

Draft Notes – Public Workshop
February 9, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Open Space Vision Project
City of Walnut Creek

Attendees:

Open Space Task Force

Rick Underwood, Chair (PROS Commission)
Sandi Jacobsen (PROS Commission)
Harvey Ceaser
Price Russ
Fran Garland

Open Space Foundation

Bob Brittain (facilitator)
Bob Simmons

City Staff

Dan Cather, Public Services Manager
Nancy Dollard, Open Space Supervising Ranger
(facilitator)
Art Janke, Ranger (facilitator)
Bruce Weidman, Ranger
Dan Bylin, Ranger (facilitator)

Consultant

Randy Anderson, LandPeople

Public

1. Scott Thenell
2. Kem Robinson
3. Sylvie Robinson
4. Jeannette Kade
5. Mitch Forcier
6. Chris Frick
7. Yorbe Jacobson
8. Ed Montgomery
9. Tammy Sypriano
10. Penny Johansen
11. Kent Sherwood
12. Sandy Sprowl
13. David Ogden
14. Margaret Birkhaeuser
15. Christine Rodriguez
16. Catherine Walters
17. Joe Stadum
18. Mary Alice Stadum
19. Marietta Stuart
20. Kathy Stuart Hill
21. Dan Birkaeuser
22. Michael Palucki
23. D. Norton
24. Jim McManus
25. Lynne McManus

General Notes:

1. Should post workshop/meeting notices on open space gates.
2. Post on City calendar notice of public meetings.
3. Put notices in open areas on kiosks; have tear-off of date and time.
4. Percent that use open space is much smaller than City population.
5. Creeks – interest in taking ownership should be considered as outcome of discussion – management of ecological system.

Breakout Group Notes:

Group A – Facilitator Bob Brittain

1. How do we use?
 - a. Walking with dogs
 - b. Hiking/mountain biking

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- c. Volunteer activities
- d. Ranch days
- e. Exploring nature
- f. Photography
- g. Picnicking
2. What would make more useful?
 - a. Parking (Sutherland)/access – neighborhood sensitivity. St. Mary’s running as example.
 - b. Want limited access – permit. City/County cooperation needed/
 - c. Other place same? Wiget, Snyder
 - d. Greater visible ranger presence
3. Access Issues
 - a. Communication between users and neighbors and City staff
 - b. Educate users to be sensitive to neighbors
4. Outreach education for people using Open Space
5. Education
 - a. Rangers emphasize in training sessions
 - b. Especially educating adults
 - c. Major public events to educated people on values, preservation
6. Enforce existing rules
7. Cattle grazing concerns – trail damage
8. Long-term concerns
 - a. Preserve oak woodlands
 - b. Educate teens using Open Space
9. Working well: Borges Ranch programs
10. Extend connectivity with wildlife corridors
11. Connect watershed management with Open Space management
12. More Open Space staffing to achieve goals outlines in these notes – maybe we can’t afford?
13. Emphasize balance between preservation and programming
14. Use with minimum impact
15. Suggestions:
 - a. On-site “Use Study” on Open Space
 - b. Incorporate creeks with Open Space for connectivity

Group B – Facilitator Dan Bylin

1. Open Space is the crown jewel of Walnut Creek – should have higher priority for funding
2. Natural resources are priority. Leave it alone, no major development (e.g. picnic areas, fire pits, turf or lawn – not a typical park). Don’t allow any development (4 votes).
3. Look at areas in Open Space that could be developed to create revenue for the Open Space Program e.g. Lime Ridge (Rock Oak) could be sold to developers to build houses. Then use funding in the Open Space (1 vote).

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4. More trail maintenance. Keep up with the maintenance.
5. Continue with the habitat restoration projects – oaks, grasslands, etc.
6. Modify policies so cattle have less impact on Open Space – timing, fencing, exclusions, protect riparian areas.
7. Restoration projects to increase habitat, but still allow cattle.
8. Increase (find) ways to find funding for the Open Space so we don't have to depend on the General Fund. Funding for habitat and restoration of native landscapes.
9. Propose another bond for Open Space to provide funding for infrastructure and habitat protection (6 votes).
10. Develop programs with local schools and keep existing programs.
11. Develop more contacts with young people – the next generation to adopt the Open Space.
12. Integrate the Open Space programs with the Shadelands programs.
13. Try to tie the Open Space program with the current "green" movement.
14. Increase ranger presence in and about Open Space.
15. Develop Open Space "courtesies" instead of rules (e.g. pick up after dogs, stay off muddy trails [horses], not bikes on sing tracks, etc.).
16. More education for Open Space users (e.g. wildlife issues).
17. Improve website with educational issues.
18. Keep "multi-use" for Open Space.
19. Develop volunteer patrol (?) for Open Space.
20. Educate public about cats and their effect on birds, rodents, reptiles, wildlife. Not only feral cats, but pet cats/
21. Development of Open Space with public projects needs to be monitored (e.g. Pine Tree Phone Antenna).
22. Increase or try to purchase more Open Space for our preserves (acquire more land parcels).
23. Develop funding source to purchase more property.
24. Don't add any other developed use sites. Keep what we have, just don't add any others.
25. Add more benches – possibly memorial benches?
26. Create a "trail sponsor" program to get more funding for trails. Individuals pay to have one mile of trail under their name.
27. Purchase more "urban open space" within City limits – Walnut Creek green belt Open Space through town.
28. Establish better coordination between agencies (EBRPD/State Parks). Possibly work together on trail projects that join the agencies together. Work on a project involving Iron Horse Trail and canal trails.
29. Open Space and Parks have their own department – not tied in with Public Services.

Group C – Facilitator Nancy Dollard

1. Plants and animal resource management plan needed
2. Open Space Foundation work
3. Tree and native revegetation needed
4. Increased number of coyotes; OK with numbers of coyotes and mountain lions

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5. Access/trails – good access; additional trails needed
6. Feels safe in the Open Space
7. Reduce deer population; don't reduce deer and turkey population
8. Would like to be able to see wildlife
9. Cattle:
 - a. Get out of Open Space
 - b. Bulls in Open Space
 - c. Injuries to hikers/chasing (aggressive/dominant)
 - d. Cattle dung on trails
 - e. Cattle in smaller areas
 - f. Trail conditions – rainy
 - g. Cow and calf operation
 - h. Range management: numbers and timing of grazing
 - i. OK with present management
 - j. Cost/benefit analysis
10. Discourage illicit gathering areas – drinking, smoking, litter
11. Increase Open Space:
 - a. Safeway property
 - b. Acalanes
 - c. Heather Farm
 - d. EBMUD knoll at Sugarloaf and at Acalanes
12. Remain what it is – no recreational improvements; no more services to non-residents
13. La Casa Via parking
14. Sutherland
15. Preserving and maintaining the natural state – natural experience
16. Conservation – management
17. Current:
 - a. hike – 6
 - b. run – 1 (+ 1 sometimes)
 - c. biking – 1
 - d. dogs – 3
18. Trail signs needed
19. Acalanes gate that was taken out replaced
20. Overall happy with Open Space
21. Need management plans
22. More maintenance staff
23. Contact numbers in kiosks

Group D – Facilitator Art Janke

1. Improve trail maintenance:
 - a. Cattle area after rain; posting cattle areas
 - b. Entrance areas

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- c. Trail markers
- 2. Increase access gates – Perada
- 3. Improve grading/drainage of fire roads
- 4. Formal Trail Plan – do we need more/less?
- 5. Continue protecting natural resources – oak restoration
- 6. Education outreach
 - a. Public
 - b. Schools/kids
- 7. Increase patrols
 - a. Volunteer walking, bike, horse
 - b. Trail monitor
- 8. Howe
 - a. Access
 - b. Tress/water
- 9. Pursue acquisition of lands
- 10. Fresh information/new events in kiosks
- 11. More program postings in Nutshell
- 12. Website posting
- 13. Overuse/parking
- 14. Expand program advertising
 - a. Schools
 - b. Times/journal feature
- 15. Steps to protect wildlife and natural resources and habitat
- 16. Protect and expand open space
- 17. Engage land acquisition specialists