

Santa Monica Canyon News

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association - Founded 1947

Winter 2010

California Incline Environmental Report Delayed

Was it something we asked? Release of the City of Santa Monica's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the California Incline has been delayed several times over the past year.

The Santa Monica City Engineer now estimates the Draft EIR will be released for a 45-day public comment period in late Spring or early Summer. The current timetable is to begin work on the project in the Summer of 2011. Summer work will not require a highway closure permit from Cal Trans as long as there is no need to close PCH.

SMCCA has asked specific questions regarding timing and traffic plans. The original EIR draft indicated

that the area of traffic concern did not extend beyond the mouth of our canyon and the traffic plan would be developed after the EIR was adopted.

Not acceptable; especially as LADOT pointed out that obsolete traffic counts were being used.

We believe the project should be built 24/7 as were the Santa Monica Freeway repairs after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In addition, highway signage should be put up as far away as Oxnard, to warn drivers to avert this area. Also, we would like to see the coned-off parking lot exit to PCH by the pier closed for the duration and Appian Way opened to Pico Blvd. to

more, see page 2

Board Members--

Jill Baldauf

Jennifer Barker

Andrew Bergman

Lisa Bittan

Bob Bronstein

Chris Casady

Norman Cowie

Mike Deasy

Quentin Fleming

Dawn Forrester

Judy Golden

Joan Graves

Leslie Hope

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John Murphy

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Restoring the Historic Eucalyptus Forest in Rustic Canyon

Slowly, progress is being made to restore the historic eucalyptus forest in Rustic Canyon. With the support of Recreation and Parks Assistant General Manager Kevin Regan and staff, approximately 67 granite boulders have been placed around the grove. These include one "L"-shaped boulder that will anchor a contemplative seating area in the Northwest portion of the forest.

To improve watering of the trees a dedicated corps of volunteers lead by the indefatigable Chris Casady has been hand watering trees during dry periods.

Park Advisory Board (PAB) chairman Norman Cowie implemented a "weed pull" event to eradicate weeds from the grove. Expect another one soon.

David Card has prepared a draft design as approved by the PAB. It includes two decomposed granite paths, defined areas where trees and other landscape will be planted and sites for two future arbors (see one in photo). The next step is approval by Cultural Affairs and Recreation and Parks.

We have asked the City Engineer to design irrigation systems for the grove to insure fu-

ture health of any plantings that are done by the community and the Friends of Scott Gerwehr, our partners for the project. Irrigation of the grove was one of the priorities set forth by the original LVNOC (oversight committee) for the long overdue Prop K project. The Engineer has resisted our request.

In addition to Friends of Scott Gerwehr and SMCCA, a grant has been sought from the Pacific Palisades Junior Women's Club. Community donations to SMCCA designated solely for the forest restoration would be much appreciated.



photo illustration by Chris Casady

[California Incline- continued from first page]

reduce congestion around the McClure Tunnel. We will carefully review the EIR when it arrives.

Bluff's Improvement Update. The project started a few week's ago and the contractor has tried to minimize lane closures. It is reported that the drains already installed are working as designed to remove excess water from behind the bluffs. Completion by Memorial Day is anticipated.

Relief Sewer Project Status. This project will provide capacity to handle low flow storm water diversion projects underway near Temescal Canyon Road. The sewer will run under PCH and the beach parking lot; joining the main sewer at Santa Monica border. Off-peak work is expected. Start date: September 2010.

Low flow project. The latest Santa Monica Canyon low flow diversion project is under way in the beach parking lot. This project is designed to handle all runoff from the canyon, except during rain events. The County will be installing a rubber dam adjacent to the Golden Bull diverter which will remain as back up.

For more info on all projects, see www.pchpartners.org.

DON'T BE LEFT IN THE DARK

When the lights go out, the power fails or a major disaster occurs, make sure you are prepared-now!

Have you checked your emergency supplies recently? Do you know where your flashlights are? Are they easily accessible in the dark? Are the batteries and bulbs good? Candles may help, but are dangerous.

Are there supplies in your car?

The American Red Cross has a complete list of necessary supplies for survival in case of an emergency or a major disaster. A few items listed are: water, first aid kit, portable radio, prescription medicines and glasses, canned food, can opener, knife, sterno stove or barbeque, waterproof matches, watch or clock, heavy shoes and gloves, and fire extinguisher.

Also, know where and how to shut off utilities. In case you have to evacuate, is your "grab and go" case with all of your important documents current?

For further information check with the American Red Cross or write "Disaster Preparedness" P.O. Box 393, Pacific Palisades CA 90272.

Better yet, pick up a preparedness packet at the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce at 15330 Antioch Street in the Palisades.

DON'T BE LEFT IN THE DARK!

PARK IMPROVEMENTS SLOWLY APPEAR

In the latest round of Rustic Canyon Facilities Improvements, work on the picnic area stairway and replacement of the Latimer stairway to the tennis courts is nearing completion. The tennis stair replacement generated some controversy because of the historic nature of the hand-built stairs which the City condemned because of liability concerns. SMCCA asked the City Engineer to make the Latimer Road gate self-closing to protect small children from running into the street. The Engineer stated there are no funds for this modification. Recreation and Parks has accepted the association's offer to fund the desired safety modifications to this gate

Rehabilitation of the park irrigation system and softball field, the one aspect of the Proposition K project mandated by the voters on November 6, 1996, has not yet been scheduled

IT'S THE LAW

It's a new year and a new decade. Let's resolve to observe the law. All of the laws, not just the ones we think are ok. Let's be good citizens, good neighbors.

We can start by observing municipal code 112.04 (c), otherwise known as the leaf blower law. It prohibits the use of all gas powered leaf blowers within 500 feet of a residence.

The noise and pollution created by gas powered leaf blowers are major concerns to individuals with asthma or allergies as well as individuals trying to conduct business in their homes, those who are ill, the elderly, shut ins, night workers and a host of others seeking quality of life in their homes and neighborhoods. Quality of life! Isn't that one of the reasons we chose to live in the canyon?

Blowers fill our air and our lungs with pesticides, mold, bird and animal fecal matter, two-cycle engine pollution, toxins and more. This particulate matter once blown into the air, and into our homes by these powerful machines, can persist for days.

There is one more health factor to be considered and that is stress! Loud, objectionable noise has been proven to cause extreme stress. Noise pollution, especially as it bounces off canyon walls, causes enormous, angry, hostile feelings toward those responsible for that noise.

Be a good neighbor. Tell your gardener not to use a gas powered leaf blower. It's against the law!

To report a violation call 3-1-1. You will need to know the date, time of day and if possible, license number.

A SMALL CANYON TREASURE: THE PASCUAL MARQUEZ FAMILY CEMETERY

The Marquez and Reyes Families are historic names in our Canyon. Francisco Marquez and Ysidro Reyes settled here in 1839 through a grant they received from the Mexican government of 6,656 acres of land. This land, known as "Rancho Boca De Santa Monica," extended from parts of present day Santa Monica and stretched through all of Santa Monica Canyon and the Pacific Palisades into parts of Topanga.

Most of the original rancho was sold over the years but there is a very special plot of land still remaining on San Lorenzo Street: The Pascual Marquez Family Cemetery, designated by the City of Los Angeles in 2000 as "Historic-Cultural Monument No. 685."

Family history records 30 or more people buried there, mostly in unmarked graves. Only two original headstones remain. In January 2009, researchers from UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology held two studies on the land to try and locate the individuals buried. First they used ground penetrating radar (GPR) equipment and a few weeks later trained cadaver sniffing dogs from the Institute of Canine Forensics in Ventura County. Both studies yielded consistent results in revealing potential gravesites. The study was so impressive that the UCLA researchers were honored with the California Governor's Historic Preservation Award.

In 1909 family and friends gathered for a New Years Eve Party where 13 people died of botulism poisoning after eating home-canned peaches. Ten persons were buried on San Lorenzo and three in Santa Monica.

On December 31, 2009 the Marquez and Reyes descendants held a memorial service on the cemetery grounds. Monsignor Torgerson of Saint Monica's Church, seen below with family historian Ernest Marquez, officiated.



December 31 was the 100th anniversary of the botulism tragedy and the family gathered to honor those deceased relatives and friends.

Now, 170 years after the establishment of Rancho Boca de Santa Monica and 100 years after the New Year's Eve tragedy, descendants from all branches of the Marquez and Reyes families are actively restoring and maintaining this small portion of the original rancho. Their family history is rich with interesting stories and culture. Truly a treasured part of our canyon's community.

The families are most appreciative of our San Lorenzo Street neighbor Reese Relfe who generously funded the four-month long restoration of the Marquez-Reyes' cherished statue of San Lorenzo.

The families plan to return the statue to the cemetery in April. There is so much more to learn about this unique part of our history. Please visit www.gpr-survey.com for further information regarding the survey and www.marquezcemetery.org for more detailed Marquez-Reyes information including photographs.

FREE TREES

Several organizations offer free trees to local residents. Palisades Beautiful will assist in providing parkway trees. Find general information and a link to the LA City Urban Forestry site at <http://palisadesbeautiful.org/>. Learn more at palisadesbeautiful@earthlink.net.

TreePeople offers pruning and pest management workshops and free shade and fruit trees to plant on private property. Find out more at treepeople.org.

LADWP offers a selection of free shade trees for private property. These trees may not be planted on a parkway. Take brief on-line workshop first at ladwp.com.

Each of these programs offers volunteer opportunities as well as comprehensive information and resources.

With a little research and physical exercise, you can give yourself and your neighborhood a more attractive and healthful environment.

SAVING OUR TREESCAPE

In addition to planting new trees, there are steps we can take to preserve and protect the existing trees in our canyon. Careful species-appropriate pruning is recommended. If the tree that needs trimming is in your parkway, you need to obtain a free permit from the City. The easiest method is online at the Street Tree Division website: <http://bsspermits.lacity.org/treeprune/> **more, see page 4**

To current resident, or

Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association
P.O. Box 3441
Santa Monica, CA 90408-3441

(Trees, cont'd)

where you can find all the facts.. Contact an arborist if you have any issues with your trees.

Rustic Environment Focus of Blog

Find this blog at <http://rusticcanyon.wordpress.com/>
The goal of this blog is to be a constructive forum about future preservation of our canyon's environmental resources. Join the discussion.

Protect Your Identity

Blue Bins are vulnerable. Papers from Blue Bins have been founded scattered in our neighborhood. This is a sign that persons may be rummaging; maybe they are looking for recycling, or maybe for your name and personal information. Consider putting the bin out at the last minute. Even better, invest in a paper shredder.

Report Graffiti in our Canyon

Send a digital photo with address or location to: pacificgraffitisolutions@yahoo.com. Exceptions are the coast highway and flood control walls. To report graffiti on State Highway 1, aka PCH, go online to: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/maintform.html> . For the flood control channels, go to <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/Resident/> and click on the *I Want to Report Graffiti* link.

Babs Lebowski

SMCCA Treasurer Babs Lebowski passed away in July after suffering a stroke. Babs was a dedicated board member for over 20 years. She danced in the 1984 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony and had the personalized license plate to prove it. She taught dance and exercise classes and served as treasurer to SMCCA and AARP. We will miss her.

2010 Dues Now Payable

The SMCCA is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt all volunteer 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 payment to SMCCA at PO Box 3441, Santa Monica, CA 90408-3441, or pay through our web site, www.smcca.org. Additional contributions are welcome and greatly appreciated. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

If you would like to participate on the board or in any other capacity or have areas of interest, please tell us in your reply. Also, please include an email address so we can send you important notices. Please tell us if you want to receive LAPD Crime Reports and Alerts. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of most months and our Annual Meeting is May18.

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

Important Phone Numbers-- Call 3-1-1, or

Graffiti Report	3-1-1
Illegal Leaf Blowers	1.800.996.2489
Illegally Parked Vehicles	1.213.485.4184
Pothole Repair	1.800.996.2489

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--

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