



The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

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Autumn 2018

Not Just Gathering Dust: Master Plan Update

The Wilderness Park Master Plan, adopted in May of 2016, was the culmination of a 3-4 year process involving the participation of numerous Claremont citizens. One concern expressed during that period was that, once approved, the Plan not just “sit on the shelf, gathering dust!” It has now been in operation for two full years and, far from being a dust collector, has proven to be a useful guide for action. Many of the specific goals have been met, while others are “works in progress”. Here is a brief snapshot of recent progress:

- The Ranger Program began with a full-time Senior Ranger, 7 part-time Rangers, and 4 Reserve Rangers. Rangers are present at opening and closing times daily, and have developed procedures for quickly and safely evacuating the Park in case of red flag closures or other emergencies. The configuration of staff is currently undergoing reorganization, after the untimely death of Senior Ranger Mark Manlapaz, and the recent retirement of Ali Martinez, who has been instrumental in the progress so far. City staff assures us that service levels will not be reduced.

- The parking problems have largely been resolved and the parking lots are sufficient to meet demand except for weekend mornings. Parking fees have increased, effective October 1: Saturdays and Sundays until 10:00 am - \$7, all other days/times -- \$5.

- Several park improvements have

been completed during the past year, including the repair and numbering of culverts and the development of an emergency closure system at each specific access point. Regular servicing of the Porta-Potties has relieved most of the earlier problems, and new trash cans have been installed. The Rangers continue to work on combatting erosion and maintaining the trails.

- The Friends of the Wilderness Park has had a surge of momentum in the past six months and is currently focusing on four objectives:

1. A newly, highly successful “Second Saturday” volunteer program began in May 2018. Wearing “Friends of the Wilderness Park” T-shirts, volunteers greet visitors, provide directions, and reinforce desirable Park behavior.

2. Work continues with the City on the signage recommendation that was initiated by the Service Projects group. This assessment addresses sign pollution within the park and proposes clearer maps and informational signs. In conjunction, the City is developing a color coding system to provide clear identification of trails which will allow visitors to communicate their location to emergency services.

3. A preliminary evaluation of unauthorized trails was begun by the Resource Management committee. This ongoing project tackles the adverse impacts of unauthorized trail use and envisions enhancing the park experience by establishing new trails.



Photo: Beverly Speck

An adventurous one-wheeled cyclist heads into the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park on a recent morning.

4. An Invasive Species Management Plan is in the beginning stages. This project includes locating invasive species and logging information into a mapping application in order to develop a strategy for the control of unwanted species.

If these – or other volunteer opportunities – interest you, please join the Friends of the Wilderness Park! Contact Vicki at vickisalazar01@gmail.com or Meg at mmathies@scrippscollege.edu.

—Meg Mathies and Vicki Salazar

You Can Never Have Too Many Friends... ...But Sometimes it Can Be Confusing!

People in our community are passionate about their natural environment and want to be involved in protecting it. When Claremont Wildlands Conservancy was founded as a small nonprofit organization to raise awareness and advocate for the preservation of Johnson's Pasture as open space, hundreds of people expressed interest in learning more and in contributing funds and/or time to help the effort. These supporters became the "Friends of the Hillside." If you are receiving this newsletter by mail, you are a member of this excellent support group, now designated "CWC Friends of the Hillside." This core group of volunteers serves the organization

when special needs arise. They receive newsletters and notes from Board meetings, act as ambassadors to the community, participate with committees according to their special interests and skills, and support the goals and mission of CWC in a variety of other ways.

With the input of CWC and many other community members, the Claremont Hillside Wilderness Park Master Plan was created to guide the City of Claremont in managing the increasingly popular Park. An important element of this plan is engaging volunteers; thus another group of friends was created! "Friends of the Claremont Hillside Wilderness Park" serves as an advisory body, with committees

engaging in projects such as greeting Park visitors, developing signage and educational materials, identification and management of native and invasive plant species, and more.

So which group of friends do you belong with? Many of us have joined BOTH groups! For more information about the CWC Friends of the Hillside, contact info@claremontwildlands.org. To learn about what's happening with the Friends of the CHWP, contact mmathies@scripps.edu or vickisalazar01@gmail.com.

Your friendship will be most appreciated!

—*Beverly Speak*

OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy is:

- to preserve the land, air, watershed, plant and wildlife resources of the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and greater Claremont area;
- to educate and advocate for the protection of important biotic habitats and/or access to these natural areas for the enjoyment of current and future generations;
- to work for the creation of a wildlands corridor along the front range of the San Gabriel/San Bernardino Mountains from the urban interface to the topmost ridgeline;
- to foster collaboration among organizations and governmental entities to enhance effective achievement of mutual goals and objectives.

A fundamental purpose of CWC is to expand the amount of accessible and protected open space in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park and surrounding areas.

CWC Welcomes New Board Members Salazar and Jensen

The CWC welcomed two new members of our Board of Directors as of June of this year.

Vicki Salazar, well known to many Claremonters as the office manager of a popular local dentist, is a Colorado transplant who came to the Southland as a child, eventually landing in Claremont fifteen years ago.

While working on a business degree at Pasadena City College, Vicki took some environmental science and field biology courses and got herself certified as a naturalist through the UC California Naturalist Program at PCC. As an amateur botanist, she is a regular contributor to the iNaturalist and Calflora online apps. A long-time hiker in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park, she signed up to volunteer

with the Friends of the Wilderness Park from its inception in 2017. She has been active with their invasive species mapping project and helps to coordinate the second Saturday meet-and-greet sponsored by the Friends. She has also worked with the Friends group on making signage recommendations to the City. She is especially interested in the education and outreach work of the Conservancy.

Nick Jensen brings expertise in California native plants, especially rare species, to Claremont, where he landed in 2013 in pursuit of a doctoral degree in Botany from CGU. Nick is now a full-time staffer for the California Native Plant Society, coordinating their volunteer efforts and overseeing projects for the Southern California region. Much of

his work involves providing scientific input to public policy processes around private land development and public lands projects and using education to impact public opinion on conservation issues.

An avid hiker and frequent user of the Wilderness Park, Nick appreciates the connection to nature and wild places afforded by the Park, and he especially admires the "reservoir of diversity" represented by the patches of intact coastal sage scrub habitats long lost from other San Gabriel hillside areas. In addition to bringing his prodigious scientific knowledge to bear on Park matters, he is especially keen to learn about the acquisition process around the Wilderness Park, an aspect of the conservation movement he hasn't been able to practice yet.

—*John Norvell*

Letter From CWC's President

As I complete my first year as president of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy, I am grateful for the organizational foundation laid by our previous president, Lissa Petersen, and the continued efforts of our volunteer board members to achieve our fundamental purpose of expanding the amount of accessible and protected open space in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park and surrounding areas.

I would like to summarize three major developments affecting the size and nature of the Wilderness Park this year. First, thanks to a generous gift of 463 acres from Pomona College to the City of Claremont, Evey Canyon became part of the CHWP. We have been and will continue to be active participants as the City incorporates this additional open space into the existing park with the challenge of establishing safe parking and access off Baldy Road. Second, Webb Schools acquired "Evans Ranch," a 75-acre parcel that increases Webb's total property to 150 acres. The purchase includes the hillsides as well as a flat portion at the end of Towne Avenue above Baseline Road. Present plans are to maintain this property as open space. Finally, the developers of Clara Oaks on the parcel along Webb Canyon Road just north of the

Webb Schools campus is slowly moving through the City's review process. We have been and will continue to closely moni-

water infrastructure projects, and flood protection projects. The largest amount of bond revenue, \$725 million, is earmarked for neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods and is of local interest because we and our neighboring cities can benefit from the availability of new competitive grants to improve and expand parks in our region, including the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park.

We have also participated with the City of Claremont Staff as they implement the master plan in a diligent manner that continues to foster a culture of respect for wildlife in and neighbors living next to the CHWP. Several of our board members have become active in "Friends of the Wilderness Park", a citizens' group charged to support the City Staff's implementation of the CHWP Master Plan. See another article in this newsletter for more details about this group and how you can join these activities.

Finally, I want to thank Tom Ilgen and Andy Roth for their service to the CWC and to wish both of them well as they move to other endeavors. I also want to welcome two new board members, Nick Jensen and Vicki Salazar, and wish them a productive and enjoyable experience. I hope that all of you receiving our newsletter feel welcome to join our efforts by serving on one of our committees or joining us at our booth on Earth Day or at Independence Day celebrations in the coming years. We will be updating our web site so watch for a new look, let us know if there is information that you would like us to include...and "like" us on Facebook.

—Terry Grill



CWC Board members and Friends of the CHWP greet Wilderness Park visitors on a recent afternoon.

Photo: Beverly Speck

tor this progress. There will be ample opportunities for public comments over the next couple of years and we will be active participants in advocating for our mission.

The CWC actively supported Proposition 68, the California Clean Water and Safe Parks Act with a donation to the campaign, co-led by the Trust for Public Land, and with letters to the editors of local newspapers. On June 5 citizens of California approved Proposition 68 with a 56.7% yes vote. Proposition 68 authorizes \$4 billion in general obligation bonds for state and local parks, environmental protection and restoration projects,

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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.**

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CWC Mourns Loss of Mark Manlapaz

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy shares our community's grief at the tragic murder of Claremont's Senior Park Ranger, Mark Manlapaz, on June 29. Mark was a good friend to the Wilderness Park, and it was always a pleasure to encounter him cheerfully patrolling the trails.

His work on the implementation of the Park's Master Plan has made a positive difference in the experience of park visitors and neighbors, and he will be greatly missed by all of us.



Photo courtesy of The City of Claremont