**TOPANGA LAGOON RESTORATION PROJECT**

**PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING**

**Saturday 17 June 2023 10am – Noon**

**Minutes**

Joey Legaspi from Lee Andrews Group introduced the Project Team and noted that the meeting was being live streamed on YouTube and the video of the meeting would be posted on the project website. <https://www.rcdsmm.org/topanga-lagoon-restoration/>

The YOUTUBE link for the presentation is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGHO9ig66n4>

Comments and questions can be sent to the project website or to email:

[TopangaLagoonRestoration@gmail.com](mailto:TopangaLagoonRestoration@gmail.com)

Join the project mailing list under [Stay Connected](https://www.rcdsmm.org/topanga-lagoon-restoration/mailing-list/) tab on website to get updates.

Lori Harrod, Acting Superintendent of Angeles District, CA State Parks provided welcome remarks and introduced project partners;

Warren Ontiveros, Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors

Clark Stevens, RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains

Rimma Tebeleva, Caltrans representative was sick and unable to attend.

Danielle LeFer, Senior Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks provided an overview of the need for the project including endangered species limitations, cultural and historic resources, recreational and emergency access limitations and on-going impacts from coastal erosion and pending sea level rise.

Rosi Dagit, Sr. Conservation Biologist, RCDSMM reviewed the project history since 2000, input received from over 400 stakeholders that was used to refine project goals and objectives, which were further refined based on the best available science to expand and restore the lagoon ecosystem; integrate public access, recreation, and visitor serving needs; and proactively address sea level rise, while protecting existing biological, cultural and recreational resources.

Ms. Dagit also noted that additional studies are still in progress and that the surf community is invited to a forum in July to provide input on the coastal morphology surf break study. Sign up is available on the website and via emailing the team.

John Ota, Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks reviewed the existing conditions and explained the three project alternatives proposed.

Warren Ontiveros, Chief, Planning Division, DBH explained the opportunities for enhancing coastal resiliency and beach habitat, improvements proposed for coastal access and more coordinated visitor services, especially parking and routes to the beach.

Barbara Tejada, Supervisor, Cultural Resources Program, CA State Parks expanded on the opportunities for improved visitor experiences including new interpretive features, trails, potential for day use or low cost overnight accommodations and cultural/historical constraints.

Jamie King, Conservation Biologist, RCDSMM outlined the need for wastewater improvements to handle the updated visitor services which are under investigation. Either a non-standard subsurface drip irrigation system or potentially a sewer hook up to the LA County service at Coastline Drive were discussed. Field testing in progress.

Ms. King also emphasized the project plan to minimize harm during construction by grading outside the wetted channel to protect fish, retain existing mature native trees and maintain a suitable buffer to avoid any impacts to cultural resources.

This also includes minimizing traffic and construction hassles by maintaining 4 lanes of PCH at all times and providing coastal access parking throughout construction. All construction traffic will be coordinated with local emergency access plans to ensure public safety is uninterrupted.

Finally, Ms. King provided a summary of the project status and timelines:

2022-2024 Environmental Review in progress

Early 2024 EIR will be released for public comment

Preferred Alternative will be selected and finalized by June 2024

2024-2026 Design Phase

Complete design and permitting for Preferred Alternative

2027-2030 Construction

2030-2035 Post-Construction Monitoring

**QUESTIONS:**

No questions were submitted from the online participants.

In-person questions included:

*What are current impacts from SLR?* On-going coastal erosion

*Have the local tribes been participating?* Yes

*Has the Regional Water Quality Control Board been involved?* Yes along with all permitting agencies

*Concerns about future SLR and coastal erosion and changes in sediment input from the creek potentially impacting the surf break were raised.* Ongoing study is addressing these issues and will be available in Fall.

*How can we best sustain the beach over time?* Use of the existing native fill material for beach renourishment is being studied and if approved could be helpful. Long term sea level rise impacts are more difficult to address but managing inland movement of infrastructure such as the lifeguard building, parking and PCH are options under consideration. Having an expanded lagoon footprint and longer bridge span provides space for the system to adjust naturally over time and retain ecosystem functions.

*Concerns about water quality, role of lagoons as natural filters, and impacts of human waste were raised.* The Topanga Source Identification Study 2014 is available at <https://www.rcdsmm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Topanga-Source-ID-Study_FINAL-10_23_14.pdf>

*Requests for opportunities to get restoration started with volunteer assistance were made*. RCDSMM email list provides information on when those events are planned. Crayfish removal and oak care will be taking place in late summer and fall.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

* 111 people RSVP’d ahead of time (20 said they would attend virtually and 31 said they would attend in-person)
* 43 people came to the in-person meeting
* 179 people viewed the live stream
* 25 people have additionally viewed the edited version of the video as of 26 June 2023