



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

CITY HALL

10300 TORRE AVENUE • CUPERTINO, CA 95014-3255

TELEPHONE: (408) 777-3110 • FAX: (408) 777-3366

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No. 7A

MEETING DATE: April 2, 2009

SUBJECT

Recommendation for future use of Simms property

BACKGROUND

A task force met on March 2 and 23 to discuss and develop options for the future use of the Simms property. Participants included:

Mark Linder, Parks and Recreation Director
Jeanne Bradford, Parks and Recreation Commissioner
Barbara Banfield, City of Cupertino Naturalist
Joanne McFarlin, Stevens and Permanente Creek Watershed Council
Anne Ng, Friends of Stevens Creek Trail
Pat Showalter, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Chris Elias, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Shani Kleinhaus, Ecologist
Debi Jamison, resident
Gail Bower, resident
Max Bokelman, resident
Janet Van Zoren, resident

These 3.1 acres were added to McClellan Ranch by Council Resolution 8369 in 1991. As part of McClellan Ranch Park any future uses of this area should be consistent with the mission statement and the goals and objectives formulated in the McClellan Ranch Park Master Plan that was approved by the City Council in 1993. According to this document, "the mission of McClellan Ranch Park shall be to maintain and protect the ecology of the area, conserve the natural features and scenic values, expand community awareness and understanding of natural history and the environment, and provide enjoyment of the resources present consistent with their preservation."

DISCUSSION

The task force members see great value in protecting and restoring land on both sides of the creek because this offers more protection to the creek itself and the steelhead in this reach of the creek is so critical to the survival of this endangered species. Protecting land on both sides is also valuable to the terrestrial species in the area including some listed as threatened or species of special concern by California Department of Fish and Game. While many schools already come to McClellan Ranch to research and document restoration efforts, teachers and students are eager for more opportunities to participate in and learn from such activities. The data from such studies would be very valuable in guiding and evaluating ongoing restoration efforts.

The task force envisions using this parcel for recreation, restoration and education activities and recommends the following actions for the property:

- Remove the house, retaining utilities such as water, sewage and electrical services to keep open options for future park amenities on that side of the creek.
- Leave in place the existing patio in front of the house as a place where groups could gather for outdoor programs.
- Replace chain link fence at both the McClellan Rd. entrance and the Scenic Circle entrance with a rail fence that reflects the rural character of the park and is consistent with fencing styles in the rest of McClellan Ranch. The section of chain link fence along the retaining wall should remain in place for safety.
- Remove base rock placed along driveway that runs from McClellan Rd. to Scenic Circle.
- Remove as many of the concrete slabs from the creek and banks as possible without causing damage to trees or negative impacts to the creek.
- Enhance the riparian corridor through the planting of native trees and understory plants.
- Construct a natural surface footpath from McClellan Rd. to Scenic Circle.
- Remove invasive non-native plants.
- Restore areas adjacent to riparian corridor to site-appropriate plant communities such as oak/native grass savannah in the floodplain, and oak woodland or chaparral on slopes.
- Place signs identifying the area as a portion of McClellan Ranch Park.
- Use this area for environmental education programs.
- Work with area high schools and colleges to conduct ecological studies of the area aimed at guiding and monitoring restoration efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

The task force recommends integrating the Simms addition into McClellan Ranch Park, a nature and rural preserve, in a manner that will protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources and create opportunities for education, research, restoration and low-impact recreation.

PREPARED BY:

SUBMITTED BY:

Barbara Banfield, Naturalist



Mark Linder, Director Parks and Recreation