

Conservation of Rancho Lilac (RL)

Talking Points for SANDAG Staff's Public Meeting on October 15.

Please read WHCC's August 28, 2020, letter for background on this matter.

Text in this font is only for YOUR information and not to be said during the meeting.

1. I support SANDAG awarding the contract for managing RL to the San Diego Habitat Conservancy.
2. SANDAG's posting on its Facebook page at the time RL was acquired stated in part, "*Rancho Lilac is a crown jewel in the SANDAG Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP)... Within the SR 76 corridor, the EMP has gone above and beyond legal requirements to set a new 'net [environmental] benefit' mitigation standard.*" The posting reflects well the purpose of conserving RL - to protect in perpetuity the sensitive species and habitats on site, including endangered species. It did not mention public access.

What is staff doing to inform the SANDAG Board and the public that RL was not acquired to provide recreational opportunities, and that its conservation is to provide a "net benefit" to species and habitat above and beyond traditional mitigation?

3. Does staff's recommendation about providing assurances that awarding the contract would not preclude a future public trail mean that there WILL be a public trail and recreation on RL? *This is important because there is no documentation that promises trails for public use on RL.*
4. What is staff doing to clarify for the Board and the public that:
 - a. no consideration of a trail on RL will occur until AFTER the completion and approval of the HMP,
 - b. no trail will be proposed in the HMP, and
 - c. a determination of whether a trail and recreation can occur in a manner compatible with conservation on RL is infeasible until there is current data available on the resources and the necessary analyses have been done accounting for the science from recreation ecology?
5. What is staff doing to inform the Board that non-consumptive recreation (*e.g., hiking, biking, horseback riding*) can disturb wildlife and habitat and that, in some cases, the effects of the disturbance can be severe? <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=178944&inline>
6. Would EMP funding be used to construct a trail or related infrastructure on Ranch Lilac or for the management of a trail or recreation?
7. The trails depicted for Valley Center in the **County's 2009 Community Trails Master Plan** are NOT commitments to those trails. Master Plans are aspirational documents and the acquisition in 2011 of Rancho Lilac as "net environmental benefit" mitigation land changed the potential for the realization of the trails depicted in the CTMP on RL.
8. The current update process for the **Valley Center Community Plan** is a great opportunity for the public to direct their efforts to get the County to provide more trails in Valley Center. Will staff promote this? There is plenty of open space in Valley Center where trails could be built and recreation occur without affecting the conserved biological resources on RL. *SANDAG funded, at least in part, the Valley Center Community Plan update.*
9. Even if well-done biological analyses accounting for science-based information from recreation ecology suggest that a trail and recreational activities could be compatible with the conservation intended on RL, neither should happen until there are other designated trails within Valley Center that lead to RL. There is no point in having a trail on RL that doesn't connect with other trails.