

Santa Monica Canyon News

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association - Founded 1947

Spring 2009

PCH Bluffs Project to Start Fall 2009

Start of Santa Monica's Bluffs Remediation project has been delayed to next Fall. Funding is in place and the city is awaiting an encroachment permit from CalTrans. This is the first of three major Santa Monica projects; the others being the California Incline reconstruction and the Santa Monica Pier bridge rehabilitation.

The primary purpose of the project is to stabilize the iconic bluffs between the McClure tunnel and the Los Angeles Boundary near the Chevron Station at Entrada. The geologic formations

behind the bluffs allow water to build up from rainfall and bountiful watering of landscape at homes inland from Ocean Avenue. The impact of the water can be seen in the year-around growth of vegetation on the bluffs even though the city does not irrigate this area. As a result, from time to time chunks of the bluffs fall onto the highway, posing a danger to users and impacting traffic during cleanup and removal of debris.

Specific goals of the project are to:

1. Improve long term slope stability,

[Continued, next page]

Board Members--

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Eucalyptus Forest Restoration Shows Progress

Spearheaded by Park Advisory Board grove improvement committee chair Betty Lou Young, visible progress has been made toward restoring the Historic Rustic Canyon Eucalyptus Forest. Betty Lou hired an arborist to look at the forest. The Pacific Palisades Historic Society and several residents stepped up to pay for the study. Key findings included the discovery that the soil in much of the grove is severely compacted and some trees have taken root in the 12"-18" of mulch creating a possibly dangerous situation.

Meetings were held with Recreation and Park Management. The department designated Chief Forester Laura Bauernfeind to work with the canyon community. The grove has received Historic Status from the City of Los Angeles to go along with the existing state historic designation.

A watering test indicated that even with deep soaking it is difficult to get water through the mulch and into the com-

pacted soil. Nevertheless, several residents have received training in how to water the trees themselves as drought watering restrictions and city budget issues make it virtually impossible for park maintenance staff to water all the trees in a timely manner.

Last month, Forestry Division completed the long awaited grove "clean up." Dead trees were removed, trees trimmed and the water pressure was tested.

The Friends of Scott Gerwehr, a PhD student killed in a motorcycle vs. illegally turning truck accident on Sunset Blvd. have come forward with a proposal to plant trees in Mr. Gerwehr's memory. SMCCA has established a dedicated fund for the restoration project.

Local arborist Carl Mellinger will provide a test of the concept of "air spading" to see if this is a good option to treat the soil compaction issues. Another option of radial trenching has been rejected because of potential damage to root systems.

[Bluffs Project - continued from first page]

2. Enhance public safety/reduce traffic congestion due to slides, and
3. Preserve the bluffs' natural look and beauty

The improvements will take place from the McClure Tunnel to the Northern City Limits in 11 zones. In an effort to speed up completion, the contract will call for work on two zones at a time.

The majority of work will be done north of the California Incline, such as,

1. Installing a dewatering system with proposed hydraugers (small perforated pvc drainage pipes) which will be inserted 100 to 300 feet into the face of the bluff. There will be about 20 of these small pipes inserted in an array from each location and there will be five locations.
2. Test grouting zone which is located near the Montana Ave. part of the bluff. They are going to try a soil grouting chemical treatment that hardens the soil and seals the bluff face, the surface grouting will be anchored into the existing soil with 10 in. "soil" nails. This is to fill in erosion pockets and improve surface drainage.

Below the California Incline most of the work will be debris removal.

With the revised start date after Labor Day 2009, the City expects to complete the project by Memorial Day 2010. The California Incline Project will not proceed until the Bluffs work is done—after Labor Day 2010. SMCCA has submitted a series of questions which Santa Monica will have to address in the revised Incline environmental study. Our primary concern is traffic mitigation measures during construction.

Work hours will be from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM Monday thru Thursday. During construction the right hand lane on northbound PCH will be closed. The lane will be opened to traffic each afternoon.

There will be NO lane closures during the summer months (from Memorial Day to Labor Day) as work will be suspended during this period. Periodic maintenance of the hydraugers will be necessary in the future and require temporary lane closures.

For more info go to www.pchpartners.org . During Construction call the Community Outreach project hotline at 866-755-7679.

**SAFE WESTSIDE ANNOUNCES
SPEED WATCH PROGRAM**

The SPEED WATCH program is one of several traffic safety initiatives generated by recent street-accident tragedies on Palisades Drive and Sunset Blvd. It is part of the newly-created SAFE WESTSIDE, a coalition of parents, students, concerned citizens and businesses working toward making our local driving environment safer for everyone. The organizing efforts were spearheaded by local residents Anne Roberts and Steve Henry with support from SMCCA and Pacific Palisades Community Council leaders as well as the local "Y," Councilman Rosendahl, LAPD, LAFD and LADOT and supported by many others.

SPEED WATCH will coordinate the training of volunteers by the Police Department to use radar guns on some of our most dangerous local streets. The goal is to get motorists to slow down, drive responsibly and respect speed limits. Teams of two or three people will use these radar devices and record vehicle descriptions and license plates of speeders. They will furnish that information to the police who will send written warnings by mail to the speeders. It is hoped that this activity will get drivers to slow down, resulting in fewer accidents and saving lives.

Anyone 16 years old or older is eligible to volunteer. Students who dedicate a certain number of hours may be eligible for high school or college community service credit. Each volunteer will undergo a 4 to 6 hour period of group training by the West LA Traffic Division, conducted at a convenient time, most likely on weekends. Volunteers participating in this program should be willing to commit an average of at least 3 to 4 hours per week over a 6 month period. Teams will always have at least one adult member. LAPD will conduct routine background checks of potential volunteers.

The SPEED WATCH program is being coordinated by Palisades residents Paul Glasgall, Deborah Lloyd, Gene Bollens and David Eagle assisted by Cathy Dwyer, Steve Cron and Eric Bollens.

If you are interested in participating, have questions or would like more information, contact speedwatch@safewestside.com or call (310) 459-7289 For more information on other programs and activities of Safe Westside log on to www.safewestside.com

WE CAN GET LA TRAFFIC MOVING!

*By Hilary Norton, Executive Director,
Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic (FAST)*

Traffic is destroying our quality of life in Los Angeles. That is why FAST (Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic), a new non-profit public private partnership, was created. On March 17th, I was pleased to present FAST's work to address traffic in the short term to the SMCCA board.

To promote an informative and rational discussion about smart interim traffic improvements, FAST, Metro and the Music Center commissioned RAND Corporation to seek high-impact, low-cost "best practice" improvements for traffic in LA County. The RAND study is available on the FAST website at www.FASTLA.org.

FAST is building a diverse, inclusive coalition of 2 million Los Angeles County residents to support RAND's recommendations and other best practices to solve traffic in the short term, including those common sense solutions that come from the input we receive from our community and neighborhood partners. The long term vision is for the coalition to advocate for Los Angeles' fair share of transportation funding for these sensible traffic solutions.

FAST's robust and interactive website – www.FASTLA.org – is designed to educate residents about proposed traffic solutions, gather input, and serve as a vehicle to build the database of 2 million Los Angeles County advocates. Please take a few moments to visit that website, learn more about the solutions that are being proposed and sign up to be an advocate for getting traffic moving. We invite you to tell others to join FAST, too. Working together, and supporting public officials who want to make high impact improvements to traffic, we can stop gridlock!

[Editor's note: FAST is a self-funded organization dedicated to supporting fixes such as better signal timing that can have an immediate positive impact on our gridlocked traffic. Vote your priority at their website. We are pleased they will have a display at our annual meeting on May 19.]

Pedestrian Safety Tips for our Canyon

If you are a pedestrian and must walk in the street, walk facing traffic.

If you are a property owner, take a walk around your property to see if your landscape is overhanging the path, posing a danger to pedestrians, tall and small, including little ones in strollers or on tricycles.

CRIME PREVENTION TIP

Senior Lead Officer Michael Moore reports that the most frequent crime in our area involves theft or burglary from motor vehicles, including a surprising number that are unlocked. If you leave your car unlocked, even in your own driveway, you are an inviting target. Never mind your car stereo or gps, some miscreant may find your garage door opener and that can lead to a bigger problem. If you leave your cell phone, laptop, ipod or purse in plain view in a locked car, that is an invitation to have a window broken and your valuables taken. Report all crime, no matter how insignificant you think it is. The Police Department assigns resources based, in large part, on **reported** crimes.

Possible Fabric Softener Hazards

According to www.sixwise.com, popular fabric softeners contain a potpourri of chemicals, including:

Benzyl Acetate: Linked to pancreatic cancer

Benzyl Alcohol: Upper respiratory tract irritant

Ethanol: On the EPA Hazardous Waste list and can cause central nervous system disorders

A-Terpineol: Can cause respiratory problems, including fatal edema, and central nervous system damage

Ethyl Acetate: Narcotic; on EPA's Hazardous Waste list

Camphor: Causes central nervous system disorders

Chloroform: Neurotoxic, anesthetic and carcinogenic

Linalool: A narcotic that causes central nervous system disorders

Pentane: A chemical known to be harmful if inhaled

These chemicals may be absorbed into the body from wearing treated clothes. Standing down wind from a dryer containing fabric softener sheets will expose you or your child to whatever chemicals are in the sheets. Alternative methods of softening clothes include the use of a quarter cup of baking soda OR white vinegar in the wash cycle. **Do not combine vinegar with baking soda or either with chlorine bleach as this creates noxious fumes.**

We Hope Third Try Is Clean Ocean Charm

The City Engineer is finalizing plans to divert all year-around dry weather flow from the Rustic Creek and Santa Monica Canyon channel to the Hyperion Sewer Plant. This project is necessary to meet a state deadline to clean up the ocean. Two previous projects greatly improved summer water quality, but did not divert the runoff from storm drains adjacent to PCH. SMCCA is concerned that current plans deal with only three of the four drains along the highway. A walk-through has been requested and an update will be posted on our website.

To current resident, or

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Tsunami Danger in our Canyon?



Members have asked about the Tsunami Signs. These warnings appear to result from concerns expressed by Venice residents. The Venice area is closer to sea level than our canyon. The state office of emergency preparedness is the responsible agency. After the City installed signs, the state created a new map of the potential limits of a tsunami at Will Rogers State Beach. The "blue limit line" parallels the edge of the parking lot where it meets the sand. We have asked that the signs be relocated to the blue line area. .

Elizabeth Bradshaw

Former SMCCA Secretary and long-time Board member Elizabeth "Betty" Bradshaw passed away in January. Her institutional memory, insight and perspective will be greatly missed.

2009 Dues Now Payable

The SMCCA is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization. Your dues and contributions help keep your association strong. Yearly membership is only \$10 per person, a modest price for supporting your community. Please send your payment to SMCCA at PO Box 3441, Santa Monica, CA 90408-3441. Additional contributions are welcome and greatly appreciated.

If you would like to participate on the board or in any other capacity or if you have areas of interest, please tell us in your reply. Also, please include an email address so we can send you notices and electronic newsletters. Upon your request, we will forward to you LAPD Crime Reports and Alerts. Please let us know if you desire this additional email information.

Our mail and email lists are not available for any commercial purposes. .

Important Phone Numbers--

Graffiti Report	3-1-1
Flood Channel Graffiti	1.800.675.4357
Illegal Leaf Blowers	1.800.996.2489 / 3-1-1
Illegally Parked Vehicles	1.213.485.4184 x-2
Pothole Repair	1.800.996.2489
West LAPD Front Desk	1.310.444.0701

If you are unable to contact 3-1-1 from your home phone, please let us know so we can notify the City's 3-1-1 coordinator. email: info@smcca.org.

Newsletter Staff--

Hillary Norton	George Wolfberg
Diane Wolfberg	Asta Young

