

Notice of Public Meeting San Diego River Conservancy

A public meeting of the Governing Board of
The San Diego River Conservancy
will be held Thursday,

**November 3, 2011
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

Meeting Location

**County of San Diego Administration Center (CAC)
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302
San Diego, California 92101**

Tele-Conference Locations

**Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1310
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**Department of Finance
State Capitol, Room 1145
Sacramento, CA 95814**

(877) 287-0283 / Pass code 606349

**Contact: Michael Nelson
(619) 645-3183**

Meeting Agenda

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
- 3. Public Comment**
Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged.
- 4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report**

5. Deputy Attorney's General Report

6. San Diego River Trail: Status

Intergovernmental Working Group-Status

Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

County of San Diego: Gaps Analysis – Assessment of Segments

Megan Hamilton, Department of Parks and Recreation

7. San Diego River Conservancy: Strategic Plan / 2012 -2017

Scope of Work and Budget Estimate

Ann Miller Haddad, Michael Nelson SDRC

Peter MacCracken, Strategic Communications

8. Department of Transportation: Auction/ Former Old Town Office

Draft Environmental Impact Report

Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

9. City of San Diego/ Carlton Oaks Golf Course: Proposed Sale / 68 acres

City Council of San Diego / Land Use and Housing Committee: October 5, 2011

Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

10. Executive Officer's Report

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officers Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

- SDRC 2012 Meeting Schedule
- SDRC/SDRPF: Board of Director's Workshop
- SDRC/SCC/DGS: Transfer of Administrative Services
- Helix Water District: El Monte Valley Mining, Reclamation and Groundwater Recharge Project

11. Adjournment

Accessibility

If you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Michael Nelson at 619-645-3183

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **2**

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The Board will consider adoption of the **September 1, 2011** public meeting minutes.

PURPOSE: The minutes of the **September 1, 2011** Board Meetings are attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY (SDRC)
Minutes of September 1, 2011 Public Meeting

(Draft Minutes for Approval November 3, 2011)

Ben Clay, Governing Board Chairman called the September 1, 2011 meeting of the San Diego River Conservancy to order at approximately 1:32 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present

Brent Eidson	Mayor, City of San Diego (Designee) (arrived at 1:45 p.m.)
Dianne Jacob	Supervisor, Second District (arrived at 1:37 p.m.)
Lorie Zapf	Council Member, City of San Diego District 3 (arrived at 1:52 p.m.)
Bryan Cash	Natural Resources Agency, Alternate (via phone)
Pedro Reyes	Department of Finance, Alternate (via phone)
Ronie Clark	Dept of Parks and Recreation, Alternate (via phone-2:00 p.m.)
Ben Clay, Chairman	Public at Large
Ruth Hayward	Public at Large
Andrew Poat	Public at Large
Ann Miller Haddad	Public at Large
Gary Strawn	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
John Donnelly	Wildlife Conservation Board (via phone)

Absent

Todd Gloria	Council Member, City of San Diego District 6
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Staff Members Present

Michael Nelson	Executive Officer
Hayley Peterson	Deputy Attorney General
Julia Richards	Administrative Services Manager
Ann Van Leer	Consultant, San Diego River Conservancy

2. Approval of Minutes

Ruth Hayward moved approval of the minutes for the July 7, 2011 public meeting. The motion was seconded by **Andrew Poat** and unanimously adopted. Ann Haddad abstained.

3. Public Comment

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged.

No comment.

4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report

Ben Clay advised that there would be Committee Reports on the agenda, and reminded that Ann Miller Haddad's Report would focus on "Projects" and Andrew Poat's on "Finances"

Michael Nelson reminded the Chairman that he had requested consideration of commencing meetings at 2:00 p.m., which could be discussed while reviewing the proposed 2012 meeting schedule.

Ben Clay remarked that since last year there was some difficulty establishing dates, he was proposing the first Thursday of alternating months, except for July. He encouraged Board members to review the dates and comment, because he would like to approve the 2012 schedule at the November meeting.

5. Deputy Attorney's General Report

No Report.

6. Project and Finance Committees: Joint Report

Presentation and Report:

Ben Clay, Chair, Introduction

Ann Miller Haddad, Project Committee

Andrew Poat, Chair, Finance Committee

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 11-04

Ben Clay said he felt it was important that SDRC's projects were consistent with its statute and its Strategic Plan, that other agencies and jurisdictions had reviewed SDRC's priorities, and that a financial strategy to fund them was established. He said it was to that end that Ann Miller Haddad and Andrew Poat had agreed to serve as chairs for Committees on Projects and Finance.

He felt it was essential to be able to explain to audiences in Sacramento and local legislative bodies what SDRC had achieved what its priorities were, and what its financial needs would be to complete them.

Ann Haddad began her presentation by stating that she felt it was an imperative for Board members to become more engaged in the development and review of SDRC projects and priorities, particularly during this period of scarce funding and fiscal constraint. She recalled that at the May meeting of the Governing Board questions were raised about the consistency of approved projects with the Strategic Plan and the San Diego River Conservancy Act. She stated that she and the Executive Officer had conducted an analysis of all project approvals and resolutions and found them to be consistent with the

Strategic Plan and in compliance with SDRC's enabling statute. She added that there had also been coordination with sister organizations and agencies along the river, and that in many cases those organizations were recipients of the grants. She said she was recommending a revised template for agenda items that provides a summary and cross references that indicate consistency with the SDRC Act and its Strategic Plan. She said she had also asked that staff provide a copy of the Strategic Plan to each Board Member at meetings for their reference.

She testified that the SDRC's current Strategic Plan would expire at the end of 2011 and believed the review of projects and their consistency was well timed, because the analyses created building blocks for the development of 2012-2017 SDRC Strategic Plan, established a methodology for program and project review, as well as funding sources that would benefit Andrew Poat's work on finances. She asked Mike Nelson to review the matrices and charts they had prepared and encouraged the Board's favorable consideration of Resolution 11-04 that would initiate and launch the revision of SDRC's five year Strategic Plan.

Michael Nelson reviewed charts, matrices, spreadsheets, and analyses that identified the SDRC projects by program, fund source, completion, as well as consistency with the Strategic Plan. He stated that Status of Investment Charts concluded that for approved projects totaling \$17.8 million, more than \$15 million had been invested in two of its four programs; Recreation and Education and Land Conservation.

Funding Analysis	Allocation
Land Conservation	\$8,948,000
Recreation and Education	\$6,414,154
Natural and Cultural Resources Restoration and Preservation	\$2,132,196
Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance	\$330,000
Total	\$17,824,350

He said that in addition to the programmatic emphasis placed on land conservation and recreation, the analyses demonstrated that SDRC's projects were achieved primarily with partners, since SDRC's capital outlays and operating budget were insufficient for property ownership and management.

Andrew Poat reviewed SDRC funding history and focused on its operating and capital budgets. He stated that this analysis recommends development of a financial strategy that helps establish a management framework; a framework that he felt was essential for decisions to implement the four programs found in the existing plan. He reminded the Board that while the estimate of funding for the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan was \$165 million, the board needs to agree on a management framework to measure what we do and how well we do it, because when money starts flowing again SDRC must be prepared for the expenditure of any allocations it receives. He emphasized that new Strategic Plan must be the key to making those allocations and management decisions. His report acknowledged the difficulties of fiscal planning, but hoped a forecast could be developed which could provide a financial layer to the plan. He also felt the new document should look at investments made by partners and all financial investments in the river.

He reviewed an estimate of the Conservancy's Capital Balance

Capital balance: (approximately)
\$4.2 million (necessary re-appropriation)
\$2,736,000 FY 07-08 available 2012-13
\$1,475,000 FY 08-09 available FY2012

He then suggested a list of opportunities for funding:

State and local General Fund, Bonds,
Local government capital outlay plans
General Fund & project mitigation
Regional transportation & open space programs
Competitive Grants
Public-Private Partnerships
Park generated revenues.

Andrew Poat concluded by saying that we owe it to taxpayers to look in detail at a diverse array of funding approaches and match them to priority projects. Updating the strategic plan should include a forecast of funding needs. He recognized that the current plan anticipates \$165 million investment, which represents a tremendous amount of money to go after at this stage. However, he stressed the need for a funding strategy was necessary to pursue SDRC's highest priorities.

Ben Clay asked whether park generated revenues could be pursued by river reach or by different types of uses. He asked whether thought had been given to stables in East County for the rental of horses, whether there were private businesses that do it currently.

Andrew Poat responded that there are recreational and land use experts in this room and outside with whom SDRC should consult. He said in Portland tradeoffs were made to protect certain view corridors, but also to develop parts of the river, that a river park became a quid pro quo as part of a development agreement. He cited the leaseholds at Mission Bay for hotels and Sea World as examples.

Michael Nelson commented that the City of San Diego was about to adopt a master plan for the river that envisioned a river park from Mission Bay to Santee. He said that one of the principal sources of revenues and for park development plans would be from zoning exactions that would occur as a result of property re-developments, because most of the land in the corridor is privately owned. He suggested that this concept represents a type of public-private partnership.

Dianne Jacob said she appreciated the work that had been done to prepare for the development of the next strategic plan and particularly the reports Ann and Andrew have provided. She continued by addressing Ben Clay's questions about stables in East County. She relayed that there are very few riding stables left in the San Diego County; one in Rancho San Diego, one in South Bay and one near I-15. She said it is important to include equestrian groups that are active on the river project. She suggested some consideration be given to encourage staging areas where people with horses could park and ride and hikers could meet and take off from them. She felt many opportunities in our back country would emerge as we created the San Diego River Trail.

Michael Beck, Chairman of the San Diego River Park Foundation stated his belief that there is a lot of unexplored equity along the San Diego River and redevelopment opportunities exist on both sides of the river. He suggest that malls have a lifespan and will redevelop one day and the remaining areas surrounding the San Diego River are parking lots which would offer incredible opportunities; and, of course there is Qualcomm, which is another redevelopment opportunity screaming for a river vision. He said a number of large cities in the west had taken advantage of river corridors and redeveloped the riparian areas for recreation and multipurpose buildings for commerce and residences. It makes the little bits of pieces we do look rather sad when compared to other cities. In those cities, it has taken leadership to say we are going to think and act big and then the money will come, not the other way around.

He testified that another missing piece in the presentation was a lack of any association of land use planning with the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) within the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego, that there is a natural connection between SDRC and those regional conservation plans. He concluded his remarks with a suggestion that there be a discussion about the proper relationship between SDRC, a state chartered conservancy, and the MSCP.

Ben Clay asked about Resolution 11-04 that would launch the preparation of a new 5-year Strategic plan.

Michael Nelson stated that the purpose of the resolution was to formally launch the preparation of the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan. He said that funds were scarce, but he believed a combination of funding from SDRC's operating budget and a grant approved by the State Coastal Conservancy would be adequate to fund the Plan's development. He said he planned that the Chairs of the Project and Finance Committees would be directly involved in the preparation of a plan which would be consistent with the guidelines from the Department of Finance.

Ben Clay said he looks forward as planning proceeds to consulting with the San Diego Park Foundation, local government and other stakeholders, because when resources are tight it is critical that the region be unified in its funding requests for the restoration of the San Diego River and the development of a river park; otherwise we will find ourselves competing for the same dollars.

Michael Nelson agreed with Ben Clay's remarks about inclusion of stakeholders and the SDRPF and stated that the annual work planning process includes the SDRFP but also the San Diego River Coalition and its 70 member organizations.

Dianne Jacob asked about the cost associated with Resolution 11-04.

Michael Nelson responded that he had not developed a cost estimate, but did have \$30,000 - \$40,000 in SDRC's operating budget that could be used for this purpose. He also said that the author of the first Strategic Plan, Ann Van Leer remains under contract with the Conservancy and mentioned that a \$75,000 grant the State Coastal Conservancy had approved which could also be used.

Andrew Poat said the proposed resolution was not intended to represent a blank check and Mike Nelson would return with a proposal and cost estimate.

Michael Nelson stated SDRC would develop a budget and a scope of work before returning to the Board. He emphasized that the scope of work and budget would be funded from SDRC's operating budget and approved grants.

Dianne Jacob asked when the governing board would receive this information.

Michael Nelson responded that it would be available at the next meeting. He added that the Resolution was the result of conversations he had with Ann and Andrew and was necessary to move things forward; so any amendments or changes to the resolution were welcome.

Ben Clay stated his preference on Item 5 of the Resolution was to add "develop a budget."

Dianne Jacobs made a motion adopting resolution with addition of Ben's suggestions and the Executive Officer return to the Board with a scope of work and a cost proposal.

Andrew Poat said the existing infrastructure plan does not include a financing strategy which adds a new level of complexity to this plan.

Ben Clay stated that Paragraph 1 "Authorizes preparation of a revised Strategic and Infrastructure Plan and financing plan . . ."

Dianne Jacobs wanted to make clear that when financing options are explored Michael Beck's comments about the role of SDRC and its relationship with MSCP be incorporated. She offered that it might even provide another funding option.

Pedro Reyes said he was not sure what was meant by consistency with the Department of Finance guidelines.

Michael Nelson responded that he had found guidelines that had been promulgated by the Department of Finance (DOF) for development of a Strategic Plan. He said that it would be great if there was an individual he could speak with about them at the Department.

Pedro Reyes said he just wanted to make certain about the strategic plan guidelines was meant broadly, since it appeared that they were used in 2006.

Ben Clay asked if Pedro would prefer if we did not cite to the DOF guidelines.

Pedro Reyes added that he understood the clarification that his heartburn arose from not knowing what the fiscal impact would be.

Dianne Jacob said Pedro raised some good issues and recommended removing the reference to the DOF guidelines.

Ben Clay said that his sense of the motion would be that the reference to the guidelines be deleted, a budget developed and a reference to a financing plan be included. He then asked if there was a motion.

Diane Jacob said made a motion and Ann Haddad seconded it; the motion was approved unanimously.

7. San Diego River Trail: Status of Gaps Analysis

Report:

Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

Michael Nelson recalled the formation of the Intergovernmental Working Group and that KTU+A had completed a gaps analysis for the San Diego River Trail which focused on gaps that existed from the Pacific Ocean to the base of the El Capitan Dam. He reminded the Board that each jurisdiction identified priority projects and the next step was for the membership of the Intergovernmental Working Group to make certain their priorities are included in the Capital Improvement Programs of their respective jurisdiction.

He then announced that the Conservancy and its Working Group had a new partner, SANDAG, who had completed the San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan which was adopted to provide a regional strategy for making the bicycle a useful form of transportation. He said he was gratified to learn that this Plan included the San Diego River Trail. He then introduced Stephan Vance, a senior planner at SANDAG to share his view of this project and the San Diego River Trail.

Stephan Vance said he was really pleased to kickoff this joint effort. He testified that much of the San Diego River Trail coincides with SANDAG's Regional Bikeway Corridor Network running east to west through the heart of the region. He explained that it will be a difficult task to get completed, but his experience in working on the Bayshore Bikeway has taught him that when he engages important stakeholders, including the policy makers from the areas involved, things can get done. He said that the adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan will put an unprecedented amount of resources towards active transportation in the region. Stephan concluded by saying that SANDAG looked forward to working with SDRC and its partners to set priorities and bring SANDAG's expertise to the task of completing the San Diego River Trail.

Ben Clay asked Stephan to provide a rough timetable from start to finish, asking whether it was a 5-year or 10-year project; or, was is it tied to a big transportation funding bill that required Congressional approval.

Stephan Vance said one of the first tasks towards implementation of the Regional Bike Plan was the development of a finance strategy. He said funds available for the first couple of years were to start projects that they know are ready to move forward. He indicated that they have set aside a small amount of money for the San Diego River Trail. He felt he could provide a better timetable, once the Regional Transportation Plan was adopted and they can determine what kind of funding might be available to us through our local TransNet, transportation sales tax program and the federal program. He admitted that the federal program is a key part of SANDAG's plan and at this moment a long term federal program had not been approved.

Ben Clay asked if 5 years was reasonable.

Stephan Vance responded it is too early to tell. He said they have not be involved with the San Diego River Trail long enough to make an estimate. He said that though there were considerable financial resources, they have limited capacity to build the San Diego River Trail, Bayshore Bikeway, the Coast to Rail bikeway and all the other corridor projects in the region. SANDAG will work with SDRC to set priorities as they set their priorities for the regional network.

Michael Nelson recalled Kathy Keehan's extraordinary efforts as Executive Director of the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition to make certain the San Diego River Trail was included in SANDAG's plans. He said that Kathy had accepted a position with the Air Resources Board and that he would like to use this discussion as an opportunity to introduce and welcome the Bicycle Coalition's new executive Director, Andy Hanshaw.

Andy Hanshaw stated that he was excited to be the Coalition's Executive Director and looked forward to working with SDRC and SANDAG to pursue the development of the San Diego River Trail. He said that San Diego was poised to become a world-class bicycling destination.

8. San Diego River Conservancy / San Diego River Park Foundation: Governing Boards' Workshop

Presentation and Report:

Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

River Gorge Trail: Construction Status, Community Impacts, Modifications

Carlton Oaks Golf Course: Proposed Sale Boundaries and Adjustments

Ben Clay said that the idea of a workshop with the San Diego River Park Foundation was an idea Tom Sudberry had broached with him. He felt it was important for the Board to select a date for the two organizations to get together and discuss coordination and consistency of efforts to secure financing and restore the San Diego River and develop a river park. He said that the format and timing for this event was flexible. He mentioned that he would also like to invite Senator Christine Kehoe and possibly former Mayor Dick Murphy.

Michael Nelson said he talked to Rob Hutsel at the Park Foundation who also thought it was a good idea, and they discussed a draft agenda, which was included in the meeting materials, but stressed that it was not carved in stone. He said that perhaps the meeting could be scheduled by the end of the year. He asked if November 12 or 19 would work could work.

Lorie Zapf responded that Saturdays are always difficult for her, but Friday's worked well.

Michael Nelson said there was no reason why the workshop could not be scheduled on a Friday in November.

Michael Beck remarked that SDRC was formed as a result of the energy that was created by a river coalition of non-profits and nongovernmental organizations and that it began with a discussion with that coalition, Senator Kehoe and then Secretary of Natural Resources, Mary Nichols. He felt that there should be a focus on the relationship between SDRC and SDRPF and the timing for such a conversation was excellent. He said that the development of personal relationships between board

members had unknown potential value recognizing the technical and strategic topics that might be discussed.

Andrew Poat said he thought it was a great idea to get the board members together. He related that his experience with these types of meetings suggested that “agenda is everything”. He felt it would be helpful to frame the agenda around items of consensus.

Michael Nelson agreed and said that the agenda he and Rob discussed was simply an outline that he hoped would spark comment by the Boards of the two organizations.

Ruth Hayward said she believe that the outcomes of this meeting could provide valuable input for SDRC’s strategic plan.

Brent Eidson offered that the workshop represents a unique opportunity, that the agenda should be designed to focus on what needs to be done. He said he liked the idea about a discussion regarding interactions with the San Diego delegation because when water bonds get written or funding opportunities our boards and their members can be very influential.

9. Executive Officer’s Report

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officers Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

**Carlton Oaks: Proposed Sale Boundaries and Schedule
River Gorge Trail: Status**

Carlton Oaks: Proposed Sale Boundaries and Schedule

Michael Nelson said the Land Use and Housing Committee will consider the City’s proposal to sell the 65-acres at Carlton Oaks at its September 14th meeting. He relayed that he was advised by the Real Estate Assets Division that the Division hoped to place the transaction before City Council a week to a week and a half after that for final approval.

Ben Clay stated our that the Board’s previous direction to Mike is that he will be available at Committee Hearings and Council Meetings to respond to questions regarding SDRC’s disposition and its decision. He said that he did not want to create any interference or involvement that would jeopardize the conservation and trail easements SDRC had negotiated with TY Investments.

Michael Nelson said he would be at the meeting.

Gary Strawn asked if the alignment had changed, since issues related to the location of the trail and the berm had been raised.

Michael Nelson stated that there was no formal alignment for the trail as things stood presently. He

said that the City had completed a survey that defined the boundaries of the sale. SDRC had negotiated a floating 15 foot easement with TY Investment. The alignment would be determined after a delineation of the wetlands and consultations with regulatory agencies had occurred.

Gary Strawn wondered if the sale would include the berm, because he recalled earlier discussions regarding the boundaries being drawn on the north or the south side of the berm.

Michael Nelson said that the boundary surveys do include the berm. He said that the City of San Diego and SDRC staff has assumed the trail alignment would be on top of the berm, if regulatory approvals could be obtained.

Gary Strawn cautioned that the berm was failing in places, so that alignment may prove to be unwise.

Andrew Poat said he is unclear what the Council is voting on and what the recommendations are to date. He said he assumed the Council will be voting to approve the sale as negotiated by the City's Real Estate Assets Division. He asked if it was known what the individual budget analyst (IBA) or the City Attorney's position was.

Brent Eidson said he did not know what the IBA recommendation was, but he knew the City Attorney has helped negotiate the transaction since the beginning, but that it was his understand that they typically will not take a position.

Andrew Poat said as we know in public processes successive decisions made by different bodies invite various opportunities to revisit those decisions. He wanted to make sure that progress was being made.

CalTrans Building near Old Town State Park

Michael Nelson relayed that Caltrans was proposing to sell its former office complex in Old Town at auction and accordingly have issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report to initiate the sale. He said that this 2.5 acre site once contained San Diego River's historic streambed and processed some of the richest cultural resources in San Diego and the State of California. A conveyance to State Parks had been the subject of negotiation for years as an addition to the Old Town State Historic Park. He said that those negotiations had failed over the handling of mitigation credits the site could provide. He mentioned that the sale to State Parks had been strongly endorsed by members of the San Diego legislative delegation, the City Council and the Mayor. He asked the Board for guidance since the property that was to be sold was so important to San Diego's and the River ecological and cultural history.

Ben Clay questioned whether by law CalTrans would be required to inform SDRC because it is within a half-mile of the river.

Michael Nelson stated that he believed that SDRC's right of first refusal would apply, but was uncertain whether Caltrans may be legally exempt. He said he had asked Hayley Peterson to investigate but had hoped to receive some guidance and direction from the Board since it was meeting

today.

Hayley Peterson reminded the Board that the agenda did not include this sale as an item, so the Board's actions should be limited to a brief response and direction to put this matter on a future agenda, that no specific action could be taken.

Dianne Jacob suggested we put this on the next agenda.

Michael Nelson asked whether Hayley's comments meant that he does not have the authorization to meet with Senator Kehoe and others on the subject to gather information.

Hayley Peterson said she will discuss this with the Executive Officer and review a previously approved resolution that delegates authority to the Executive Officer to respond to issues in a timely manner. She reiterated that the purpose of today's discussion was to bring the issue forward and make sure the board is aware of it, to receive direction, and to consider placing it on a future agenda.

Deanna Spehn from Senator Christine Kehoe's office observed that the comment period for the draft EIR for the sale of the old CalTrans building closes October 3, after which CalTrans may proceed with its plans to auction property; so, we don't really have the luxury of waiting two months.

Ben Clay asked Deputy Attorney General Hayley Peterson that if Mike does not have the delegated authority to respond and a determination is made that an action must be taken quickly, does the Chair have the ability to call a special meeting to discuss actions the Board might wish to take.

Hayley Peterson answered that he could call a special meeting, moreover, a regular meeting can be called with 10 days notice and a special meeting can be call with less notice. She said the Executive Officer may comment on non-regulatory issues related to the jurisdictional authority of the San Diego River Conservancy. She promised to review whether commenting would constitute a regulatory or non-regulatory issue.

River Gorge Trail: Status

Michael Nelson said at the last meeting there were presentations from US Forest Service and the Supervisor on the status of the situation at Cedar Creek Falls. Joan Frielander, District Ranger for the Palomar District of the Cleveland National Forest announced she was developing a Closure Order, and that Order was in the included in your meeting materials. He continued that Cedar Creek Falls is closed until management decisions and practices can be put in place in consultation with users and homeowners at San Diego County Estates. Though he believed that many of the management options had been identified, US Forest Service has hired a mediator to bring stakeholders together to discuss those options and perhaps achieve consensus. Congressman Hunter's office, Supervisor Jacobs office and San Diego County Public Works are participants and we are pushing Forest Service to take actions as quickly as possible.

Ben Clay asked Mike if what he meant by "management" was management by the US Forest Service.

Michael Nelson said yes and an example of a management decision was US Forest Service's considering implementing a permit system to restrict the number of people that have access to Cedar Creek Falls; a permit for which there would be a fee.

Ruth Hayward stated that while it is important that users and residents are involved, she said that it was equally important that there is representation that is concerned with impacts to the environment; that someone should advocate for the environment.

Dianne Jacob said that the County has attended the last two sessions and have been told that their attendance may no longer be necessary; and, in reality she didn't know what more the County can do, because ultimately it is a US Forest Service issue. She said the County has provided a number of good recommendations.

She said that she felt a facilitator was engaged it to cover their backsides. She said that Ruth was correct that there should be someone advocating protecting the environment. It was one of her goals when everyone initially came together, because the area is being trashed and it was once a very pristine area. She said that she has repeatedly stated that a permit system to limit access was crucial.

She commented that from the County's standpoint, it has addressed the community's request for parking restrictions, but fears they are just band-aids. Nonetheless, parking restrictions will go into effect and if approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 28. The proposal is there would be a parking prohibition from 9:00a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Holidays, which would include Cathedral Way, Sugarplum, Thornbush Road, Love Lane, Cherish Way and Bellbottom Way?

Ruth Hayward asked whether there had been any talk of prohibiting alcohol.

Dianne Jacob responded that the US Forest Service did do that. They put up signs and agreed to do that at the meeting she had hosted. She said that they have rules in place, but the most important, outstanding issue was to begin limiting the number of people.

Michael Beck added there was a broader lesson, what resulted at River Gorge this is a reaction to opening up an area without a game plan. This is a huge issue on the environmental side because we often find that we are trying to undo decisions being made on public use. He said that those who advocate for resource protection in this County acknowledge and understand that public use can be a conservation benefit, but the sequence should be to first do a resource based analysis identifying sensitive areas, subject to erosion and other issues.

Ben Clay adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

10. Adjournment

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **3**

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC COMMENT**

PURPOSE: Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority which is not on the agenda. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Presentation times may be reduced depending on the number of speakers.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **4**

SUBJECT: **CHAIRPERSON'S AND GOVERNING BOARD
MEMBERS' REPORTS**

PURPOSE: These items are for Board discussion only and the Board
will take no formal action.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **5**

SUBJECT: **DEPUTY ATTORNEY'S GENERAL REPORT**

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO RIVER TRAIL: STATUS**

Intergovernmental Working Group-Status
Michael Nelson, Executive Officer

County of San Diego: Gaps Analysis – Assessment of Segments
Megan Hamilton, Department of Parks and Recreation

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY:
STRATEGIC PLAN / 2012 - 2017**

Scope of Work and Budget Estimate
Ann Miller Haddad, Michael Nelson SDRC
Peter MacCracken, Strategic Communications

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **8**

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: AUCTION/
FORMER OLD TOWN OFFICE**

Draft Environmental Impact Report
Michael Nelson, Executive Officer



September 16, 2011

California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis
Attention: Olga Estrada
4050 Taylor Street, MS 242
San Diego, CA 92110

RE: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex

Dear Ms. Estrada:

The purpose of this correspondence is to raise statutory issues and questions regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex in San Diego County, California (PI# 1100000072).

The San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC or Conservancy) is an independent state agency within the Natural Resources Agency. It was established by the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 32630-32661) in 2002 to restore a riparian corridor along the length of the San Diego River and to build a stream valley park. Interestingly, the findings of the Act expressly reference reestablishing cultural and historic connections between the San Diego River, Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, the Military Presidio, and the Kumeyaay Nation:

(a) The San Diego River is a natural, historic, and recreational resource in the heart of San Diego. From its headwaters near the town of Julian in east San Diego County, it runs 52 miles through Mission Valley and the first settlement in California at Old Town San Diego The river has been subjected to intense development in some parts; it runs through one of San Diego's most populated neighborhoods and is in need of restoration, conservation, and enhancement all along its length. . . . Reestablishing the cultural and historic connections between the San Diego River, Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, the Military Presidio, and the Kumeyaay Nation will provide the public with the opportunity to appreciate the state's historic beginnings.

(b) Given the opportunities available, the state recognizes the importance of holding this land in trust to be preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

(Pub. Resources Code, § 32631.)

Buttressing these findings and conclusions, the Act's first statutory purpose for which SDRC was created includes acquisition of land and historic interpretation:

(a) To acquire and manage public lands within the San Diego River area, and to provide recreational opportunities, open space, wildlife habitat and species restoration and protection, wetland protection and restoration, protection of historical and cultural resources, and protection, maintenance and improvements of the quality of the waters in the San Diego River and its watershed, its tributaries

(b) To provide for the public's enjoyment, and to enhance the recreational and educational experience and historic interpretation on public lands in the territory in a manner consistent with the protection of land and natural resources, as well as economic resources, in the area.

(Pub. Resources Code, § 32633.)

As a consequence, Staff was perplexed that Caltrans did not formally notify SDRC of its intent to sell the former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex and provide SDRC with 60 days to decide whether to purchase the property. (Sts. & Hy. Code, § 118.6.) Streets & Highways Code section 118.6 requires Caltrans to offer the property to SDRC. Staff was equally surprised that Caltrans failed to acknowledge SDRC as an interested and potentially responsible agency or to recognize its statutorily mandated first right of refusal:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the conservancy has the first right of refusal to acquire any public lands that are suitable for park and open space within the conservancy's jurisdiction when those lands become available. The conservancy may not exercise the power of eminent domain.

(Pub. Resources Code, § 32646.) The Environmental Impact Report must explain how Caltrans has or will comply with these statutory requirements.

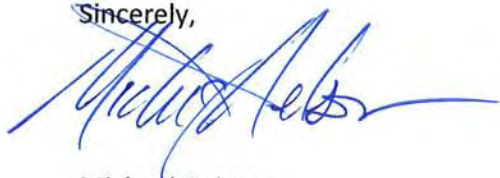
Because the Draft Environmental Impact Report states that the proposed action will have cultural resource impacts that "are both significant and unmitigable" and the action will occur within SDRC's statutory jurisdiction (**Public Res. Code, § 32632**), SDRC seeks an acknowledgement and confirmation of its right to receive formal notification of the disposal of land of notable environmental value and the opportunity as a public agency to consider its purchase. Moreover, SDRC seeks acknowledgement and confirmation of its right to exercise a first right of refusal under **Public Resources Code, section 32646**.

SDRC has established a remarkable record of achievement with federal, state and local governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations, to establish restoration, recreation and

California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis
Attention: Olga Estrada
Page 3

land conservation projects and programs along the San Diego River. SDRC would appreciate the opportunity to work with Caltrans in this matter. Please forward any response Caltrans may have to me for the Board's consideration at its next scheduled meeting on November 3, 2011.

Sincerely,



Michael Nelson
Executive Officer
San Diego River Conservancy
1350 Front Street, Suite 3024
San Diego, CA 92101

cc: Christine Kehoe, Senator, District 39
Toni Atkins, Assembly Member, District 76
Ben Clay, Chairman, San Diego River Conservancy
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair, San Diego River Conservancy
Michael Beck, Endangered Habitats League, San Diego River Park Foundation
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation, San Diego River Coalition
Bruce Coons, Executive Director, Save Our Heritage Organisation
Hayley Peterson, Deputy Attorney General



October 17, 2011

California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis
Attention: Olga Estrada
4050 Taylor Street, MS 242
San Diego, CA 92110

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report for Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation District Office Complex

Dear Ms. Estrada:

I submitted correspondence to your office September 16, 2011 that raised statutory issues and questions regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Disposal of the Former California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District Office Complex in San Diego County, California (PI# 1100000072).

The Governing Board of the San Diego Conservancy will meet November 3, 2011. As a consequence, I am inquiring when Caltrans proposes to address the Conservancy's issues. Since the Board meets every two months, I must seek formal guidance regarding the Board's disposition toward intervention in the proposed disposal and auction of the Old Town Complex at the November meeting.

Accordingly, I would like to share with board members, Caltrans's timetable for making the Draft Environmental Impact Report final, and whether a Public Hearing will be scheduled as part of its promulgation. Your ability to provide this information would greatly benefit the Board's deliberations next month.

Finally, I would also like to request that the San Diego River Conservancy be placed on your distribution list for the Environmental Impact Report and the proposed disposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Nelson".

Michael Nelson
Executive Officer
San Diego River Conservancy
1350 Front Street, Suite 3024
San Diego, CA 92101

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: **CITY OF SAN DIEGO/ CARLTON OAKS GOLF
COURSE: PROPOSED SALE / 68 ACRES**

**City Council of San Diego / Land Use and Housing
Committee: October 5, 2011**
Michael Nelson, Executive Officer



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: September 28, 2011

REPORT NO: 11-106

ATTENTION: Land Use and Housing Committee Chairman and Committee Members
Agenda of **October 5, 2011**

SUBJECT: Sale of a portion of Carlton Oaks Golf Course

REQUESTED ACTION:

1. Authorize the sale of approximately 68.9 acres of City-owned Water Fund real property comprising a portion of the Carlton Oaks Golf Course located on portions of APN 383-080-03 & 04 for \$3 million.
2. Authorize the acceptance by the City of approximately 2.6 acres of real property located on portions of APN 383-060-26 and APN 383-071-07 at no cost to the City.
3. Authorize the purchase and sale agreement between the City and TY Investment, Inc., at \$3 million.
4. Authorize the Comptroller to accept and deposit the proceeds of the sale of the property into the Capital Outlay Water Fund 400004.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the requested actions.

BACKGROUND:

The City owns approximately 106 acres of Water Fund property ("City Property") in and around Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The City Property was acquired by the Water Fund in 1933 as part of the lands for Mission Reservoir, which was never built, and to allow the dredging of the San Diego River.

The northern portion of the City Property has been leased for golf course purposes since 1959. The lease is currently on holdover on a month-to-month basis, generating annual revenue of \$237,869.76. TY Investment, Inc., a California corporation ("TY"), owns 105 acres of property on the north and east sides of the City Property and operates the Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The southern portion of the City Property not being leased for the golf course runs along and includes the San Diego River.

City staff negotiated a proposed sale, subject to City Council approval, of approximately 68.9 acres of the City Property (the "Sale Property;" i.e., that portion of the City Property used for the golf course) to TY for \$3 million, together with TY's conveyance of approximately 2.6 acres of its property to the City. The net acreage changing hands would be approximately 66.3 acres. The City would retain the balance of the City Property along and including the San Diego River. The proposed sale would generate capital outlay funds for the Water Fund.

The value of the Sale Property is \$3 million, as determined by a qualified MAI appraiser. The appraiser indicated that mitigation use could potentially achieve the highest achievable sale price, which is greater than the value in its present state. It was estimated that it would cost the City \$6.4 million to develop the property for use as a mitigation bank (assuming that 75% of the City property (49 acres) could be used for wetland/riparian creation). The appraiser investigated the revenue, cost, and absorption associated with establishing a mitigation bank and applied current rates of return to the net cash flows from the banking endeavor to calculate the present value. When all of these calculations were taken into account, the value of the property, in its current condition, was determined to be \$3 million as of the date of the appraisal.

The San Diego River Conservancy, an agency of the State of California ("SDRC"), once held a right of first refusal to purchase the Sale Property, but in September 2010 SDRC agreed to waive that right if TY purchases the Sale Property and: (1) provides SDRC with an easement to develop a public trail on the Sale Property and extinguishes TY's development rights for commercial, industrial, agricultural or residential development on the Sale Property; and (2) provides SDRC with a right of first refusal to purchase all of TY's property comprising the Carlton Oaks Golf Course.

If the Sale Property is sold to TY, the City will have the right to continue and complete a mitigation project already underway along the San Diego River, a temporary invasive plant control and restoration project easement, and an access easement. In addition, the City will reserve the right to record a public trail easement and environmental mitigation easements related to a public trail easement on that portion of the Sale Property adjacent to the San Diego River.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Per the Development Services Department: This activity is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15312 (Surplus Government Property Sales). The sale does not propose or allow a change in use and/or development footprint from the existing golf course. The subject property is not located in areas of statewide, regional, or area wide concern identified in Section 15206(b)(4). Upon completion of the sale of the property, the San Diego River Conservancy will record a conservation easement over the Sale Property to ensure that no building occurs on the property and the land remains in its current state. Additionally, upon completion of the sale of the property, the City will reserve an environmental mitigation easement for the approved mitigation site for the old Mission Dam Dredging Project, and will have the right to record an easement on a portion of the property for a potential future trail. An

easement for the trail is not being recorded with this activity. Regardless of ownership, any change in use and/or development (including a trail) on the site will be subject to future CEQA review, due to the presence of environmentally sensitive lands.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Proceeds of the sale, minus approximately \$33,000 in expenses related to the sale (for surveying, Phase I environmental report, appraisal, title and escrow fees, etc.), would be deposited into the Capital Outlay Water Fund 400004.

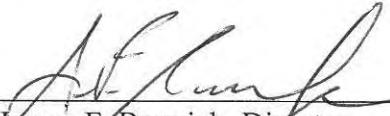
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

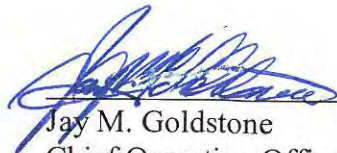
City staff attended and answered questions at the San Diego River Conservancy Meeting of September 2, 2010, when the San Diego River Conservancy approved Resolution 10-06B waiving its first right of refusal and rights under the surplus land statutes to acquire the property.

In addition to discussions with the San Diego River Conservancy, City staff has been in communication with various other interested groups such as the San Diego River Park Foundation, Citizens Coordinate for Century 3, and the City's Park and Recreation Department.

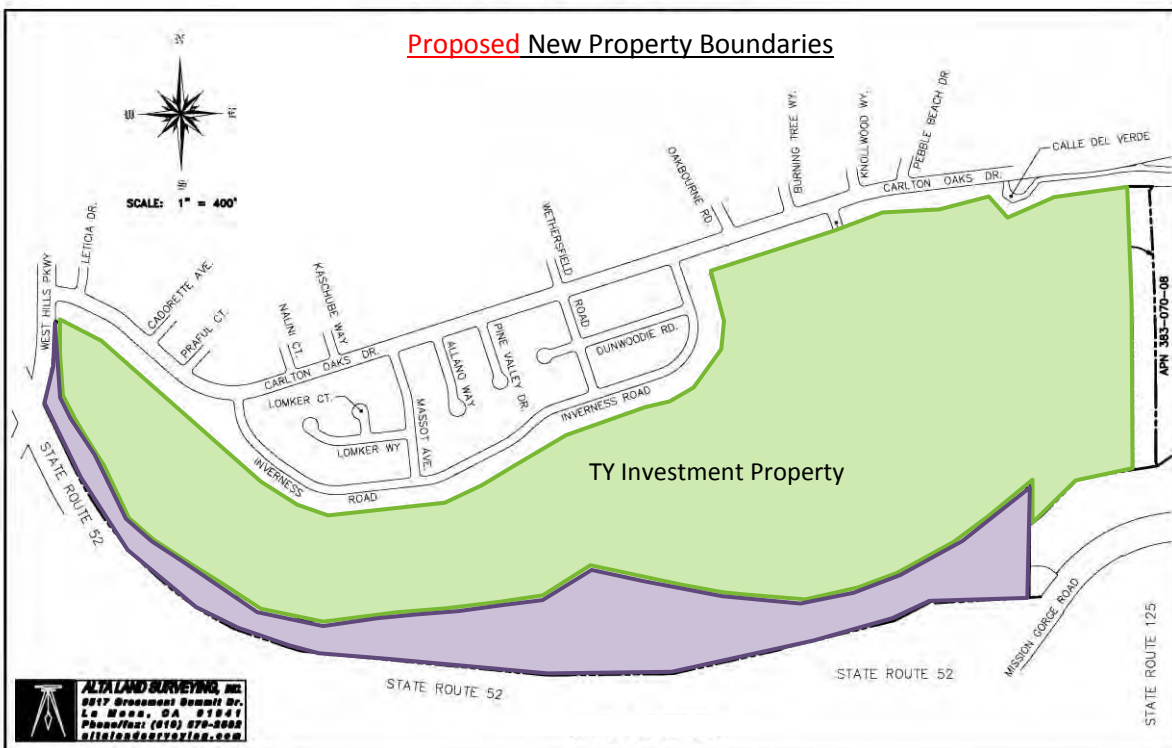
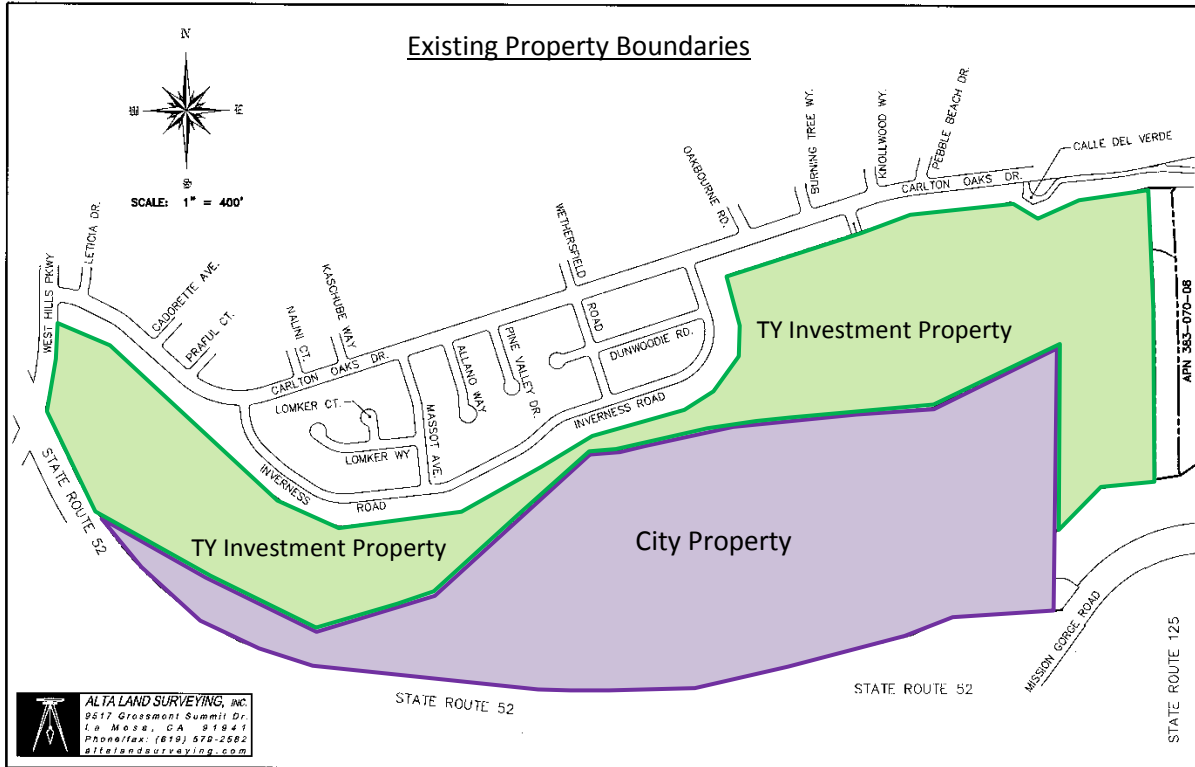
KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

The City of San Diego, the San Diego River Conservancy, and TY Investments, Inc., a California corporation.


James F. Barwick, Director
Real Estate Assets Department


Jay M. Goldstone
Chief Operating Officer

Carlton Oaks Existing and Proposed Property Boundaries



Carlton Oaks
Appraisal Abstract

Property: Portions of APN 383-080-03 & 04 consisting of approximately 65.4 gross acres, improved with a portion of Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The property is located in a flood plain and is highly constrained.

Date of Value: September 1, 2011
Jones, Roach & Caringella, Inc.

Highest and Best Use: The highest and best use of the Property was determined to be wetland mitigation. Appraisal assumes approximately 49 acres of the property would qualify for wetland and riparian habitat restoration credits.

Mitigation Bank Development Costs: The financial risk and liability of developing a mitigation bank is significant. The owner would bear all responsibility for the wetlands. Mitigation bank development costs are estimated to be in excess of \$6,460,230. Approximately 2' of soil would need to be removed and hauled from approximately 75% of site. CEQA review, grading, planting, five year maintenance and biological monitoring would also be required.

CEQA Preparation & Processing: CEQA preparation and processing is estimated to cost \$150,000-\$400,000. However, the appraisal assumes that CEQA review would not be required.

Appraisal Methodology: *Discounted Cash Flow Analysis:* The costs associated with establishing a mitigation bank were estimated (grading, habitat restoration, 5 years maintenance and biological monitoring and long term management endowment funding) to be absorbed over an eight year period. The required rate of return was applied to the net cash flow to calculate the present value of the Property.

Sales Comparison Approach: the Property's characteristics were compared with those of similar properties which have recently sold.

Conclusion: The Property was appraised at \$3,000,000.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: **10**

SUBJECT: **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officers Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

- **SDRC 2012 Meeting Schedule**
- **SDRC/SDRPF: Board of Director's Workshop**
- **SDRC/SCC/DGS: Transfer of Administrative Services**
- **Helix Water District: El Monte Valley Mining, Reclamation and Groundwater Recharge Project**



**SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY
2012 MEETING SCHEDULE**

Thursday	January 5	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	March 1	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	May 3	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	July 12	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	September 6	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Thursday	November 1	2:00 - 4:00 pm



Helix Water District

7811 University Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91942-0427

(619) 466-0585

FAX (619) 466-1823

www.hwd.com

Setting standards of excellence in public service

September 8, 2011

Michael Nelson
San Diego River Conservancy
1350 Front Street, Suite 3024
San Diego, California 92101

Dear Mr. Nelson,

We want to thank you for your encouragement and support of the El Monte Valley Mining, Reclamation, and Groundwater Recharge Project (El Monte Valley Project). Your advocacy has been a positive force in this project, and we know how important restoration of the San Diego River Valley is to the community at large. We wanted you to be among the first to know that the Helix Water District (District) Board of Directors voted on September 7, 2011 to suspend the El Monte Valley Project because of a delay in the availability of advanced treated recycled water and increased project cost.

For the El Monte Valley Project, Padre Dam Municipal Water District (Padre Dam) would produce the advanced treated recycled water, which requires upgrading and expansion of their reclamation facility. Due to a revenue shortfall, Padre Dam has deferred these improvements for at least four years. Also, during the preparation of the draft Environmental Impact Report, as the project design and cost were further refined, the estimated cost of the advanced treated recycled water increased from \$1,200/acre-foot to about \$1,850/acre-foot. Before moving forward, the District needs to have more certainty regarding both available water and total project cost.

Helix Water District remains committed to finding new, locally-controlled sources of water to reduce San Diego County's dependence on imported water from Northern California and the Colorado River and we will continue to explore options for water reuse.

With the El Monte Valley Project, the advanced treated recycled water has to be percolated into a groundwater basin, extracted and blended with all of the other raw water supplies, and be treated again before it can be used as drinking water. This is an example of indirect potable reuse. The water industry is now analyzing the science and technology of direct potable reuse, to be able to blend advanced treated recycled water with other raw surface water supplies where water treatment plants are located downstream.

We will seek legislative and/or regulatory revisions which would allow direct potable reuse by collaborating with agencies that have similar projects or water supply objectives. If at some point in the future, the California Department of Public Health Title 22 regulations for advanced treated recycled water were changed to allow for direct potable reuse, the recycled water could potentially bypass the El Monte Valley and be placed directly into Lake Jennings. Advanced treated recycled water is higher quality than our imported water supplies. Pumping advanced treated recycled water directly to Lake Jennings will also eliminate the need for recharge facilities in the Valley and lower the project cost.

We appreciate your interest in and support of the project and the comments you have given us. Visit our website (www.elmontevalley.com) for details outlined in our Staff Report and Board Meeting Minutes. If you have questions, please contact Carlos Lugo at (619) 667-6241 or carlos.lugo@helixwater.org.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Weston
General Manager

**Elected Board
of Directors:**
DeAna R. Verbeke
President

John B. Linden
Vice President
Kathleen Coates Hedberg
Charles W. Muse
Richard K. Smith

Staff:
Mark S. Weston
General Manager

Donna Bartlett-May
Board Secretary

Legal Counsel:
Scott C. Smith



HELIX WATER DISTRICT
Setting standards of excellence in public service

BOARD REPORT

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Mark S. Weston, General Manager *msw*

INITIATED BY: Carlos Lugo, Director of Engineering
Lisa Irvine, Director of Administrative Services
Mark Umphres, Director of Water Quality/System Operations
Tristan Hayman, Director of Field Operations/Distribution

DATE: September 7, 2011

SUBJECT: El Monte Valley Mining, Reclamation, and Groundwater Recharge Project

Recommendation:

The Board direct the General Manager to implement the following actions regarding the El Monte Valley Mining, Reclamation, and Groundwater Recharge Project (El Monte Valley Project):

- Suspend the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the El Monte Valley Project and “idle” processing the Major Use Permit for the sand mining portion of the Project. Within the County of San Diego processing alternatives, the District may “idle” processing a Major Use Permit for up to two years.
- Terminate all current contracts on the El Monte Valley Project once the grant conditions are met and final public outreach is released.
- Seek legislative and/or regulatory revisions which would allow advanced treated recycled water using micro-filtration, 100% reverse osmosis, and UV disinfection through direct potable reuse as a supplemental untreated (raw) surface water supply. These efforts would include collaborating with agencies which have similar projects or water supply objectives.
- Retain within Helix Water District’s (Helix) 2020 Vision Plan the development of a local water supply project using advanced treated recycled water.
- Analyze alternatives regarding Helix’s ownership of the El Monte Valley property and report back to the Board with a recommendation. This analysis will include resolution of the grading and mitigation requirements under the Major Use Permit issued by the County of San Diego for the El Capitan Golf Course. Mitigation requirements and costs from the golf course project will be litigated in the lawsuit with El Capitan Golf Club, LLC.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of November 3, 2011

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **ADJOURNMENT**

SELECTED ARTICLES OF INTEREST

S.D. River projects win national honors, state grant

By Mike Lee-San Diego Union Tribune (Oct. 3, 2011)

Carlton Oaks Golf Club future in doubt

By Nathan Max-San Diego Union Tribune (Oct. 6, 2011)

Q&A with retiring Helix water manager

By Karen Pearlman-San Diego Union Tribune (Oct. 17, 2011)

River Blitz Surveys the State of Santee's River Parks

By Steven Bartholow- Santee Patch (Oct. 18, 2011)

The San Diego River: A diamond in the rough

By Cary Lowe & Rob Hutsel-San Diego Union Tribune (Oct. 23, 2011)

Helix suspends water reclamation project

By Karen Pearlman-San Diego Union Tribune (Sept. 7, 2011)

It all started when he needed something to do

In three years, Robert Doty has piled up the service to Lakeside's River Park

By Lisa Deaderick-San Diego Union Tribune (Sept. 8, 2011)

Battle of Old Town: Caltrans vs. Parks

By Roger Showley-San Diego Union Tribune (Sept. 9, 2011)

Ex-San Diego mayor offers Chargers stadium solution

By Matthew T. Hall-San Diego Union Tribune (Sept. 21, 2011)

Expanding Old Town State Historic Park

By Margie M. Palmer- San Diego Uptown News (Sept. 30, 2011)

RAMONA: Authorities close Cedar Creek Falls trails after fatality

By Gary Warth- North County Times (July 8, 2011)

RAMONA: Cedar Creek Falls trails may not reopen Nov. 8, officials say

By Morgan Cook- North County Times (Sept. 24, 2011)

REGION: Some people misusing rescue copters, authorities say

By Morgan Cook - North County Times (Oct. 2, 2011)

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

SignOnSanDiego.com
BY THE UNION-TRIBUNE

S.D. River projects win national honors, state grant



Written by Mike Lee 11:41 a.m., Oct. 3, 2011

The San Diego River Improvement Project has garnered a prestigious award from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Landmark Award recognizes a work completed 15 to 50 years ago that has retained "design excellence over time" and "significantly contributes to the public realm."

Designed by San Diego landscape architects Wimmer Yamada and Caughey, the first phase of the river project was completed in the 1980s. It features constructed wetland habitats, wildlife preserves, picnic areas, bikeways and pedestrian paths in Mission Valley. Most importantly, proponents said the project reduced seasonal flooding.

“This was among the first cities to make the leap of letting our rivers be visible. It pointed to the future and because it succeeded, others have followed. Now it's much more common for cities to do this,” said the awards jury. “People think this occurred naturally, which is the beauty of the project. We hope they'll expand this project and continue its success.”

The award ceremony will be at the San Diego Convention Center on Nov. 2 during the annual meeting of the landscape architects group.

Rob Hutsel, head of the umbrella group San Diego River Park Foundation, said the improvement project was cutting edge for its time and the recognition is good for ongoing efforts to extend riverside paths and parks. Today, he said, it's clear that open areas for trails should be wider than initially designed to reduce safety threats for walkers and runners in the thick riparian vegetation.

San Diego's namesake river received more attention Monday with the announcement of a \$150,000 grant. It's targeted at developing an interpretive plan for new exhibitions and programs intended to rejuvenate the Junípero Serra Museum in Presidio Park.

The state's Coastal Conservancy awarded the money to a partnership between the San Diego History Center and the San Diego River Conservancy. It will allow the history center to consult with several local partners to synthesize the historical, cultural, archaeological, biological and historic ecology of the Serra museum area.

The goal is to examine the many land-use decisions that have affected that spot and produce an interactive experience for students, scholars and the general public.

Connections between people and the river are expected to play an important role in the initiative.

“The location of the San Diego River was one of the primary factors involved in selecting the site for the Presidio and mission” said Bill Lawrence, chairman of history center's Serra Museum Committee. “These forthcoming exhibitions at the Serra will inform people that human culture and the environment are in continuous dialogue.”

At the San Diego River Conservancy, executive director Mike Nelson said the historical efforts will contribute to environmental goals. “Creating a better connection between the river's past uses will aid us in building support for its future conservation,” he said.

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Carlton Oaks Golf Club future in doubt

Written by Nathan Max 2:59 p.m., Oct. 6, 2011

SAN DIEGO — The future of Carlton Oaks Golf Club remains in doubt after a San Diego City Council committee postponed a decision on whether to approve the sale of city land to the facility's owners.

The proposed \$3 million sale of nearly 70 acres is opposed by several environmental groups and state Sen. Christine Kehoe. County Supervisor Dianne Jacob is in favor of the deal, which supporters say is necessary for the 52-year-old course to stay in business.

The city's Land Use and Housing Committee could take up the issue again as early as Oct. 26, but a second public hearing on the matter has not been set. The first hearing, which took place Wednesday, lasted two hours and featured 55 public speakers.

Of those, 44 expressed support for the deal. Many of the supporters were Carlton Oaks employees, who packed the committee meeting room and all wore green stickers that read: "I Support Carlton Oaks."

The majority of the 170-acre Carlton Oaks facility is in the East County city of Santee, but the course rents a significant portion of land that lies within the San Diego city limits. A 50-year lease on the city-owned property expired at the end of 2008, and the course's owners have been renting on a month-to-month basis since 2009 at an annual rate of \$240,000.

TY Investment, which owns the course, currently controls 105 acres of the property. It has been trying to renegotiate its lease or purchase city-owned land that runs through the course for nearly four years, according to attorney Felix Tinkov.

TY Investment can no longer afford the rent, and Tinkov said the city initially rebuffed efforts to renegotiate a cheaper lease in 2008. If a purchase of the land isn't completed, or the rent isn't lowered, the owners will be forced to shut down the course and redevelop the land it owns.

The 18-hole golf course is located along the San Diego River and employs about 100 people.

"Without the sale, we're back to square one and we've got to give all these folks pink slips," Tinkov said. "If we can work out a lease renegotiation, and it works, then great. That's perfect. It just has to work economically so we don't have to lay people off and change the use of the property."

According to the terms of the proposed deal, the city would sell 68.9 acres to TY Investment. The city would retain 37.7 acres and acquire 2.6 acres from TY Investment. The city would also

retain easement rights to a trail along the berm and receive access to cross TY Investment property.

Groups opposing the deal are uneasy about transferring public land in an environmentally sensitive area to a private owner. There were 11 speakers against the sale at Wednesday's meeting.

The proposed deal received little support among the four council members, who ordered city staff and the course's owners back to the negotiating table.

"By and large, I think selling public lands is not a wise thing to do," Councilman Todd Gloria said. "I think other options are available to us."

Councilman Kevin Faulconer said he needed time to "figure this out," and David Alvarez said: "I would prefer a different route."

Councilwoman Sherri Lightner added that she did not support the sale, but she also didn't want to see the golf course go away.

Q&A with retiring Helix water manager

Written by Karen Pearlman 6:50 p.m., Oct. 17, 2011

LA MESA — Mark Weston, general manager at the Helix Water District for the past 10 years, will retire at the end of the year after a 38-year career in water, wastewater and municipal infrastructure engineering that took him from his Northern California roots to Helena, Mont., to Poway, and finally to La Mesa.

Weston, a licensed civil engineer for 35 years in California, will spend retirement traveling with his wife of 38 years, Anne. The couple has two sons.

The district serves 262,000 customers in La Mesa, El Cajon, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of Lakeside.

Weston, 61, took some time to answer a few questions about his tenure with the district, and what he sees in the future for that precious resource of water.

Q: What are you most proud of having accomplished during your tenure?

A: Water is essential to life and abundant water is critical to our quality of life. Helix Water District has an outstanding history of providing high quality water at the lowest price possible focusing on exceptional customer service while maintaining \$1.5 billion of infrastructure. I am very proud of collective accomplishments at Helix where over the last 15 years we modernized our infrastructure and business practices during a time of great technological advancement. I am also proud that the district is financially sound and we are reinvesting in the district's infrastructure to assure our customers will continue to have the water they need.

Q: What have been the biggest challenges during your tenure?

A: Along with every water provider in Southern California, rapidly rising wholesale water rates and reduced water sales have placed great rate pressure on our customers. The biggest challenge is maintaining the confidence and trust of our customers that we are managing the district as efficiently as possible. Based on our comparative water rates and reinvestment plans, our ratepayers can be assured we are excellent stewards of the District.

Q: What do you see in the future for water consumption/water conservation in Southern California?

A: Helix is the poster child for water conservation. Four years ago, customers were using 145 gallons per person per day. Today we use 106. That translates to more than 25 percent water conservation. Helix has already exceeded the water conservation goals set by state law. We have the second lowest per capita water use in the county. I see conservation continuing. We will re-landscape Southern California over the next generation. We use less water today in all of Southern California than we did 20 years ago while our population has increased from 12 million to nearly 19 million people. Efficient use of water will continue. We will stretch our limited water supplies and develop more local water supply projects such as reusing highly purified recycled water or desalination to meet the needs of the future. We will also continue to see upward pressure on rates.

Q: Do you think the San Diego County Water Authority and Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles will patch up their differences?

A: San Diego County Water Authority purchases the single largest amount of water from Metropolitan Water District, but they find themselves paying a disproportionate share of the cost. The current dispute is focused on determining a fair and equitable price for water. The courts will provide the answer. We are all in water because we believe in the mission of providing this essential service to the public. It is in our ratepayers' best interest to resolve these differences.

Q: When the economy eventually improves and the county begins growing again, will the water supply be in good enough shape to handle it?

A: Conservation is here to stay. I would expect countywide that we could reduce water usage on a per capita basis by another 5-10 percent. Growth has very little impact on future water demand particularly in the near term. New building standards which include landscaping, assures that new buildings are the most water conserving in the county. The building industry has supported the move to more water conserving land use planning. We will also develop more local water projects to assure that we have the water availability for our customers. Imported water supplies will be less reliable in the future so the emphasis on local water projects and conservation is a sound strategy for the future.

Q: Long range, what do you see as possible answers to water supply issues in the East County?

A: Highly purified 100 percent reverse osmosis recycled water is a safe, proven technology to develop new water supplies in the East County. The public accepts this technology. It is the same technology used to desalinate ocean water only less expensive. Conservation will be another way to stretch our water supplies. We will see more and more lawns removed and replaced with water conserving landscaping.



River Blitz Surveys the State of Santee's River Parks

By [Steven Bartholow](#) October 18, 2011

The San Diego River Park Foundation and its volunteers are hard at work keeping river clean, especially in Santee. See photos of the latest river survey.



Volunteers turned up at Mast Park on Saturday ready for a nice walk along the San Diego River with a specific purpose in mind- surveying trash, non-native plants and other anomalies in the semi-annual River Blitz.

The San Diego River Park Foundation organizes the Blitz, which covers the river in Santee from Chubb Lane all the way through Carlton Oaks to Mission Trails. The volunteers broke into teams of four or five people, with at least one member being a trained leader, so volunteers need to experience.

Just about anything and everything ends up along the river, taken there and left by people or carried downstream: lawn chairs, dryers, lots of beer bottles and plastic bags, waste at fishing sites, homeless encampments, construction dumping and much more (see photos).

There are a handful of non-native, invasive plants we were to keep an eye out for, including Tamarix, Eucalyptus and Egyptian Palms. These crowd out native plants and suck up a lot of water.

My team was assigned the south bank of the river, beginning near Chubb Lane and Cottonwood Avenue, near the RCP Brick facility- which butts up against Las Colinas.

One person took photos, and three others took notes, one about trash, another about non-native plants and another about any anomalies within the park.

The data is then compiled into a State of the River report, which guides future cleanup events and other projects.

The San Diego River Park Foundation is doing a lot of work in and around Santee, and Santee Patch will continue to report on their activities.

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

The San Diego River: A diamond in the rough

By Cary Lowe & Rob Hutsel Oct. 23, 2011



Hikers explore the rugged upper reaches of the proposed San Diego River Gorge Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River near Julian. — John Gastaldo

The San Diego River Improvement Project recently received the Landmark Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation for its wetland habitats, wildlife preserves, picnic areas, bikeways, pedestrian paths and its improved ability to reduce flooding. In the commentary below, the authors discuss the continuing effort to transform the river into one of the region's crown jewels.

The San Diego River is our region's most invisible and underappreciated feature. It runs for 52 miles, through a dozen communities, from its source near Julian to Ocean Beach. Yet, it is largely unknown to most residents, other than when it occasionally floods Mission Valley malls during the winter or when drivers cross over its wide mouth on their way to the beach.

In fact, the river gave birth to the city of San Diego and the region. Before the arrival of European explorers, the Kumeyaay long inhabited the river valley. For early settlers, the river similarly was key to establishment of missions, farms and eventually urban communities.

Although the river was prone to occasional flooding, this became a serious issue after World War II, when commercial development in the river corridor began in earnest.

Despite its low profile, the river is a critically important environmental feature. The river and its tributaries drain a watershed of 440 square miles, including pristine canyons, towering waterfalls, hiking trails and important riparian habitat. Those features, coupled with a vision of how much more of a resource the river could be, have been the impetus behind many years of effort to preserve the river's remaining natural form and restore parts that have been rerouted, drained or otherwise impacted. The San Diego River Coalition, a collection of more than 70 environmental, user, community and planning groups organized by the San Diego River Park Foundation, has just celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its efforts.

This view of the river as a resource to be restored and protected was not always so. In the early 1950s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers realigned and channeled the portion of the river west of what is now Interstate 5 to keep silt out of San Diego Bay. After development of Mission Valley began, the same treatment was proposed for several miles inland. It was only because of the concerted opposition of civic and environmental groups, along with thousands of local residents, in the 1960s that the river avoided becoming a copy of the concrete-lined Los Angeles River.

Today, the emphasis is on making the river a vital element of the community. Recreational trails already run from the ocean nearly four miles upriver, and in segments along other stretches. Efforts are under way to continue the trails for most of the river's length. Development, both commercial and residential, increasingly is being oriented toward the river, to take advantage of the views and recreational amenities it provides. The city and county of San Diego, as well as the city of Santee, have established parks along the river, and the River Park Foundation is planning a major community center in Mission Valley for public education and involvement. Organized cleanup and conservation activities take place regularly. The state's San Diego River Conservancy has been established to be a significant partner in these efforts. Land conservancies, notably the River Park Foundation and Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, have been acquiring land within and adjacent to the river to protect and restore wetlands, watersheds and wildlife habitats. In some cases, private owners, such as the Grant family in Mission Valley, have donated land or given easements across their land. And the city of San Diego is in the process of formulating a long-range River Park Master Plan for the portion of the river corridor within the city.

Still, much more is needed. In order to establish a trail network along the river, additional land or easements must be acquired, a costly process. Wetlands and other riparian habitat that have been heavily impacted over the years need to be restored, including removal of invasive plants that choke the waterway.

Many of these objectives can only be attained through redevelopment or acquisition of older developments that encroach upon the river's natural course and by ensuring that new developments learn from past experience and not build in areas prone to flooding.

The agencies and organizations concerned with the vitality and usability of the river corridor recognize that this is a long-term effort. In an era of tight public budgets and reduced charitable donations, it will be even more difficult, even with an army of volunteers.

Today, the San Diego River remains a diamond in the rough. However, with continued effort and dedication, those dedicated to the future of the river, along with all residents of the region, can look forward to the day when the San Diego River will be recognized by all – like Balboa Park and San Diego Bay – as one of the jewels of the region.

Lowe is a land-use attorney who serves as chairman of the City of San Diego Wetlands Advisory Board and as a board member of the San Diego River Park Foundation. Hutsel is executive director of the San Diego River Park Foundation.

Helix suspends water reclamation project

Written by [Karen Pearlman](#) 7:39 p.m., Sept. 7, 2011

LA MESA — A \$200 million East County project that would have bolstered water supplies with highly treated wastewater has been suspended because of high cost and other obstacles.

The Helix Water District board of directors voted Wednesday to put the long-planned El Monte Valley reclamation project on hold after spending about \$2.2 million on it. Grants from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and from the County Water Authority covered about half of that cost.

The project called for pumping the treated wastewater from the Padre Dam Municipal Water District in Santee 11 miles to underground recharge basins in El Monte Valley near Lakeside, where it would mix with groundwater. After percolating for six months or more, the water was to be pumped out for more treatment at a Helix plant before it was piped to customers. Sand mining would have been done in the valley as part of the project, and revenue it produced was to help pay the cost.

“There was great support and great interest... the El Monte project was visionary,” said Mark Weston, Helix general manager. The district began work on the plan in 2005.

“The goal was to develop sustainable local water supply from water that is now ending up in the ocean, the goal was to improve the environment,” Weston told the board, visiting Padre Dam Municipal Water District Director James Peasley and members of the public who attended the meeting.

He said the district staff is not recommending discontinuing the idea, but it may need to be changed.

“We learned that the cost is up,” he said. “It’s not unaffordable, but it does increase cost of water we would purchase from Padre Dam. This gives us time to take a half step back.”

The advanced treatment expected at Padre Dam as part of the project would require upgrading and expanding Padre Dam’s reclamation facility. Because of its own revenue shortfall, Padre Dam has deferred those improvements for at least four years.

“We hope to work out all these technical and financial issues and move forward in a positive way,” Peasley told the Helix board.

Helix spokeswoman Kate Breece said that during preparation of an environmental impact report, which cost the district \$45,000, the estimated cost of the advanced treated recycled water went from \$1,200 an acre-foot to nearly \$1,850 an acre-foot. An acre-foot is enough to supply two average households for a year.

“It’s kind of sad that we spent a lot of time and money on this project,” said Kathleen Coates Hedberg, a Helix director. “It does seem like with the hurdles, obstacles and challenges, it’s time to step back and re-evaluate.”

Some residents of the rural El Monte Valley have said in the past that they feared the project would foul their water wells.

Before moving forward, the district needs to have more certainty regarding supply and project cost, Breece said.

She said that if state public health regulations for the treated recycled water were some day changed to allow for direct potable reuse, the recycled water would not have to be piped to the El Monte Valley and instead could be placed directly into Lake Jennings. That arrangement would be much less expensive.

“Advanced treated recycled water is higher quality than our imported water supplies,” she said.

Weston said that in working in the El Monte Valley, the district uncovered some “cultural resources... ancient cultures, Native American artifacts.”

“There is still a growing concern that there may be more cultural resources that would impact the project,” he said. “There are still some questions that need to be answered. This is an appropriate time to pause and suspend (the project).”

The San Diego Union-Tribune.



It all started when he needed something to do

In three years, Robert Doty has piled up the service to Lakeside's River Park

Written by [Lisa Deaderick](#) midnight, Sept. 8, 2011



Robert Doty

In 2008, Robert Doty's wife, [Sherri](#), encouraged him to find something to do.

“I started driving my wife crazy and she said, ‘Find something to get involved in and something to do,’” he said with a laugh, explaining that health issues had put an end to his accounting career a few years before, which meant he was spending most of his time at home. “She found an online listing at the (Lakeside) [River](#) Park... she started to do it with me, and at some point I decided I wanted to do more.”

Doty, 45, lives in Lakeside with his wife; their two daughters and two foster children are all adults now. He started out as a gatekeeper at Lakeside's [River](#) Park Conservancy, which works to “preserve and restore” the environment of the [San Diego River](#) and create various opportunities for people in East County. Unlocking and locking the gates of the trail provided

exercise because it required walking the length of the trail, making sure no one would be locked in.

He has since become the “lights guy” for the park’s annual fundraiser, stringing holiday lights along the trail, in the trees and over the observation deck, said Cindy Collins, the membership and volunteer manager for the park. One of his primary responsibilities is leading the bird [nest box](#) program to attract the Western blue bird and the violet green swallow back to the [San Diego Riverbed](#).

“Boy [Scouts](#) build [nest boxes](#) to restore the habitats, to get natural birds back into these habitats,” said Doty, who won the park’s highest award last year, the Joan Burnett Memorial Award. He also volunteers to work at the river cleanup events and at the park’s 5k run.

“I’m what they call the ‘right-hand guy.’ If something’s not working or if there’s a problem somewhere, ‘Where’s Robert, because Robert can fix it,’” he said. “I can help someone if they need help. I’m a quick thinker on my feet, and I think that’s why they like to have me around.”

He enjoys the work at the park because the conservation group works to restore the river to its natural state, he said. It can be tough working in 100-degree weather or in the rain, and around snakes or spiders, but he spends at least 20 hours volunteering during an average week, and he believes in the work and that it has positive affects on the environment. Plus, he wanted to try and return a small part of what he feels his community has given him. When he was ill, he and his family received help from community organizations.

“I just felt it was my time to give back. You know, I like giving back to my community because my community has been good to me,” he said.

Do you know of a volunteer who should be in the spotlight? Contact Lisa Deaderick at (619) 293-2503, or lisa.deaderick@uniontrib.com.

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

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BY THE UNION-TRIBUNE

Battle of Old Town: Caltrans vs. Parks



The San Diego district headquarters for Caltrans was built in Old Town from 1951 to 1964 and replaced by the present building on Taylor Street in 2006. — State of California

By [Roger Showley](#), September 9, 2011

Friday is [California Admission Day](#), so perhaps it's fitting that a cat fight has broken out between two state agencies over a building in the state's birthplace, [Old Town San Diego](#).

The state Department of Transportation wants to auction its former [San Diego](#) headquarters in Old Town to the highest bidder. The state Parks and Recreation Department had hoped it would get the 60-year-old building, demolish it and add the 2.5-acre site to its 13-acre Old Town historic Park immediately south.

But parks couldn't come up with the \$10.7 million asking price, set five years ago, and [Caltrans](#) doesn't want to wait any longer to get the white elephant off its hands.

"We tried to give it to Parks and Rec on three different occasions," said Caltrans spokesman Edward Cartagena. "We couldn't get a deal to work it out."

Old Town plan update

An urban design and land use charrette workshop is set for 4 to 8 p.m. Sept. 27 to discuss an update to the Old Town San Diego community plan. It will be held at 2375 Congress St. in Old Town. Information: [Land Use Planning Charrette](#)

Caltrans said it is spending \$50,000 annually on maintenance and security on the vacated 115,735-square-foot building, which it built and expanded starting in 1951 at 2829 Juan St. The agency moved to its present headquarters across the street in 2006.

The property was appraised at \$10.7 million at the time, but real estate experts say it may be worth a small fraction of that because of environmental issues and use restrictions -- not to mention historic and archaeological issues that would need to be addressed.

Cartagena said a planned transfer to state parks fell apart and now the department is bound by state law to sell it for fair market value to the highest bidder.

"Once it's sold, we will not have any hand in deciding what will be built or what can or cannot be done," he said. Those decisions will be in the hands of the city of San Diego.

Comments on an environmental impact report are due Oct. 3 and marketing is expected to begin soon after, he said. An auction is tentatively set for January.

(We're awaiting comments from state parks.)

The building is adjacent to Old San Diego State Historic Park and sits on property believed to have once been part of the native American village of Coso.

It also is the site of several adobes, including the Fitch store, the first retail building in San Diego. Henry Delano Fitch, a sea captain, was the area's first American resident, first lawyer and surveyor. His elopement to a Mexican don's daughter is the stuff of legend of Old [California](#).

Park planners had imagined razing the Caltrans building and reconstructing the Fitch store and other adobes and commemorating the native American connection to the site, which once sat at the edge of the San Diego River.

The parks department has \$2.7 million still set aside to pay Caltrans and several million more for demolition and remediation, officials said. But the deal with Caltrans failed because the balance of the proposed payment could not be delivered as projected.

Bruce Coons, executive director of the [Save Our Heritage Organisation](#), which has its headquarter in another Old Town landmark, the Whaley House, said efforts have been restarted to get a new deal struck.

"This is the greatest thing we can do since the creation of the state park (in the 1960s)," he said. "There's not a more important parcel to add to state parks than this one."

Sen. [Christine Kehoe](#), D-San Diego, who originally championed the property transfer, intends to push for a new deal, said her policy director, Deanna Spehn.

"Maintaining this special property in public ownership should be a priority for the state," Kehoe wrote Caltrans in July. "We must not let the opportunity be lost to preserve and protect the historic and cultural treasures buried beneath the former Caltrans site."

Spehn held a meeting with a number of Old Town activists and interest groups in Kehoe's office Wednesday to plan strategy, including pressing Gov. Jerry Brown to cancel the sale and restart transfer negotiations.

Such a step may be politically attractive, but the governor cut millions from state parks in the current budget. The money set aside to cover part of the acquisition is still intact, Spehn said.

But it's possible nobody will bid on the site in January when the auction is scheduled.

Chuck Ross, owner of Fiesta del Reyes, the restaurant and retail complex that replaced Bazaar del Mundo just south of the Caltrans building, called the building an "eyesore" and "worthless" for retail uses.

"I don't believe anyone will bid on it," he said.

He hired Colliers International to appraise the property and broker Chuck Wasker said he came up with a value of only \$160,000. That's based on repairs, estimated in 1997 at \$15 million, limited parking and restricted uses. It could cost \$500,000 for an archaeological dig that could months if not years of delay.

"Quite frankly these old government buildings have found themselves with negative value because you can't just retrofit them," Wasker said. "When you tear them down, it costs a lot of money because of hazardous materials they used back in those days."

Even if someone does buy the property, major roadblocks stand in the way of a remodel or new development, according to the city's Historical Resources Board, which will have jurisdiction.

Cathy Winterrowd, the city's historic preservation planner, said only 67,954 square feet would be allowed under present zoning and 213 parking spaces would be required for a retail use, compared with the present 25.

The existing building has been deemed potentially historic because of its mid-century modern design and the site historic, because of its prior use as an olive factory, built in 1907, and the earlier Fitch store, the first in San Diego, built in the 1830s.

David Thornton, chairman of the Old Town [Community Planning](#) Committee and general manager of Old Town Trolley, said residents and businesses are "very concerned" that a private entity would take over the property -- not because of potential competition but because of the lost opportunity to expand the state park.

"I don't know of anybody in the community that is supportive of Caltrans selling the property to a private entity," he said.

His committee is scheduled to discuss the building at its Wednesday meeting.

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Ex-San Diego mayor offers Chargers stadium solution

Written by [Matthew T. Hall](#) Sept. 21, 2011



One week before resigning, San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy stood in his driveway and dismissed Time Magazine's characterization of him as one of the country's worst big-city mayors. "People should be proud of what we have accomplished in this city," he said. "Tell Time magazine that they just don't understand what's going on." — U-T file photo

As San Diego waits for Mayor Jerry Sanders to negotiate a plan for a new Chargers' football stadium, Sanders' predecessor has offered an idea of his own.

In a new autobiography, former mayor Dick Murphy, whose 2005 resignation amid a growing financial crisis paved the way for Sanders' election, suggests that San Diego scrap the idea of a downtown stadium in favor of building the team a new home in Mission Valley near the 44-year-old Qualcomm Stadium.

Murphy's book is titled "San Diego's Judge Mayor: How Murphy's Law blindsided leadership with 2020 vision." He'll be at Warwick's in La Jolla for [a book signing](#) on Oct. 6. The book's an interesting read for anyone who lived through (or covered) the Murphy years at City Hall.

Here's what makes Murphy's Chargers proposal different from others, such as [this one](#) most recently, that have been advanced about the location:

...Earlier discussions suggested massive residential development on the Qualcomm site. I would argue that the better course would be to allow the Chargers to develop commercial office buildings, creating the San Diego Chargers Office Park. The parking lot or garages used by those working in the office buildings during the week

would be used by the Chargers and the SDSU Aztecs on the weekends.

Murphy's suggestion is one of 10 ideas he's proposing in his book to make San Diego a better place. (Yes, he's still big on that number.) Interestingly, the Chargers stadium proposal is No. 2 on the list. What's No. 1? Completing the San Diego River Park. Read on for the entirety of Murphy's Mission Valley stadium proposal.

One of the City's challenging tasks is to function as landlord of Qualcomm Stadium. Its prime tenant, the San Diego Chargers, is not satisfied with Qualcomm, and the team has been pushing for years to have a new stadium built. That has presented a difficult political conundrum. Most San Diegans want the Chargers to stay in San Diego, but polls have shown that the majority of San Diegans do not want to spend taxpayer money to build a new football stadium. So the goal is to find a fiscally responsible way to keep the Chargers in town that the public will support.

One proposal under consideration is for a new football stadium to be built downtown. It may be feasible if redevelopment fund are available. But if the local economy and the City continue to hobble along financially, it will be difficult to convince San Diego voters to approve hundreds of millions of tax dollars for a new downtown football stadium.

In my opinion, there is a viable alternative. It would be a modified version of the proposals submitted by the Chargers Task Force that I created and later resurrected by the Citizens for Qualcomm Site Redevelopment. Under this concept, the City would give the San Diego Chargers a long-term lease at a nominal rent on most of the existing 166-acre stadium site in Mission Valley. The Chargers, along with the National Football League and possibly San Diego State University, supplemented with naming rights revenues, could build a new stadium on part of the property. The land between the San Diego Trolley tracks and the San Diego River would become part of the San Diego River Park. The Chargers would be free to develop the balance of the property.

The Chargers, as well as some other civic leaders, floated a similar proposal in the past. But earlier discussions suggested massive residential development on the Qualcomm site. I would argue that the better course would be to allow the Chargers to develop commercial office buildings, creating the San Diego Chargers Office Park. The parking lot or garages used by those working in the office buildings during the week would be used by the Chargers and the SDSU Aztecs on the weekends. While hotel or retail uses would be permitted, I would be concerned that residential development would be incompatible with the noise and traffic of a football stadium.

Of course, the City would be handing over more than 100 acres of valuable real estate in Mission Valley. However, the City currently loses money on the property anyway. This proposal would generate property tax, sales tax, and transit occupancy tax revenues for the City.

If redevelopment law survives in some form, the City could explore adding the stadium site to the Grantville Redevelopment District. The Qualcomm site would arguably qualify as a redevelopment zone because soil contamination from the nearby tank farm has caused significant blight. This would allow the property tax increment to further develop the San Diego River Park east of I-15.

In summary, I believe a new San Diego Chargers football stadium at Qualcomm has three advantages:

1. It keeps the stadium at a familiar central location with access to three freeways and a San Diego Trolley stop.
2. It requires little financial risk for the City and no upfront costs.

3. It augments the San Diego River Park and offers an opportunity for further enhancement upstream.

Murphy later in the book's proposals suggests that the San Diego Association of Governments' 2050 Regional Transportation Plan should include a San Diego Trolley extension along I-15 between Qualcomm Stadium and Escondido. "None of San Diego should be left out of the San Diego Trolley network," he writes.

Expanding Old Town State Historic Park

Posted by [admin](#) on 9/30/11 • Categorized as [News](#)



The California Parks Department is looking to acquire a 2.5-acre lot in Old Town as a means of expanding the Old Town State Historic Park. Whether the land's owner, CalTrans, will sell it to them remains uncertain. (Photo by Daniel Solomon)

By Margie M. Palmer | SDUN Reporter

The California Parks Department has its eye on property owned by CalTrans.

The 2.5-acre in question is located adjacent to the Old Town State Historic Park, and park representatives believe that its acquisition would round out the historical tale of Old Town.

California Parks Representative Clay Phillips said the land beneath the vacant building on the lot, formerly used as the CalTrans headquarters, is what's of most interest.

"Basically, if you could picture the Old Town State Historic Park as a big square pizza, the CalTrans property is basically a big chunk in the upper left-hand corner," Phillips said. "Because Old Town is this unique display of history, this property isn't about just a point in time but a span of history of the Mexican era of the 1820s all the way through the transition of the American era in the 1870s. What's underneath that building is an important part of the story to add to the people who don't really understand what Old Town is."

Although CalTrans and the Department of Parks and Recreation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the transfer of the land in Oct. 2008, the deal was never consummated. The terms of the MOU provided for an initial cash payment of \$2.5 million with an additional \$8.2 million being paid within ten

years of the property's transfer date. Currently, The Parks Department has \$2.5 million available for a down payment for the property, but due to budget cuts it cannot guarantee that it would have the balance within ten years.

The Parks Department, although still interested in acquiring the CalTrans property, believes the parcel of land has since devaluated.

In a Sept. 7 Broker Opinion of Value report prepared by Colliers International, the condition of the building was described as being **"fair to poor"**. The report states, **"Based on [a] report prepared by the Department of the State Architect the rehabilitation of the existing structures is financially unfeasible even if the property were to be given away."** Phillips further points out that the building would need to be demolished and therefore should not contribute to its fair market value assessment.

CalTrans, who currently pays an annual \$50,000 bill for maintenance of its former headquarters, is now evaluating other and perhaps more lucrative means of sale. Notice of the sale will be made public.

"Prior to selling it we [will] send out a letter to [public] agencies to let them know this is what's available and to find out if anyone is interested," said CalTrans spokesperson Ed Cartagena.

In a July 1 letter to CalTrans District 11 Deputy District Director Bruce April, San Diego Senator Christine Kehoe appealed for the property to be transferred to State Parks.

"It is unfortunate that CalTrans has backed away from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on October 15, 2008 between [CalTrans] and the Department of Parks and Recreation, and is proceeding with the potential sale of the former CalTrans property," Kehoe wrote.

"The transfer of the property from CalTrans to Parks would allow the creation of a welcoming 'front door' for Old Town State Park and allow the direct connection with the San Diego River, whose banks were originally along the site of the former CalTrans building. Expanding the park would allow a representation of what Native American life along the river was like, showing the connections with the life-giving river such as early gardens and landscapes. It would enhance pedestrian access to Old Town State Park and allow for safer pedestrian access to the City of San Diego's Presidio Park," she added.

Chuck Ross, owner of Old Town's Fiesta de Reyes shops and restaurants, agrees.

"Transferring the property to State Parks makes perfectly good sense," Ross said. **"Putting it on the retail market is a bad decision all around. The building is worthless and it's really an eyesore. This is for the betterment of the community."**

NORTH COUNTY TIMES

RAMONA: Authorities close Cedar Creek Falls trails after fatality

By [GARY WARTH gwarth@nctimes.com](mailto:gwarth@nctimes.com) | Posted: Friday, July 8, 2011 5:45 pm

The U.S. Forest Service has closed the trails to Cedar Creek Falls following the Wednesday death of a hiker at the East County site, and violators could be jailed and fined as much as \$5,000.

Forest Service personnel were warning people of the closure Friday on trails leading to the falls from Ramona and Julian and are expected to start citing people Saturday, said U.S. Forest Service Public Affairs Officer Brian Harris.

The violation is considered a misdemeanor, which has a standard fine of \$200, but the penalty could run as high as \$5,000 with six months in jail, he said.

The closure is officially in place for a year, but the trail could reopen any time after authorities investigate ways to make the site safer, Harris said.

"This is federal public land and the intent of that is for people to use it," he said. "The closure is in place temporarily, and as soon as we can devise a management plan, we'll get it back up."

Forest Service officials are expected to meet with law enforcement and county officials next week to discuss safety issues at the trails, he said.

According to authorities, 16-year-old Joseph Meram of El Cajon was killed after he hit his head on a boulder while falling from an 80-foot bluff from the top of the falls in the Cleveland National Forest. Another boy struck by the falling teenager was airlifted to Palomar Medical Center in Escondido for treatment of minor injuries.

The falls are popular with hikers and thrill-seekers who like to jump into a swimming hole below, and the trails have been especially crowded this year because the heavy rains have made the falls flow later in the year than usual, Harris said.

The April opening of the new Ramona trailhead off Thornbrush Road and extra attention from many Internet videos about the trails also have increased the number of hikers who make the five-mile round trip to the falls, he said.

Harris said numerous fatalities have occurred at the falls over the years. A prohibition against diving from cliffs was implemented in May, and signs about the rule were installed just before July 4, he said.

Besides serious injuries from cliff-diving, Harris said many people become dehydrated or suffer from heat exhaustion on the trails, which are not recommended for young child or people who are not physically fit.

Harris said Forest Service officials received six calls for helicopter rescues at the trails last Saturday. There were no rescues Sunday or Monday, July 4, but paramedics were called to the trail heads numerous times to assist hikers.

Harris suggested people interested in hiking the trail after it opens first check with the U.S. Forest Service website for safety tips. Those include wearing appropriate footwear ---- no sandals or bare feet ---- and bringing plenty of water and a snack. Hikers also should not wear loose clothes that can snag on branches, learn the trail and stay off slippery rocks.

"This is not an easy trail for people to take," Harris said. "There are numerous trails throughout Cleveland National Forest we recommend for families. This is certainly not one of them."

More safety tips about hiking near waterfalls can be found at the Forest Service web page for waterfalls, www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/

Call Gary Warth at 760-740-5410.

Read more: http://www.nctimes.com/news/local/ramona/article_2fd3ec34-fa02-50b0-be55-060e63f84c2c.html#ixzz1a1kPffBx

RAMONA: Cedar Creek Falls trails may not reopen Nov. 8, officials say

[By MORGAN COOK mcook@nctimes.com](#) | Posted: Saturday, September 24, 2011 8:00 am |

Officials had hoped to reopen the trails to Cedar Creek Falls on Nov. 8, but lingering questions about how to keep people safe at the waterfall may cause delays, U.S. Forest Service officials said this week.

The Forest Service ordered the trails to the falls closed following the death of a 16-year-old hiker on July 6 at the site east of Ramona, officials said. Like several other people killed there in recent years, the teen died after he jumped from steep bluffs into the pool of water below.

The closure is intended as a temporary solution until authorities can devise a plan to make the site safer, but coming up with that plan is no easy task, Brian Harris, a spokesman for the Forest Service, said Tuesday.

"We really don't want to open the site until we're comfortable that everything can be run efficiently, and that the cooperators are comfortable and on the same page with how it's going to run out there," Harris said.

The Forest Service has been meeting since early July with representatives of such "cooperators" - --- agencies, including the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or CalFire ---- to work out a management plan, Harris said.

Certain aspects of the space make improving safety at the falls difficult, Harris said.

For one thing, it's big, he said.

"(A) National forest is not like a city park in a very urbanized area," Harris said. "It's not with the ranger around the corner, where everywhere you look there's someone you can go to to get help."

"So it's part of an education process to make sure people understand that," he said.

CalFire Capt. Mike Mohler said education is also critical to making sure people understand what they're getting into when they start out on a long hike, and what they need to have with them.

"The biggest safety issue for CalFire working with the other agencies is that people aren't prepared when they go out there," Mohler said. "Hikers need to know the distance, what they need to bring with them ---- water, cellphones."

He said CalFire and the Sheriff's Department are the agencies that respond to 911 calls from the Cedar Creek Falls trails.

One option officials have considered is putting up more signs, Harris said. But the signs the Forest Service put up just before July 4 warning of the prohibition against diving from cliffs didn't solve the problem.

Another option is to open only part of the trails, Harris said, but that may not stop people from getting into trouble, either.

"National forest is wide-open land," Harris said. "There's not one way in and one way out."

Solutions for improving safety at the falls will probably need to be aimed at educating people who use the trails, not changing things about the site itself, Harris said.

A plan could be in place in time to open the trails on Nov. 8 as authorities had hoped, Harris said, but people should be prepared to wait a little longer.

In the meantime, authorities said people should obey the closure orders and stay off the trails. Violators could be jailed and fined as much as \$5,000.

Call staff writer Morgan Cook at 760-739-6675.

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REGION: Some people misusing rescue copters, authorities say

By [MORGAN COOK mcook@nctimes.com](mailto:mcook@nctimes.com) | Posted: Sunday, October 2, 2011 9:00 pm | [\(8\) Comments](#)

Along with developing plans to improve safety on trails to Cedar Creek Falls near Ramona, authorities are considering ways to further limit the number of uninjured hikers who call 911 for taxpayer-funded helicopter rescues, officials said.

Officials said several of the 38 helicopter evacuations from the Cleveland National Forest in the year before the trails closed involved hikers who called in distress, but then refused medical help after they were rescued.

Authorities said some of the hikers were simply unprepared for the long, steep treks and rugged terrain, but chatter on social media networks may have inspired some people to abuse the expensive public service.

"What we saw in the past is people hearing through social media and other people that if you get tired out there, you can call 911 and a helicopter will come get you," Capt. Mike Mohler of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said Thursday. "But you need to know, is a helicopter necessary? Do you really need a rescue?"

Sheriff's Lt. Todd Richardson said last week that he also had seen blog posts on social media websites that encouraged abuse of emergency rescue services.

A spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration said public agencies may not bill people who call 911 for rescue from public lands if the public agency in question owns and operates the aircraft being used.

"If a government agency claims they're conducting a public aircraft operation, they cannot charge anyone for anything they do," FAA spokesman Ian Gregor wrote in an email Thursday. "This is under federal law, not FAA regulations."

Richardson and Mohler confirmed that the agencies generally cannot charge individuals for rescues with CalFire and the Sheriff's Department's shared rescue helicopters. Both agencies participate in rescues at the Cleveland National Forest.

But, Richardson said, authorities have policies in place to avoid sending rescue helicopters ---- which cost about \$1,000 per hour to operate ---- when 911 calls don't involve life-threatening emergencies.

He said rescuers respond by ground whenever they can, and they can use a less-expensive patrol helicopter to reach 911 callers if there's reason to believe the emergency isn't legitimate or life-threatening.

"They're not going to pick up somebody when they're out there if they're just tired," Richardson said.

If someone fakes an emergency to get a helicopter ride at taxpayer expense, he or she can be charged with crimes such as making a false police report, Richardson said.

Mohler said authorities are thinking of ways to make sure that hikers are prepared for the difficulty and length of a trail before they set out, and that they have supplies such as water, a map and a cellphone.

"Our biggest concern is educating the public about what they need to do," Mohler said of the multiagency effort to cut back on rescues from the Cleveland National Forest.

Richardson and Mohler said people should not hesitate to call for help if they are in danger, but they shouldn't tie up a rescue helicopter if they simply don't feel like climbing the steep path back to the trail head.

"(CalFire and the Sheriff's Department) will be there if people call and need help, but it is not a free helicopter out," Mohler said. "We need them for life-threatening injuries, not just people who can't hike out and aren't prepared."

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