the Plateau.

## ***Research Access***

Walk Koenig is scheduled to conduct acorn counts along Coyote Trail in September.

Riverside County Agricultural Commission was recently granted a Letter of Permission to survey for invasive shot hole borers where sycamore trees are found at the SRPER.

Dr. Winston Vickers is continuing his mountain lion hair snare trap study. It was more difficult than they expected to retrieve hair samples, so they are still adjusting their methods and have plans to host a symposium in the winter with the results for the region.

Dr. Mazor has plans to continue intermittent stream monitoring in Cole Creek and one of its tributary streams. The monitoring is to help build a rapid assessment method to described waters under the Clean Water Act.

Addendum to CDFW's Richard Kim SB 85 Fuels Agenda Item

Two projects were proposed for funding at the SRPER. One for post-wildfire remediation and another for wildfire prevention. For post-Tenaja Fire remediation, CNLM and TNC proposed invasive species surveys, invasive species treatments, sensitive species restoration, and sensitive species monitoring. CNLM and TNC also proposed restoration of the Hines property to reduce fuel loads from standing yellow star thistle thatch.

## **5. California red-legged frog relocating update/artificial ponds update. TNC**

Susan mentioned USGS studies are continuing. Water levels are declining. Zack spoke on the well has water they are awaiting supplies and installation of the solar pump.

## **6. CDFW Senate Bill 85 Wildfire Resiliency Funding Update.**

Richard briefly spoke of the bill and how he hoped to do projects on the reserve using this program. He was seeking the committee approval.

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

## **7. Roundtable**

A discussion of radio's and of a community Firewatch program was spoken of by Erin Fairfax. Dustin asked her to reach out to Ranger Evans and Hailey.

Dustin spoke of Robert Williams coming back to RivCoParks. Robert spoke briefly. Richard spoke of new hires to CDFW joining the team.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:07 AM.

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