

Middle San Dieguito Watershed Field Trip
Notes
Technical Advisory Committee
May 26th, 2005

Attendees: Mike Gonzales, Lilian Busse, Maeve Hanley, Mary Ann Mann, Jeff Pasek, Dexter Wilson, Jason Jackson, Cathy Cibit, Bob Collins, Cheryl Filar, Susan Carter, Dave Martens, Cindy Stankowski, and Jim Witaker.

Stop 1: Parking Lot behind Restaurant: North County Fair

Several participants were late due to traffic congestion so Mary Ann Mann and Cheryl Filar took the opportunity to discuss urbanization and land use trends within the City of Escondido that may affect this part of the watershed.

Stop 2: Pomerado Road/Trail Head

Dave Martens, Property Agent, Real Estate Assets Department described the history and background of San Pasqual and passed out a handout showing existing lease holds. There is an on-going struggle regarding who pays for water and who doesn't; some use well water and others don't such as Bordier's Nursery. He discussed some of the long-term residents such as Rebecca Judson who still lives in her house at the end of Bandy Canyon Road and is 103 years old. The world's smallest buffalo will be moving out along with owners.

Dave also discussed Brian Maienschein's "Vision Plan" which will preserve agriculture and change zoning and land use designations. Some of the leases discussed included a lady that raises ostriches and an organic farmer (Brammer) who is concerned about nitrates in the well water he uses. He will be moving his packing shed to #1.

Susan Carter from the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) discussed their organization and the plan for the "Coast-to-Crest" Trail for multiple recreational users such as cyclists, hikers, and horseback riders. So far only two 10-mile trail segments are in place but the whole trail is envisioned to be 55 miles in length. The JPA is working with the County in another segment downstream and there will be a trail by the fair grounds. The Beaudreau property was recently acquired and will be compatible with So. Calif. Edison's mitigation site which is adjacent.

Susan also discussed the proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to be constructed over Hodges Reservoir (approx. 995 feet long with a stress-ribbon design) west of I-15. Construction is estimated to start in September, 2005.

Jeff Pasek discussed the water quality monitoring that is done by the City Water Department at various stations in the valley; specifically where the creeks enter the valley. Hodges is considered an "impaired" water body and most pollutants it receives is

from the surrounding residential and commercial uses. Nutrient loading is a major concern and they do monitor for pesticides but testing results do not show any pesticide residuals.

Jason Jackson discussed ground water in the valley and it's quality is generally good.

Stop 3: San Dieguito River Park Trailhead

Dave Martens discussed the Witman farm and the diversity of farming activities on his leaseholds from sod, fruit, avocado trees to row crops. Some ancillary uses include maintenance sheds. The Verger Dairy sells organic milk; has about 350 cows and had been in business since the 1940's. Santa Maria Creek is no longer a part of their leasehold. Note that the concentrated wastes from the cows remain here.

Cowbird trapping was also discussed since this bird parasitizes the nests of other sensitive birds. It is a non-native species that has had significant impacts to native bird species especially least Bell's vireo. New leases should include cow bird trapping as part of their agreement if needed.

The U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service provides advice regarding BMP's for leaseholds. Some of these leases are long-term but most are currently on year-to-year leases. According to Jason Jackson, San Pasqual has the best farm land left in the county.

Groundwater in San Pasqual is currently used for irrigation by some of the leaseholds. There are not many groundwater basins in the county. In San Pasqual, the groundwater basin has the potential for storing water and for reclaimed water injection for eventual extractive use for municipal purposes. As leases are renewed, the City is reserving the right to be able to use injection wells and therefore will charge for water usage

Stop 4: San Diego Archaeological Center

Matt Whitman discussed farming issues relative to his operations in the valley. Also discussed injection wells and the issues are:

- City pays for imported water coming into the Valley and therefore the lessees should also pay. This had led to competition since there are other agricultural areas in the State where water is free. This could become an economic issue for San Pasqual farmers.
- Water quality could be improved.

Jim Whitaker and Annmarie Cox talked about the San Diego Archaeological Center (started in 1998) and their educational programs. This Center is a non-profit organization and a repository for private and jurisdictional cultural materials which are also used as part of their educational programs. The Hodges area is extremely rich in cultural resources with the Harris Site being an important oldest site in California and the nation. This Site is located on the Crosby Golf Course and was originally excavated by Malcolm Rogers. There are three different cultural periods in San Diego County: San Dieguito

(10,000 to 7,000 YBP), La Jolla (7,000 to 3,000 YBP) and Late Prehistoric (3,000 YBP to Spanish contact). The past people also needed water and found this Valley to be suitable for their needs. The San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians were moved from this Valley to Valley Center after the Europeans arrived. The famous Battle of San Pasqual was fought here.

Stop 5: Hodges Golf Center

This commercial use precipitated the San Pasqual Vision Plan by Councilmember Maienschein. The urbanization issues were already discussed at the first stop. But we talked about giant cane (*Arundo donax*) at Kit Carson Park; major developments in Escondido (approximately 70% built out) and the trend to convert avocado orchards to residential uses. The Rancho Guejito subdivision is a huge housing development that is being planned within the County of San Diego which will affect this part of the watershed.

Stop 6: Sikes Adobe

Susan Carter invited us to tour this historic site which is adjacent and west of the Hodges Golf Center. It was built in 1870 by the Sikes family and was originally a one room adobe structure. The wood frame was added on later and the family lived here for about 30 years and were farmers but later switched to the dairy business. In 1918, the property was purchased and transferred to the City of San Diego. Through a state grant the house was restored in 2003. The JPA is currently renegotiating their lease to have a full-time docent; future plans include adding a formal garden and recreating the well building and wind mill.

Stop 7: Hodges Dam

Jeff Pasek discussed the history of the dam and the eventual replacement of the flume by a pipeline by the Rancho Santa Fe Irrigation District. The City of San Diego owns the dam and reservoir and sells water to the Rancho Santa Fe Irrigation District and San Dieguito Irrigation District. The Olivenhain Reservoir (O.R.) is hooked up to the aqueduct system and will convey water to Hodges Reservoir via pump station and pipeline currently under construction. Therefore, the reservoir will be full of water most of the time. Currently, about every three years or so the reservoir fills up from rain water. The issue came up about the willow trees in the vicinity of I-15 which will affect water quality as the trees die. No trees were removed previously due to cost and environmental issues dealing with sensitive habitat. A recommendation for the watershed plan could be to keep out willow trees when water levels are low. The growth of trees was never a problem when cattle grazing was permitted since they kept down plant growth.

Other discussions at this stop included releasing water to keep some river flow in the canyon below Hodges Reservoir and the accumulation of sediment in Hodges.