



Planning + Landscape Architecture
 3916 Normal Street
 San Diego, CA 92103

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO -FIESTA ISLAND GDP–
 NATIVE SPECIES/HABITAT MEETING- MINUTES
 Meeting Date: January 29, 2010 Revised Minutes –May 4, 2010**

DISTRIBUTION:

Attendance

Consultants

Michael Singleton	KTU+A Planning & L.A.	mike@ktua.com	yes
Cheri Blatner-Pifer	KTU+A Planning & L.A.	cheri@ktua.com	yes

Audubon Society, SD Native Plant Society, Sierra Club Members

Jim Peugh	San Diego Audubon Society	peugh@cox.net	yes
David Varner	SD Native Plant Society	confluence.dv@gmail.com	yes
Chris Redfern	San Diego Audubon Society	redfern@sandiegoaudubon.org	yes
Shannon Dougherty	San Diego Audubon Society	dougherty@sandiegoaudubon.org	yes
Carolyn Chase	Sierra Club	cdchase@sdearthtimes.net	yes

ITEM MINUTES DISCUSSION

1. Mike Singleton reviewed the latest version of the Fiesta Island Precise Plan to the Committee Members. Mike also gave a brief overview of the Island's history, the development and updates of the 1994 Master Plan, recent public workshops/surveys, public agency and community planning group processing to date, as well as user group meetings which have occurred and those pending. He mentioned that this revised plan will need to go back to the Mission Bay Park Committee and the Design Review Subcommittee of the Park and Recreation Board, since there have been enough changes from the previous plan from what they approved in 2008 and 2009.
2. Chris Redfern –Inquired why Least Tern sitings are not identified on habitat map.
3. Mike discussed that Recon did conduct surveys on the island at different times of the year as rare species may only be found at specific times (springtime for instance).
4. Chris asked about the burrowing owl and if it had been spotted on the Island.
5. Chris – What is proposed on Enchanted Island? Mike explained that there are no proposed uses at this time. Presently in the proposed plan it is indicated as native vegetation.
6. Chris – Suggested that maintenance issues need to be addressed. What if sensitive species are found? How should they be protected and maintained?
7. Carolyn Chase – Recommended that the restroom building proposed across the road on the north side of the sand arena be moved out of the native/sand area. She mentioned that the major usage will occur south of the road most of the time and there is no reason to encroach into the native/sand area which is not, in general, for the public. Mike indicated that the Over-the-Line

events are required to use their own restrooms and that the location of the restroom building was on the west side of the sand dunes, in an area already disturbed and graded level.

8. Mike discussed the location of the sand management area and why it was not located closer to the islands entry point. Carolyn feels it would minimize truck traffic throughout the island by placing it closer to the entry. Carolyn also mentioned the City was supposed to have researched alternative sand management sites beyond Fiesta Island. Mike indicated a study has been completed and he will see if he can get it. If Mike obtains it, Mike will see if it can be forwarded to others. Mike discussed that there are generally only a few trucks per week that utilize the sand management area and the additional distance will not be a serious constraint on these operations. Also, the primary purpose of the relocation of the sand management to this area is to provide some synergism between the new habitat, the kelp drying area, foraging by birds of the kelp drying area and the compatibility of sand management and dune development. Shannon expressed concern that the synergy “between the new habitat and kelp drying area, foraging by birds” might be a negative synergy, i.e. it might attract more predators closer to the Least Tern site. KTU+A will look into this further.
9. Mike explained that the proposed berm adjacent to the SW Least Tern site was raised to create overlook areas to maximize views and to provide a visual and noise buffer between uses and the Least Tern site. The group expressed concern over places for birds to perch such as fences and trees. Signage needs to be low. Fencing design needs to be addressed for solutions to discourage perching. Discussed eliminating railing, adding anti-bird devices on the fence and utilizing lower heights of fencing. Mike asked if the meeting attendees had any recommendations as to what has been successfully used in similar situations.
10. Carolyn inquired as to what the “Launch Ramp” is in Enchanted Bay. This is a small existing concrete ramp that small craft from the Youth Aquatic Center launches from that will remain.
11. Discussed reducing the size of the volleyball area @ southeast end of the sand area arena and extend native habitat area into this area.
12. Carolyn inquired about gate access @ beach / water in South West Park. Mike confirmed the intent to have gates along this fence. Gates will be added and labeled in the plan. A fairly detailed discussion on FIDO concerns and the site plan options ensued. Carolyn indicated strong opposition to the parking lot location. Mike explained that the FIDO initiative moves the parking lot more than ¼ mile away from the beach / water use areas and felt that would not be a satisfactory compromise with those users. Mike was asked to provide other parking lot alternatives to Carolyn. KTU+A will further pursue this issue with Coastal Commission, the City of San Diego, FIDO and the paddling groups.
13. Discussed adding labels to the plan to designate the Ranger / Check in Building @ the proposed campsite.
14. Shannon inquired what bird species are drawn to the kelp foraging area? How long is the kelp drying period? Are higher levels of kelp drying found during different parts of the year? KTU+A will research. (Continuation of Item 11).
15. Chris inquired if there would be an increase in motorized boating activity as a result of the plan. It has been hypothesized that this activity may reduce the availability of Least Tern prey (they may be driven deeper in the water column due to boating disturbance and thus unavailable to the Least Terns). Mike indicated that non-motorized boat use would likely go up, but that no facilities for motorized craft are proposed. In fact, less beach launching area and less personal water craft operating areas are proposed.
16. Chris asked Mike who from the USFWS had been providing input into this plan, and more precisely who was advising them on the potential negative impacts of these land use changes on

Least Tern nesting productivity on the island. Mike indicated that he did not know who from USFWS had provided input but that it had been “a couple of years ago”. Chris inquired as to whether another meeting would be desirable, especially since the plan elements have changed over the past few years. Mike indicated that KTU+A will reactivate their contacts at USFW and CDFG along with RECON and propose a meeting.

17. Jim Peugh was not present @ the meeting earlier that day but Mike and Cheri met with him later that same afternoon. Jim thought the central portion of the island, around the sand management area, would be a great place to create a dune environment with some beautiful paths through the dune areas. He mentioned Sylmar as a good example of what this looked like. Jim said he will provide us with some information on how to program an area like this. KTU+A will research further.
18. Jim inquired what type of materials are proposed along the berm forming Tecolote Creek where water is directed at the berm? A permeable soil and gabion base material would allow water to flow through the berm. Jim indicated that pipes may also be effective.
19. Discussed Chris’s concern about birds perching on fences in area of Least Terns. Jim suggested the use of “Nixilite” at top of fence. He will provide KTU+A with information on this product.
20. Another way to address the concern of birds perching on fences adjacent to the Least Tern site could be to incorporate low decorative walls that could also be used for seating. These low walls could be placed behind the proposed berm in the overlook area, in lieu of fencing as long as they would visually hide dog activity.
21. Jim inquired about importing certain soil types to support habitat, especially in wetland areas.
22. Jim asked how fresh water input into wetland area @ north end of island will be controlled. Mike indicated that the size of the dredged opening, pipe sizing and or weirs will be used to control the amount of water that will circulate.
23. Jim expressed concern about sand loss, sedimentation and erosion. Mike discussed techniques proposed to lower the amount of island erosion.
24. Jim would like to see permeable concrete @ entry road. Mike indicated that the entry parking area is proposed as permeable, but the entry road may create foundation stability issues.
25. David Varner inquired how information for native habitats was collected, in which Mike responded that the work was done more than a few years ago and that he was unclear about the extent of surveys conducted. David indicated that in order for CNPS to support the project, they need to have confidence that comprehensive surveys have been performed. He also stated that the timing of such surveys is crucial, as the window of opportunity to identify some species closes in late spring. David also stressed that, if not already conducted, on-the-ground surveys are necessary and would possibly reveal more extensive populations of Nuttalls lotus and coast woolly heads (nemacaulis). Mike responded that several ground surveys were done by RECON biologists as well as several surveys from Keith Merkel of Merkel and Associates (both sub consultants to KTU+A). He stated that KTU+A will collect and compile the already completed biological survey dates and results and send it to the meeting attendees.
26. Jim Peugh submitted additional input after the meeting which includes the following: He is very concerned about reducing the buffer east of Stoney Point. He feels that looking down on the Least Tern nesting areas from the proposed overlook point would potentially discourage terns from nesting there and cause disturbance and predator problems that could reduce their productivity. He suggests that the buffer needs to be dramatically expanded during pre-nesting and nesting season and recommends that the mound be moved back to where the second fence is presently located. This would allow the Least Terns a better view of the horizon from the

nesting areas, which they need to be able to take wing to harass incoming predators in time. This buffer also needs to be sufficient to keep dogs from approaching the nesting areas. To sum it up, the buffer needs to be widened and the fencing needs to be substantially improved.

27. Jim emphasized that dogs need to be kept on a leash in close proximity to the habitat areas that are open to visitors.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **Meeting attendees are asked to comment on these meeting minutes as well as provide additional questions and comments on the draft plans distributed at the meeting.**
2. **Jim to provide more information on raptor control on fence tops.** Jim sent information after the meeting on devices for keeping predator birds from fence tops. The link is: <http://www.nixalite.com/nixalitemodels.aspx>
3. **Jim to provide ideas on the sand dune recreation area.**
4. **Mike to research Burrowing Owls, Sand Management Report, Kelp Drying Areas and wildlife use of these areas.**
5. **Mike to determine if more information on wildlife management, target species for protection and enhancement and restoration issues can be added to the study.**
6. **Mike to provide Carolyn with parking lot / road layout options that were identified but rejected by the planning team.**
7. **Mike to obtain the sand management study and verify if the results of the study can be shared with others.**
8. **Mike to discuss with RECON, Merkel and the agencies about the best arrangement of land use and landform for the enhancement of the Least Tern and other habitat areas.**
9. **Mike to arrange another meeting with USFW, CDFG and RECON to discuss the best habitat and restoration practices for the Least Tern and other wetland areas.**
10. **Mike to collect and compile the completed biological survey dates and results and send to the meeting attendees.**

Prepared by: Cheri Blatner-Pifer / Mike Singleton