

Proposed Park Hours

6 November 2015

Dear Editor:

What a difference an hour makes. The draft Master Plan for management of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park (section 5.2.17) proposes to close the main entrance gate at Mills Avenue a full hour before the park closes. Closing the gate early will negatively impact a wide variety of park visitors, not all of whom aim to complete “the Loop.”

There is much to enjoy within just a few minutes of the gate. Those of us who visit just before dusk appreciate what a rich time that is to observe wildlife, to appreciate the last light on the hillsides and to transition from workday to evening. Early closure of the main gate will disproportionately affect working people, parents and their children and local school teams, none of whom are likely to be able to access the park in midday.

Finally, many park users—including those who run, bike or ride horses—are more than capable of completing the Loop in an hour or less.

Closing the park an hour earlier each day amounts to the equivalent of more than 15 days of park closures annually.

If the motivation to close the park early is to reduce impacts on neighbors, other solutions are more direct and effective. We can work together to educate park visitors who arrive by automobile that their park visit begins in the parking lots.

To preserve that special hour, let the main park gate stay open until the park itself closes.

Andy Lee Roth

Board member

Claremont Wildlands Conservancy