

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 — 3:00 p.m.

Before formally starting the meeting, Chair Fegraus thanked the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park staff for their above and beyond assistance with the Elisabeth Brown Celebration of Life ceremony. It was a fitting tribute, well attended and appreciated by the Brown family.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Fegraus, Vice Chair McCary, and Members Orgill, Norton, Clark, Osborne, and Felder were present. Members Foley, Horne, Conners, Weiss, and Litschi were absent.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At this time, members of the public may address the Authority on items of public interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Authority and are not contained in today's agenda.

No comments were received from the public.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A)

The following item on the consent calendar will be approved by one motion unless an Authority Member requests to pull a specific item.

A. APPROVE AUTHORITY MINUTES FOR THE JULY 10, 2024 MEETING.

*Motion: Member Orgill
2nd: Vice Chair McCary
Unanimous vote to approve*

IV. AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND PARTNERS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

A. LAGUNA CANYON FOUNDATION (LCF) UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

B. LAGUNA BEACH OPEN SPACE UPDATE

No update at this time.

C. NATURAL COMMUNITIES COALITION (NCC) UPDATE

Darin Loughery, NCC Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, shared the following: 2024–2026 Training for Habitat Restoration is underway with commitments to targeted individual species and endangered species. The restoration process using cattle grazing to remove invasives in the NCCP lands has not been implemented yet.

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Question by Member Orgill about how the guidelines under the NCCP deal with public use? Loughery noted that recreation uses are part of the monitoring under the program. Member Orgill noted that the City of Laguna Beach is still looking at the opportunity to enroll their open space land not included in the county park system in the NCCP.

D. IRVINE OPEN SPACE PRESERVE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time. Member Felder would like more information regarding the City's e-bike ruling.

E. NEWPORT BEACH OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

F. ALISO VIEJO OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

G. LAGUNA NIGUEL OPEN SPACE UPDATE

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File Agenda Items IV.A–G.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File Agenda Items IV.A–G

V. OC PARKS STAFF UPDATE

A. PARK OPERATIONS — ALL DEPARTMENTS UPDATE

Derrick Ankerstar, OC Parks Operations Manager, shared the following: Recent Park Ranger recruitment, 12 candidates onboarded in November and December and will be in January 2025; one staff vacancy in both Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park and Laguna Coast Wilderness Park. Regarding the Airport Fire – O'Neill Regional Park and Caspers Wilderness Parks are closed along with activities in other parks in the fire area.

Question regarding the illegal trailhead in the Top of the World area – concern about fuel modification and delay with OC Permit. OC Parks must verify the area is within the allowed fuel modification boundaries. This permit has been issued. In areas adjacent to OC Parks surveys are done before the goats arrive to be sure the boundaries are correct.

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B. LAGUNA COAST WILDERNESS PARK (LCWP) AND ALISO AND WOOD CANYONS WILDERNESS PARK (AWCWP) SPOTLIGHT

1. LCWP Update

Brad Barker, OC Parks Supervising Park Ranger II, shared the following: The historical information presented by Celebration speakers was appreciated by the park staff; 70 foot fuel modification has been done around the Nix Nature Center; question about the Pacific Pocket Mouse population – not stable – varies from year to year, looking at a second site but it is probably a few year away; Tene Greene, Office Technician is transferring to Mason Regional Park, for a certain time period will split her hours between the two parks, OC Parks is in the process of recruiting a new staff person, more than ever there is a need for volunteers at the Nix Nature Center. There was a question about the City of Irvine’s study of access into the Planning Area 18 near the intersection of Lake Forest and Bake Parkways – no information available at this time.

Chair Fegraus thanked Tene Greene for her work at the Nix Nature Center and her support of the Authority administrative functions. We will miss her.

2. AWCWP Update

Adam Martinez, OC Parks Supervising Park Ranger I, shared the following: There is a new fossil dig near the AWCWP Nature Center; some park visitors required medical assistance during the recent excessive heat, met with the City of Laguna Beach regarding the goat program. Some communication issues by Authority members included the question of the ownership of the Carolyn Wood Knoll – the dedication sign has been removed – which jurisdiction can put it back? Rock Cave issue – unauthorized trail to the entrance – Laguna Beach Park Rangers and OC Parks need to work together on this issue.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and File Agenda Items V.A–B.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Osborne

Unanimous vote to Receive and File Agenda Items V.A–B

VI. DISCUSSION CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A–E)

A. LAGUNA CANYON ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

City of Laguna Beach Staff, if available, will share an update on its Laguna Canyon Road Improvement Project following a report presented at the November 15, 2022 City Council Meeting and further planning.

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Representative not available to provide an update at this time. Chair Fegraus noted she had attended the September 5, 2024 Laguna Canyon Road: Protect & Connect Open House. City staff indicated that undergrounding the utilities in the LCWP is no longer an option.

Penny Milne, Canyon Alliance of Neighborhoods Defense Organization President, commented on her joy regarding no undergrounding taking place but raised concerns regarding other impacts to LCWP and the wildlife corridor.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file and continue the item.

Motion: Member Osborne

2nd: Member Orgill

Unanimous vote to receive and file and continue the item.

B. LAGUNA CANYON ROAD WIDENING AND SAFETY PROJECT UPDATE

OC Parks Staff, if available, will share an update on Caltrans' Laguna Canyon Road Widening and Safety Project.

Brian Kurnow, OC Parks Entitlements Division Manager, noted no new activity. Question of Stagecoach South Trail closed because of the project?

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file and continue the item.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Orgill

Unanimous vote to receive and file and continue the item.

C. LAGUNA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN STUDENT CENTER DEVELOPMENT

City of Laguna Beach Staff, if available, will provide a report of the proposed developments at the Laguna College of Art and Design Student Center and any possible impacts to AWCWP.

Representative not available to provide an update at this time.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file and continue the item, if appropriate.

Motion: Member Osborne

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2nd: Vice Chair McCary

Unanimous vote to receive and file and continue the item.

D. IRVINE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR UPDATE

Receive information about the Science Advisors Series, Partner Charter, and other activities.

Member Clark presented the highlights of the Wildlife Corridor project.

- *Proposition 4 on the November 2024 ballot will have funds for wildlife corridors.*
- *Partner Charter signers continue to emerge. This topic and the endorsement of the 30X30 project will be before the cities of Laguna Woods and Laguna Beach in the next few weeks.*
- *City of Irvine discussions are ongoing about a wildlife corridor interpretative kiosk to help the Great Park residents understand the role of a wildlife corridor*
- *Recent wildlife corridor tours included one for the Laguna Greenbelt board highlighting the difficulties of animal passage at Interstate 5. Caltrans and other stakeholder groups have also requested a tour.*
- *Recent camera studies in the restored Great Park section of the wildlife corridor show wildlife movement.*

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file and continue the item.

Motion: Vice Chair McCary

2nd: Member Norton

Unanimous vote to receive and file and continue the item.

E. HABITAT SUSTAINABILITY AND LCWP TRAIL MAP REVIEW

Authority Members will refer to and discuss sections of LCWP General Development and Resource Management Plans that require updates or amendments and discuss preparation of an addendum to these plans.

Chair Fegraus reviewed the draft Addendum with the CGA Members, Public and OC Parks staff. Many suggestions were made including:

- *Use same titles as 1998 original documents.*

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- *Tie new suggestions to original documents — for example — New Access Points — See RMP Section V Public Access, page 65 and GDP Section V, page 34.*
- *In Opening Summary include how many miles of trails in LCWP.*
- *More explanation of term “south coast wilderness”.*
- *Population of Orange County at park’s creation time and now. What is this impact on LCWP?*
- *Importance of park etiquette — stay on the trails, no dogs, e-bikes.*
- *Timeline suggestions: 1988 City of Laguna Beach decision about the Carmen Sandling development at Top of the World — created a park; CA Prop 70; operational change for Laguna Heights area now covered by Aliso & Wood Canyons Wilderness Park; distinguish between the Laguna Laurel purchase and the Option 5 and Planning Area 18 dedication, include maps; acreage for CCSP; add 2004 document of the OC Board of Supervisors action for long-term leases to include land within LCWP and AWCWP - include Lease Agreements in the References.*
- *Agreements: Include lease agreements between OC and the cities of Laguna Beach and Laguna Woods — include actual Leases in References.*
- *New Access Points: legal access points without parking, name of trail at Laguna Bowl?*
- *Fire Prevention: Link to Fuel Modification Plan — NCC will help with documentation.*
- *Hydrology: Research and find dates/documents for early Lake studies — include in References.*
- *Education and Interpretive Programs: Be sure LCWP Resource Specialist reviews text for editing and additional information.*
- *Goals moving forward: Question of Trail Management — how to manage large number of trail users; Wildlife Corridor connections within LCWP utilizing Laguna Canyon Road undercrossings and larger wildlife corridor connection within the 22,000-wilderness area of parks and preserves.*
- *How to keep the public agencies’ commitment and coordination to keep the connections within their jurisdictions?*
- *Insert word “legal” prior to access points under “New Access Points”.*

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Chair Fegraus noted that this is the first draft of Addendum #1. CGA members are still working on the Nix Nature Center Addendum. In order to incorporate as much information as possible we should change the approval date to at least January 2025. When we sent a Budget Request letter to OC Parks and the Board of Supervisors we didn't state a specific date for our completion.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Discuss and incorporate information recommended for inclusion in the Addendum to the LCWP General Development and Resource Management Plans.
2. Continue the item.

Motion: Member Osborne

2nd: Member Orgill

Unanimous vote to continue to work on the Addendums and to continue the item.

VII. AUTHORITY COMMENTS AND REPORT

At this time Authority Members may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Members may also suggest items for the November 13, 2024 meeting agenda.

Authority Members welcomed Member Barbara Norton as the Member-At-Large appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. Member Norton's history and understanding of the parks will be invaluable as we continue to support the two wilderness parks.

Regarding Ex-officio membership to the Natural Communities Coalition. Tom Maloney was the Authority member with Mary Fegraus as Alternate. We should elect new representation at our next meeting.

Member Felder noted that the CA Prop 4 on the November ballot does have wildlife corridor funding.

Chair Fegraus suggested that in a future meeting we should talk about representation from Non-Voting Members as stated in the Coastal Greenbelt Authority Bylaws.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT TO NOVEMBER 13, 2024 MEETING 5:20 p.m.

Motion: Member Osborne

2nd: Member Norton

Unanimous vote to adjourn to the November 13, 2024 Meeting.