

TOPANGA LAGOON PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Meeting held on Saturday, 29 February 2020 10am – Noon
Annenberg Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Highway, Santa Monica

Welcome from Craig Sap, Angeles District Superintendent

Power point presentation found on the website.

Project goals reviewed by Rosi Dagit, Sr. Conservation Biologist, RCDSMM

Topanga General Plan review by Danielle LeFer, acting Sr. Environmental Scientist, CDPR

History and Ranch Motel review by Barbara Tejada, Cultural Resource Program Manager, CDPR

Topanga Lagoon berm and breach dynamics and surf by Chris Webb, Project Manager, Moffatt and Nichol

Workshop directions were provided by Clark Stevens, Executive Officer, RCDSMM

Site plans were distributed two per table with ten tables of participants, who were tasked with using markers, stickers, and post it notes to describe their vision for the future of the Topanga Lagoon area.

At 1130, each plan group was given a minute to summarize their ideas and share them with the group.

Additionally, everyone was requested to provide more detailed comments on a sheet provided which were collected at the end of the meeting.

Individual comments provided by 35 comment sheets were tabulated and summarized in Table 1. Some comment sheets were fully filled out and others were partially complete. Table 2 provides a list of all written comments provided on the site plans. All comments are included. The number indicates how many times that comment was individually noted.

A total of 75 people signed in, but an additional 20 people participated without signing in.

Photos of all the site plans with notes follow the summary tables. Note that no notes were observed on site plan for Team 15.

Table 1. Comments provided on the comment sheets

Comments Received (31 sheets)	(Max = 31)
Restore Topanga lagoon	11
Natural gateway into park with minimal build structures	4
Overnight accommodations	-5
Visitor uses: interpretive and educational facilities	-1
Ecological:	1=14, 2=3, 3=0, 4=0, 5=0, 6=0 (1)
• Improve fish passage for steelhead trout	13
• Maintain/improve habitat for tidewater goby	13
• Increase wetland and transitional habitat	15
• Self-sustaining function	13
• Protect nesting habitat	12
• Improve water quality in lagoon and ocean	13
• Note that sand movement and beach re-nourishment are potential project benefits	9
Sea Level Rise:	1=6, 2=5, 3=1, 4=2, 5=1, 6=1 (2)
• Accommodate increased wave action and tidal levels	9
• Move the lifeguard station and restroom septic tank	12
• Anticipate upstream migration of lagoon and transitional habitats	11
• Impacts to cultural resources in floodplain/Snake Pit area	3
Cultural/Historical:	1=3, 2=2, 3=4, 4=2, 5=5, 6=0 (5)
• Native American and historical resources within the project area. Consideration of pre- and post-1933 site topography and effects to cultural resources.	10
• Topanga Ranch Motel – determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places for its association with, and an example of, the evolution of 1930s-1950s roadside recreation. Character-defining features include the courtyard layout and the landscape trees and shrubs.	1
• Interpretation	1
Emergency:	1=2, 2=2, 3=3, 4=2, 5=4, 6=1 (3)
• Lifeguard and Ranger access under PCH bridge has been identified as a benefit if possible to avoid problems during high traffic weekends and summer	6
• Emergency turn around during road closures – direct traffic under PCH bridge as a turnaround to be explored further	9
• Helicopter evacuation – need to attach utility power lines to the bridge structure which would provide opportunity to move the pad to the west. It might also be possible to place a pad on top of the new lifeguard building? Food for thought!	6
Recreation/Visitor Serving:	1=1, 2=1, 3=4, 4=3, 5=1, 6=3 (4)
• PARKING! Need to sort out how much and where	7
• Surfer access to view waves from PCH	5
• Make sure no change to surf break!	12
• Pedestrian access under PCH	9
• Interpretive signs	6
• Trails	11
• Picnic area	8
• Restrooms (there are septic limitations!)	12
• Restaurants and shops	-6
• Potential Visitor Center	1
• Topanga Ranch Motel Low Cost Accommodations	-6
• Handicapped access	7
• Other visitor serving concessions	-6
Transportation:	1=2, 2=1, 3=1, 4=3, 5=1, 6=7 (6)
• Maintain traffic access on PCH during bridge replacement	6
• Provide shoulder parking- Caltrans is unlikely to allow any parking on the bridge for safety reasons. Maybe add a lane to the bridge deck on south side for short term parking?	4
• Provide view to ocean through railing	3
• Bridge needs to be single span less than 200 feet	4

Additional comments provided on comment sheets:

ADDITIONAL REMARKS on comment sheets	No. times noted (Max = 31)
Restore the lagoon and remove all built structures	4
No overnight accommodations	1
Maximize lagoon restoration	9
Raise bridge to accommodate pedestrian undercrossing	2
Put all parking on land side of PCH	2
Make sure adequate staffing and maintenance are provided	2
Preserve historic info in photo records and demo	3
Build modern appropriate accommodations	1
Important to not overlook that natural capacity for septic and potential for sewer hookup, sm package treatment	2
Use most north alignment to maximize shore area	1
Accommodate alternative transportation so parking is not as important such as shuttles, bus stops, surfboard storage	2
Add pedestrian overlook to the bridge	1
Interpretation is so broad!	1
No concessions except Cholas	2
Consolidate restaurants, visitor center, motel, sm business in one area for accessibility.	2
More focus on environmental and ecological ramifications	1
Allow natural dunes to develop	2
We do not want to be another Disney/Malibu	3
Do not cave to self serving business interests like Malibu	1
Underground utility infrastructure	3
Build structures sustainably, low impact, Aesthetic but sensitive architecture that blends with environment.	1
greywater all restaurants and businesses to help sustain land, reduce water wastage	3
Keep Cholas and Reel Inn	3
Interconnect trail with upper Topanga	2
Sea level rise will take care of itself	1
Reduce size or eliminate Ranch Motel	2
Interpretation visitor center where Oasis is, raised building with underground parking like Topanga Library	1
Want excavation to widen creek, but worried about the warming of the creek with widening. Trout need cold water. Ad if drought continues or worsens does that leave the creek bed/fish gone; too dry and no water?	1
Signage only for interpretation	1
Minimize built structures	1
Let nature happen	2
Move Ranch Motel to snake pit area	1
Lifeguard station should be moveable and helipad could be by parking on east side	2
Lagoon should be as natural as possible. Removal all fill and let the lagoon be an area for the wildlife.	3
Have trails for walking and wildlife viewing	1
Move businesses to east or west edges	1
Bridge should be as long as needed to have lagoon as large as possible	1
Add restaurant and business and ranch motel on west side of creek	1
Extend bridge to 500' with dune restoration to the south	1
Create greywater system location on E bank of creek	1
Add parking along Topanga	1
Move Ranch Motel to east side near Reel Inn on TCB	1
Relocate and reproduce historic structures for visitor and historic interpretation perhaps	1
Feed Bin could be maintained for equestrian visitors	1
Replace eucalyptus trees (fire hazard) with native oaks or sycamores	1
restrooms should not be attached to lifeguard tower	1
Priority is to benefit the ecological, allow for emergency services access, move lifeguard tower back	1
Keep parking minimal to reduce crowd at the beach	1
Funds to maintain visitor services?	1
Make the Arco the turn around area to be only used during emergencies. That Arco is dangerous with people pulling in/out and doesn't look safe or ecologically sound.	1
Too rocky to swim at Topanga Point. Only good for surfing. Funnel "beach goers" toward Mastros. No need to put more parking N of Mastros	1
Natures is history, not old buildings! Plants and animals need to be respected here	1
Excavate sediment and move wetland habitat upstream	1
Nature should dictate hydrology planning	1
Remove all buildings on ocean side of PCH	1
safe pedestrian access (high bridge)	2
Education signs	2
No changes to the road/ keep highway alignment	1
Move lifeguard up on piles	1
Low cost accommodations	1
Preserve topanga point surfing	1
Keep as seasonally-closed estuary	1
Plan for sediment export management due to wildfires	1
Low cost parking	2

Table 2. Comments provided on the site plans.

Blank cell means not selected by anyone	# of times noted
Comments Received on Site Plans	(Teams = 19)
Restore Topanga lagoon	14
Natural gateway into park with minimal build structures	0
Overnight accommodations	1
Visitor uses: interpretive and educational facilities	8
Ecological:	
• Improve fish passage for steelhead trout	0
• Maintain/improve habitat for tidewater goby	0
• Increase wetland and transitional habitat	7
• Self-sustaining function	0
• Protect nesting habitat	1
• Improve water quality in lagoon and ocean	0
• Note that sand movement and beach re-nourishment are potential project benefits	0
Sea Level Rise:	
• Accommodate increased wave action and tidal levels	1
• Move the lifeguard station and restroom septic tank	8
• Anticipate upstream migration of lagoon and transitional habitats	1
• Impacts to cultural resources in floodplain/Snake Pit area	0
Cultural/Historical:	
• Native American and historical resources within the project area. Consideration of pre- and post-1933 site topography and effects to cultural resources.	0
• Topanga Ranch Motel – determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places for its association with, and an example of, the evolution of 1930s-1950s roadside recreation. Character-defining features include the courtyard layout and the landscape trees and shrubs.	1
• Interpretation	5
Emergency:	
• Lifeguard and Ranger access under PCH bridge has been identified as a benefit if possible to avoid problems during high traffic weekends and summer	0
• Emergency turn around during road closures – direct traffic under PCH bridge as a turnaround to be explored further	1
• Helicopter evacuation – need to attach utility power lines to the bridge structure which would provide opportunity to move the pad to the west. It might also be possible to place a pad on top of the new lifeguard building? Food for thought!	0
Recreation/Visitor Serving:	
• PARKING! Need to sort out how much and where	8
• Surfer access to view waves from PCH	1
• Make sure no change to surf break!	1
• Pedestrian access under PCH	1
• Interpretive signs	2
• Trails	5
• Picnic area	1
• Restrooms (there are septic limitations!)	2
• Restaurants and shops	6
• Potential Visitor Center	9
• Topanga Ranch Motel Low Cost Accommodations	2
• Handicapped access	1
• Other visitor serving concessions	3
Transportation:	
• Maintain traffic access on PCH during bridge replacement	1
• Provide shoulder parking- Caltrans is unlikely to allow any parking on the bridge for safety reasons. Maybe add a lane to the bridge deck on south side for short term parking?	0
• Provide view to ocean through railing	0
• Bridge needs to be single span less than 200 feet	1

Additional comments provided on the site plans.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS on the site plans	# of times noted	ADDITIONAL REMARKS on the site plans	# of times noted	ADDITIONAL REMARKS on the site plans	# of times noted
Restore the lagoon and remove all built structures	3	parking on "fill" public access	1	Wylie's could move. Keep choldas, winery, reel inn,	1
No overnight accommodations	2	reproduce and relocate perhaps near feed bin(ranch motel)	1	Move lifeguard stand to the southeast edge of	1
Maximize lagoon restoration	6	"Hearts" on winery, Wylie's, Choldas, and Reel Inn	2	Loss of 10 handicap spots moved to street spots	1
Raise bridge to accommodate pedestrian undercrossing	0	Retain as existing food concession!!!!	1	Better signage/wayfinding for tunnel to promote	1
Put all parking on land side of PCH	2	Retain feed bin and expand for visitor center area with Topanga Ranch Motel	1	Extra parking on west side of winery	1
make sure adequate staffing and maintenance are provided	1	This highway is crucial emergency route no-messing with it	1	Restore hotel for lodging \$	1
Preserve historic info in photo records and demo	2	First, do no harm!	1	remove helipad	1
build modern appropriate accommodations	1	not enough baseline information to make decisions. Need biological surveys of all areas in the floodplain and uplands first before we decide.	1	Remove winery, oasis, and feedbin	1
important to not overlook that natural capacity for septic and potential for sewer hookup, sm package treatment	0	fill for pkg lot.	1	Move Lifeguard tower back	3
use most north alignment to maximize shore area	3	What is the purpose or reason for "project"?	1	Get rid of flag on top of hill	1
accommodate alternative transportation so parking is not as important such as shuttles, bus stops, surfboard storage	3	New showers with warmer water. Solar heated. Currently it is ice cold!	1	Preserve ped xing	1
add pedestrian overlook to the bridge	2	Less wine, more parking	1	Move Topanga Ranch Motel to accommodate lagoon	2
Interpretation is so broad!	0	Make Ranch visitor center to learn	1	Move restroom on beach up to parking lot.	1
No concessions except Choldas	1	remove arrundo	1	LaCO Lifeguard strorage where feed bin and oasis is	1
Consolidate restaurants, visitor center, motel, sm business in one area for accessibility.	2	concerned that there be no additional run-off of water into lagoon	1	No evcs	1
more focus on environmental and ecological ramifications	0	not in favor of any hotel/motel development	1	Low cost overnight max pub access by reel inn	1
allow natural dunes to develop	1	use of taco truck	1	No amoring of beach	1
we do not want to be another Disney/Malibu	0	Move helipad next to feed bin	1	Restore single building of Ranch Motel for visitor center	1
Do not cave to self serving business interests like Malibu	0	parking on Topanga	2	Keep emergency services and access on s. side	1
Underground utility infrastructure	0	Front Office, cabin rentals, and bathrooms where reel inn currently is	1	Look into/study turn around option at Topanga/PCH intersection	1
Build structures sustainably, low impact, Aesthetic but sensitive architecture that blends with environment.	0	extend span of bridge over creek	1	Expand wetland area w/ terracing as buffer fo SLR and habitat value	1
greywater all restaurants and businesses to help sustain land, reduce water wastage	1	portable lifeguard shack	1	Extend sewer line for 1 mile to hook all businesses into the city sewer	1
Keep Choldas and Reel Inn	3	portable bathrooms south of pch where parking lot is	1	Improve left turn out of canyon	1
Interconnect trail with upper Topanga	1	maintain berm closure dynamic	1	Widen mouth of creek	1
Sea level rise will take care of itself	0	relocate businesses	1	Move lifeguard station to where helipad is currently	1
Reduce size or eliminate Ranch Motel	3	remove all fill	2	Keep existing businesses or move because they are historic	1
Interpretation visitor center where Oasis is, raised building with underground parking like Topanga Library	3	outdoor dining on slope northwest of creek	1	Move new helipad closer to pch	1
Want excavation to widen creek, but worried about the warming of the creek with widening. Trout need cold water. Ad if drought continues or worsens does that leave the creek bed fish gone; too dry and no water?	0	do not disturb undeveloped land north of pch	1	Restore the Topanga Ranch and get it on the national historic register	1
Signage only for interpretation	0	Maybe remove/re-assign Wylies and area of "Excavation Ok"	1	Area behind ranch motel as day use only	2
Minimize built structures	2	Parking-removal of southern side is okay as majority of people park highway side	1	Move lifeguard station up on west side of parking lot	1
Let nature happen	0	lifeguard station move more eastern location (closer to Topanga and PCH intersection)	2	Repurpose ranch motel land for hotel, classroom, education, and bar	1
Move Ranch Motel to snake pit area	0	Maintain Reel Inn	2	Repurpose Oasis/Feed Barn lot for visitor center, underground parking	2
Lifeguard station should be moveable and helipad could be by parking on east side	0	Turn around and pedestrian beach access under bridge	2	Widen PCH	1
Lagoon should be as natural as possible. Removal all fill and let the lagoon be an area for the wildlife.	0	Move helipad west	2	Visitor Center utilizing historic feed bin	1
Have trails for walking and wildlife viewing	2	interpretive center for trail usage	1	Keep historic buildings (Reel Inn, Wylie's, Choldas, Ranch Motel) but can move if necessary	1
Move businesses to east or west edges	0	trail from interpretation (built where oasis is) and extending to creek	1	most northern route for PCH	2
Bridge should be as long as needed to have lagoon as large as possible	0	Lifeguard Tower 2 story for visibility parking below for veh. Remove veh. Container (station moved to edge of existing parking lot)	1	Dune restoration	1
Add restaurant and business and ranch motel on west side of creek	0	lagoon as no groom zone	1	Parking and turn around on Topanga	1
Extend bridge to 500' with dune restoration to the south	0	move helipad closer to pch and further west	2	Us of TCB Highground electric shuttle from pier	1
Create greywater system location on E bank of creek	0	restore top of bluff (where parking lot is)	2	Move lifeguard station up into parking lot on east side of lagoon	1
Add parking along Topanga	2	keep parking in same area	1	Move Topanga Ranch Motel to high ground off of Topanga	1
Move Ranch Motel to east side near Reel Inn on TCB	0	maintain lifeguard sighting zone	1	Visitor Center and any concessions on NW corner of PCH and TCB	1
Relocate and reproduce historic structures for visitor and historic interpretation perhaps Feed Bin could be maintained for equestrian visitors	0	larger lagoon w/ nat. closure dynamics	1	Keep PCH alignment but extend the bridge	1
Replace eucalyptus trees(fire hazard) with native oaks or sycamores	0	helispot access from lifeguard station	1	Free surfer parking where handicap parking road is	1
restrooms should not be attached to lifeguard tower	0	access to upcoast of lagoon	1	Bury utility poles	1
Priority is to benefit the ecological , allow for emergency services access, move lifeguard tower back	0	turn around access across from winery	2	Save Choldas or rebuild	1
Keep parking minimal to reduce crowd at the beach	0	restroom top of bluff	1	Migratory birds feeding and resting in lagoon	1
Funds to maintain visitor services?	0	Rebuild Ranch Motel for visitor use	1	Staffing is critical for maintenance	1
Make the Arco the turn around area to be only used during emergencies. That Arco is dangerous with people pulling in/out and doesn't look safe or ecologically sound.	0	protect songbirds revegetation	1	12 acre lagoon	1
Too rocky to swim at Topanga Point. Only good for surfing. Funnel "beach goers" toward Mastro's. No need to put more parking N of Mastro's	2	use of tunnels at topanga and pch. Elevate hw/topanga canyon to Malibu	1	Keep Choldas and Wylie's	1
Natures is history, not old buildings! Plants and animals need to be respected here	0	increase parking in another area east of Topange canyon blvd	1	Move Reel Inn up on hill top	1
Excavate sediment and move wetland habitat upstream	0	Right turn tunnel important at Topanga and PCH	1	Move Ranch Motel Across PCH to beach side	1
Nature should dictate hydrology planning	0	Remove helipad and burne	1	Re-route PCH to historic alignment where it cuts into the hillside	1
Remove all buildings on ocean side of PCH	2	repurpose road leading to lower parking lot for surfer parking	1		
safe pedestrian access (high bridge)	0	Save Wylie's and Choldas	2		
Education signs	0	Maintain helispot location	1		
no changes to the road/ keep highway alignment	2	Clear South of pch for beach only with beach restrooms.	1		
move lifeguard up on piles	1	beach parking all north of pch. Allow limited pkg spaces need disabled pkg for easier beach access. Encourage alternate transportation to reduce pkg	1		
low cost accommodations	0	Native American and cultural center, interpretive center, and visitor center together	1		
preserve topanga point surfing	0	safe ingress and egress for this area considering traffic during rush hr	1		
keep as seasonally-closed estuary	0	Complete restoration in 2 stages. Stage 1 encompassing the west side of lagoon and phase 2 the east side of lagoon	1		
Plan for sediment export management due to wildfires	0	No Gas Station, other possibilities	1		
low cost parking	0	Visitor Center, Interpretive centers, and snack shop on south side of pch on west side of lagoon	1		

Photos of the site plans with a summary of their associated comments follows.



Team 1



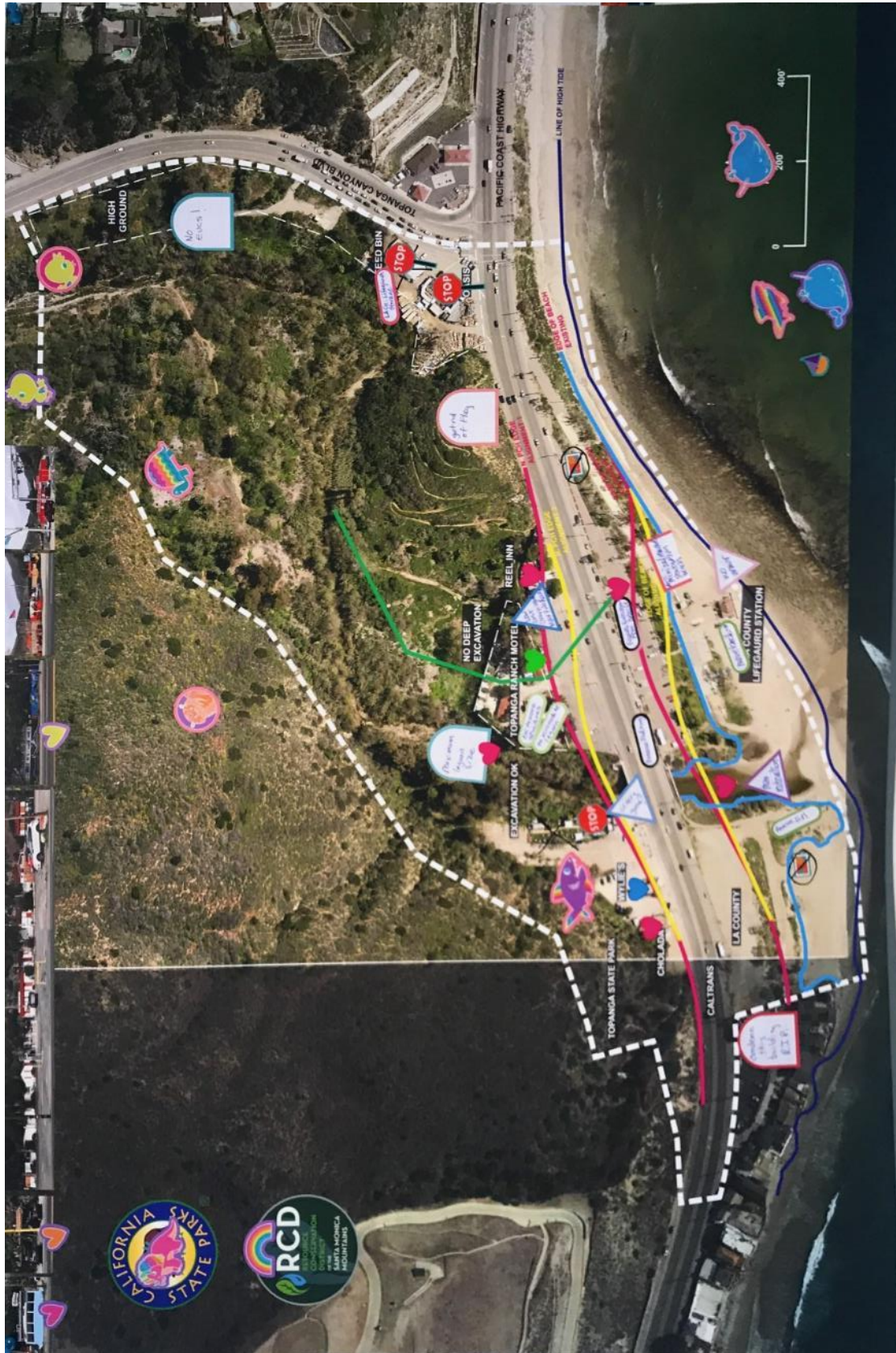
Team 2



9



Team 6



Team 7

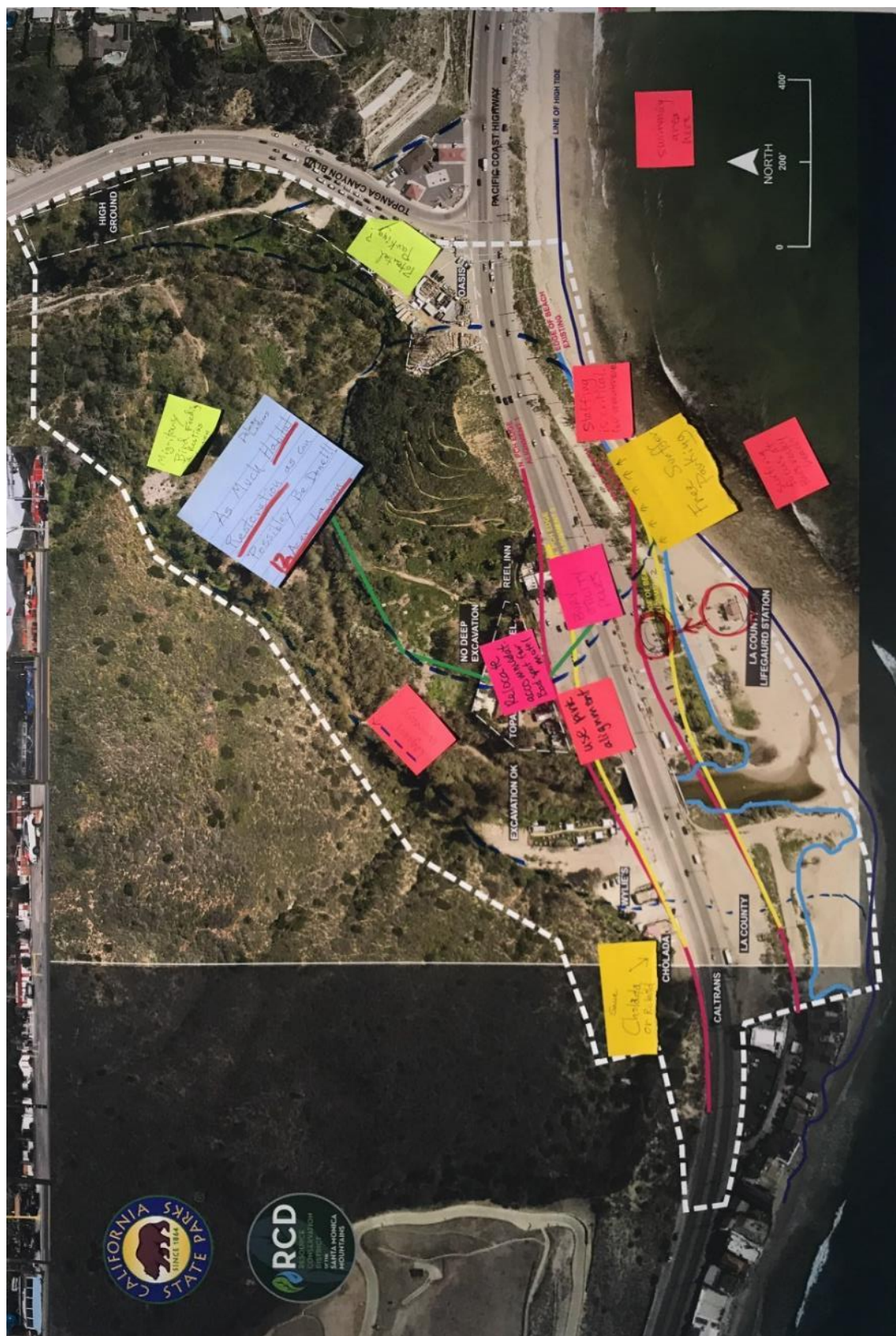




Team 9



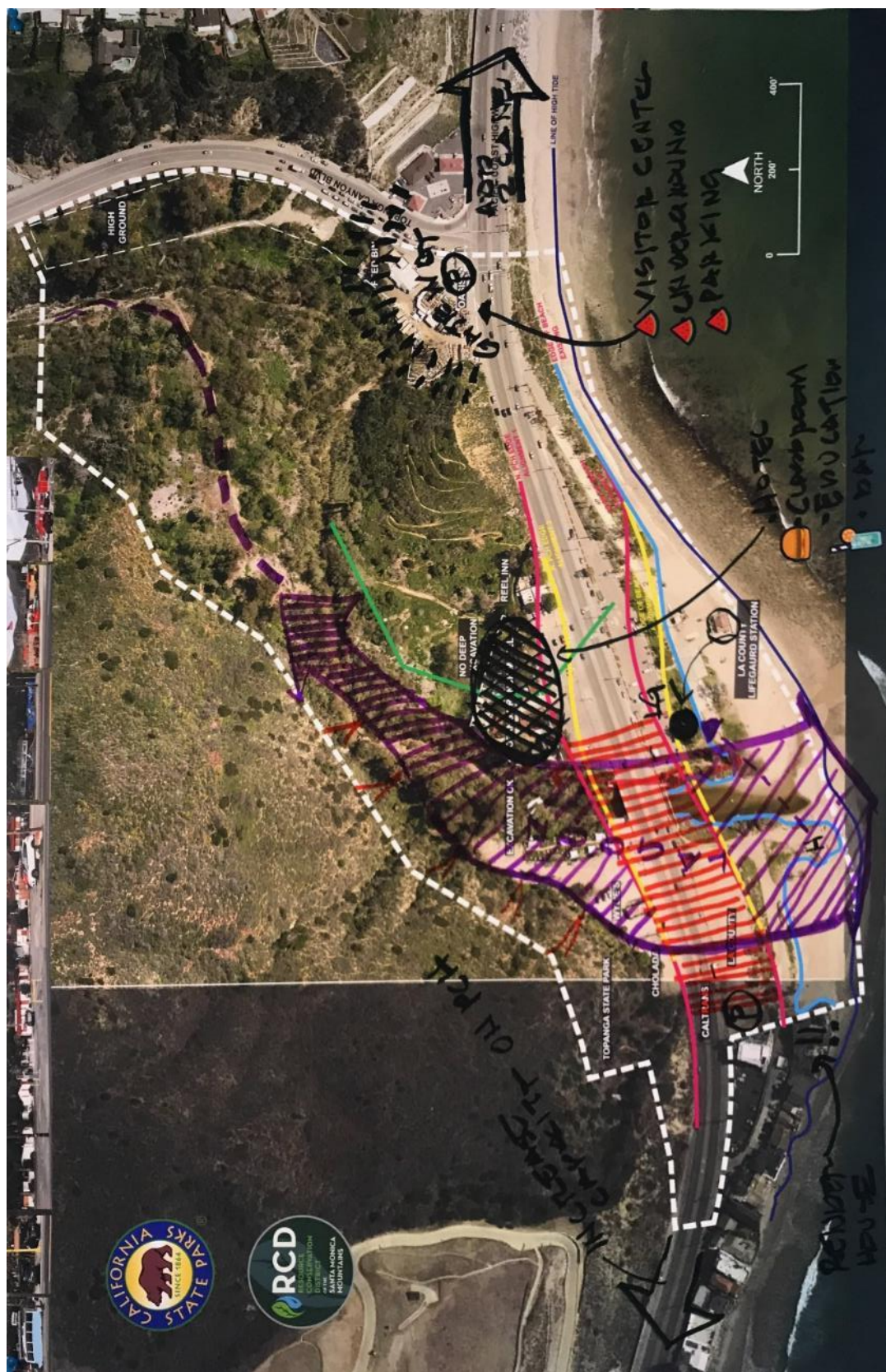
Team 10



Team 11



Team 13



Team 14



Team 16







