

COUNTY SERVICE AREA (CSA) 20 ADVISORY BOARD

Novato Fire District Administration Building
95 Rowland Way, Novato, California

Draft Minutes for Special Meeting of November 29, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Craig Knowlton
Jonathan Gasson
Ron Witzel
Marisa Walker

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Knowlton at 11:07 am.

2. Public Comment

No one from the public came forward

3. CSA 20 Trails

Jon Campo described Marin County Parks Staff desire to develop an Inclusive Access Plan (IAP) on the Indian Valley Fire Road, the standards of which would involve a 5' wide packed gravel surface and grade limits suitable for wheelchair accessibility.

Discussion ensued, and Board Member Witzel reiterated the previous suggestion that such IAP access be initiated from Indian Valley College and terminate at or near the abandoned quarry site. Such site could be enhanced to allow access to the seasonal waterfall behind the quarry. Initiating Inclusive Access from the Indian Valley Road entrance would be fraught with danger given the heavy traffic of Open Space visitors, and ongoing problems of interaction of horse riders, dog walkers, hikers and mountain bikes.

Commissioner Witzel described a specific example of the dangers occurred late morning on Sunday Nov.28th when a speeding mountain bike rider and his aggressive dog on the loose, exited the creek side trail a few hundred yards in from the Indian Valley entrance and attacked a horse on the Fire Road almost causing the rider to be thrown off. Commissioner Walker mentioned ongoing conflicts of bike riders, horse riders, and off-leash dogs all accessing at a common entrance and suggested limiting or separations. Commissioner Knowlton suggested the need for additional signage and Ranger presence, as well as Marin Horse Council's "*Slow and Say Hello*" program signage recommended.

Discussion ensued on various other trail enhancements to meet three goals:

- ✓ Minimize environmental impacts of roads and trails, ex. protecting ecological situations such as for newts and salamanders
- ✓ Create a sustainable system of trails which can be maintained by staff
- ✓ Improve visitors experiences continuing access to waterfalls, ponds, creeks

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Planner Jason Hoorn discussed reimagining trails such as the Waterfall Trail and the Pacheco Pond trail with different contours that would be sustainable. Commissioner Gasson commented that the west side of the Sue Alexander Trail was quite difficult to access, but the trail was very attractive since it experiences little use.

Planner Campo described the desire, and the Board agreed with the plan, to close off the trail on the north side of the Pacheco Pond to protect and provide a nesting habitat for the Western Pond Turtles which are thriving in the pond. The use of fencing and explanatory signage was recommended by the Board. Pacheco Pond is one of only three habitats for Western Pond Turtles within Marin County Open Space lands.

Vice Chair Gasson suggested, and the Board recommended changing the designation of the Buzzard's Burn Trail from a "fire road" to a "trail" which would preclude bicycle usage on the trail which is steep and in poor condition. Realignment of the trail would be reviewed. Enhanced signage would be required. Jim Chayka mentioned that access needed by PG&E and NFPD would be clarified.

Jon Campo discussed the possibility of tying the Spy Glass trail into the Montara Fire Road and Commissioner Witzel reiterated the recommendation that it be tied into the Indian Valley College Service Road and not over to the west to the Ken Harth Waterfall Trail.

There was discussion regarding enhancements to the Buck Gulch Falls Trail which has adequate parking and is attractive to seniors walking in ½ mile to view the waterfall. Implementation of IAP Standards is under consideration and would require realignment of the trail away from the creek and installation of 2 -5ft wide 45' long bridges crossing the creek bed.

The Board and staff agreed to meet on an "as needed" basis to consider concepts and specific plans which Jon Campo and Jason Hoorn will develop.

4. Advisory Board Member Comments

Chair Knowlton commented on the extensive adverse light pollution caused by the IVC Ballfield lights at night which are most likely affecting the wildlife within Indian Valley and Ignacio Valley Open Spaces. The lights are often on when no one is present on the fields. Commissioner Witzel mentioned that this was litigated at the time the lights were under consideration to be installed, and the neighborhood objections were rejected by the court.

Next Regular Meeting: April 11, 2022

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