



The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

Volume 14, Issue 1

Summer 2017

A Year of Implementation Progress in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park

Since adoption of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Master Plan and Implementation Plan in May 2016, we are thrilled to report that implementation is progressing nicely and that establishing a culture of respect for the park, its visitors, and its neighbors is well underway.

Ranger staffing has been increased to seven part-time and three reserve rangers, all of whom receive the same training and wear the same uniforms. The goal is to have eight reserve rangers and eight part-time rangers. The City has purchased a new 4WD truck, which significantly enhances the rangers' ability to oversee the park and respond quickly when necessary.

Rangers are already educating park visitors about safety, opening

closures during red flag warnings, and constructive interactions with rangers.

Three meetings of the Friends of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park have been held with the objective of mobilizing dedicated groups of volunteers for each of three program areas including Docent and Community Interaction; Service Projects and Park Maintenance; and Environmental Preservation, Resource Management, and Master Plan Implementation. Overall, the Friends groups will aim to support the park and enhance the experience of its stakeholders.

Additional highlights from the first year of implementation include:

- Establishment of a method to close the park in an orderly, efficient way in case of red flag conditions;
- Continued car counts and monitoring of residential parking restrictions, as well as implementation of congestion pricing for parking, which began in April 2017 with very little reaction;
- A new contract with Diamond Environmental Services to service five portable toilets on a frequent basis. The combination of regular service and ranger education is making these units more successful than they have been in the past;
- Mapping by rangers of unofficial single-track trails and areas of erosion; and
- Replacement and repair of culverts, which are now mapped and numbered.

Activities for the next twelve



Cliff Aster (*Malacothrix saxatilis*).

Photo: Beverly Speck

months include improved signs, vegetation management, visitor surveys, trail management, and the launch of education programs to reinforce a park culture of respect and appreciation.

“We are thrilled at the progress we have made over the past year and are excited to continue to implement the goals and spirit of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Master and Implementation Plans,” Ali Martinez reported. “The goal is to create a park culture that provides the community with passive recreation space while preserving the hillsides and natural resources. We are elated with the progress we have made in the first year and look forward to the second year of implementation.”

—Terry Grill

“We are thrilled at the progress we have made over the past year and are excited to continue to implement the goals and spirit of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Master and Implementation Plans.”

— Ali Martinez

and closing times, and the reasons for occasional park closures. Ali Martinez, Human Services Supervisor, has regular communications with a variety of park visitors and finds that previously negative email/telephone exchanges have become positive with improvements in portable toilets, information about the reasons for park

Finding the Right Balance: The Proposed Clara Oaks Estates

In 1996, the City of Claremont and Pomona College clinched the deal creating the original 1200-acre wilderness park. Since then the City, with our support and encouragement, has expanded the park. Today the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park protects over 2000 acres from development; 1000 acres remain in private hands. Our vision is to encompass as many acres as possible within the park.

The City's hillside ordinance of 1981, respecting the legal right of property owners to receive economic benefit from their land, designated cluster areas where homes could be built. By confining development to clusters, the City's aim was to preserve large tracts of open space, an aim that it has accomplished by expanding the park. Today, of the 1000 privately held acres, only about 200 may be developed, with a limit of about 100 homes in all.

Our main mission at CWC is to secure funding for the purchase of private land for the park. Yet we also acknowledge the right of owners and developers to build in cluster areas, and we work with them to meet our standards. We expect a development to donate as many acres as possible to

the park, preferably contiguous ones, and to provide appropriate amenities for park visitors such as trails, parking, restrooms, and signs. Also, development must have minimal visual and environmental impact. We support the City's requirements that natural features such as ridgelines, outcroppings, water courses, and native vegetation be protected, with minimal grading and use of unobtrusive, environmentally



White Sage (*Salvia apiana*).

friendly, and fireproof materials.

This spring developer Randy Lim and his team publicly announced his application to build Clara Oaks Estates, LLC: 47 homes east of Webb Canyon Road on 100 of the 200 acres designated as cluster areas. We have monitored progress on this project for over two years and have worked with the City

and Mr. Lim since last August to assure that his project meets our standards. We are convinced that it is the best option for development that we are going to see. Mr. Lim has gone beyond the City's requirements to satisfy our terms.

He plans to donate 52 of the 100 acres to the Wilderness Park and to provide a two-mile hiking trail with a parking area. His development plan meets our criteria with features such as minimal grading, low structures that preserve ridgelines, and shielded lighting. The horizontal home designs incorporate natural colors and textures, inconspicuous garages, porous paving, light-colored roofs, rainwater harvesting, and drought-tolerant landscaping. Solar power will be encouraged.

Over the next two years, the project will proceed with the submission of a tract map and specific plan, an Environmental Impact Report, and hearings by commissions and City Council. The public will have ample opportunity to voice concerns and urge changes. We will closely monitor the process to assure that our criteria continue to be met, and we encourage you to join us.

—Lissa Petersen

CWC Welcomes New Board Members Lopez and Norvell

The CWC is especially pleased to welcome Dago Lopez and John Novell as new board members.

Dago Lopez is Pitzer College's Arboretum and Grounds Manager. His



Dago Lopez

knowledge of native plants will be a welcome addition to the board. He and his family often hike in the CHWP. "What I love most about the Wilderness Park is being surrounded by native plants. I'm excited to get people engaged with our local flora and the role they play in nature."

John Norvell is an avid hiker in the San Gabriel Mountain hillsides. He teaches Anthropology at Mt. San Antonio Community College. He is particularly drawn to educating the community about the hillsides and has expressed interest in trail development. He tells us the CHWP is "the very best thing about Claremont.



John Norvell

It is my go-to spot for contemplation and escape. It deserves our best civic efforts to preserve it for all to enjoy."

—Jill Benton

Letter From CWC's President

A heartfelt thanks to our dedicated board members and all of you who have supported us in the efforts we've made this year toward achieving our two most critical goals: to expand the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park and to assure public access to it for passive recreational use.

Our board is facing exciting changes, opportunities, and challenges as we move into the new year on July 1. Terry Grill will step into my shoes as president, and Andy Roth will continue as vice president. We are also welcoming two new board members—Dago Lopez and John Norvell.

Here is a brief overview of four key issues we're facing.

In 2014 President Obama increased protection for 346,177 acres of the Angeles National Forest above Claremont by creating the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. President Trump's Secretary of Interior has just placed it on a list of 27 monuments "under review." We will be vigilant in monitoring this review, and we may call on you to help us protect this treasure in our backyard.

On November 8, voters approved Measure A, which extends funding for parks, rivers, and natural areas in LA County for 30 years. This is great news

for us! These funds may be used to purchase hillside lands for the Wilderness Park and to build and maintain trails and park facilities.



Chaparral Yucca (*Yucca whipplei*).

Photo: Beverly Spreak

We will work with the City to secure some of these county funds for Claremont.

A new path for attracting such funds to the Wilderness Park opened this spring with the creation of Friends of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park, a citizens' group charged to support and oversee the City's implementation of the Master Plan. When the City Council approved the Master Plan in May 2016, it created conditions for the park to be actively managed for the first time. We at CWC have been and will continue to be involved. See the Master Plan story for more details.

At a crowded public meeting

at the Hughes Center on May 1, a developer announced plans for Clara Oaks Estates, a development of 47 homes in our hillsides above the Webb Schools just off Webb Canyon Road. We have been working with his team and will continue to do so through the planning process over the next two years to assure that the development meets our standards and preserves as many acres as possible for the Wilderness Park. See the Clara Oaks story for details.

As we work on these projects, we hope you will keep in touch with us via Facebook and our website.

I feel greatly honored that you have chosen me to be your president for the past six and a half years. It's been a joy to work with so many of you as we have shared our passion for Claremont's wildlands and the conviction that we can make the park even better. And we've done it!

—Lissa Petersen

Friends Support

Continued from Page 4

We also hope that you will actively help the CWC by making a donation. Your support allows our all-volunteer board to continue monitoring implementation of the Master Plan, and to advocate for adding new parcels of land to the Park as they become available.

Donations to the CWC are tax deductible.

With your support, the Wilderness Park will continue to preserve the hillsides and provide a remarkable place of recreational opportunity for all.

—Dave Bedell

Claremont Wildlands Conservancy
1320 N. Mountain Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 20
Claremont, CA



www.claremontwildlands.org

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all.

The Post is the newsletter of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

Board of Directors:

Arlene Andrew
Dave Bedell
Jill Benton
Terry Grill
Tom Ilgen
Dago Lopez
Meg Mathies
John Norvell
Lissa Petersen
Andy Lee Roth
Beverly Speak
Jim Van Cleve

Editors: Andy Lee Roth
and Kirk Reynolds

For more information, or to send donations:

1320 N. Mountain Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711

Email / Website:

info@claremontwildlands.org
www.claremontwildlands.org

CWC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax exempt corp. #95-4777423

You Can Never Have Too Many Friends

As the City of Claremont begins to implement the Wilderness Park Master Plan, some confusion has arisen due to the fact that the new support group created by the Master Plan is named "Friends of the CHWP." Of course, the support group for the CWC, which has been around several years, is called "Friends of the Hillside."

Members of the CWC Friends of the Hillside aid us politically when called on, help at events such as Earth Day and July 4th where we have our booth, and receive e-mail updates on business related to the CWC and the Park.

The City's new group, Friends of the CHWP, consists of volunteers who serve in an advisory capacity and help with projects related to the Park. For more about the



Friends of the CHWP, see the story on page one.

The CWC encourages those in our "Friends"

group to join the City's "Friends" to take an active role in shaping the future of the Wilderness Park. It is important to show the City that there is strong support for implementing the Master Plan and a willingness of citizens to do their part in carrying out the task.

Continued on Page 3