

**McClellan Ranch - Simms Master Plan
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting
Study Session - Community Input, Nov. 3, 2011**

An overview and background information were presented to the study session attendees. Attendees divided into discussion groups and each group submitted its input as summarized below.

Input from Group 1

- 1 Use Barn for environmental classrooms
- 2 Provide a System of Education, not just a building
- 3 Relocate the black smith shop for education; move it east
- 4 Provide adult education in heritage skills such as beekeeping, blacksmithing
- 5 Provide chicken [raising] classes for adults and families
- 6 Provide a community chicken house
- 7 Combine education with history of environmentalism
- 8 Provide an Environmental Resource Center [meetings, book donations etc]
- 9 Allow multi uses of Simms meadow: such as temporary parking & temporary dog park
- 10 Reevaluate the price of tearing down the Simms House and building an access path for walking
- 11 Open the Simms haul road to dogs on leash
- 12 Set up a faster way for Helping Hands [volunteers] to get fingerprinted
- 13 Adopt a job not just a park; adopt a plant

Input from Group 2

- 1 Complete the restoration of the Historic Building
 1. When does the [big] barn move from a maintenance project to a capital project?
 2. Want to maintain loft for native Barn Owls.
(*two possibly conflicting ideas)
- 2 Restore Blacksmith Shop, use as museum
- 3 Implement creek cleanup/restoration; remove the concrete
- 4 Historic & scientific signage
 1. Uniform signage
 2. Attention to placement & density
 3. Meets goal #4, share history
 4. Draw attention to birds, educational use of area
- 5 More permanent signs for the Preserve & the creekside [nature] trail - NO Dogs
- 6 Install bike rack(s) at creekside trail access by the comnty. gardens & parking area, because bikes are not allowed on the creekside trail.
- 7 City-owned ["horseshoe-shaped"] and Water District easement area north of comnty. gardens & across creek incl. into Park
 1. Now have community trails there
 2. Could we have access from streets at north?
- 8 Add extra parking, possibly at Simms (esp. for animal load/drop off for big events like wildlife education day)
- 9 Change/remove gravel road access to Simms house
 1. Remove oil/debris
 2. Offset from the riparian corridor
- 10 Improve the creekside [nature] trail
 1. Repair/replace signs, fences, numbered posts
 2. Widen & level the trail
 3. Address erosion at creek and trail access

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- 11 Manage flora according to wildlife management plans
 - 1. Fire break mowing
 - 2. Thinning of trees
 - 3. Remove Chinese Tree of Heaven (invasive tree)

 - 12 Provide Science Classroom / Lab
 - 1. With sinks and refrigerator
 - 2. Storage & astronomy tools to use in outdoor classroom/meadow

 - 13 Remove Simms house

 - 14 Larger meeting facility [needed]
 - 1. Indoor would be great (esp. for Feb-April)

 - 15 Improve current buildings to be more functional

 - 16 Provide outdoor classroom adjacent to buildings near parking area

 - 17 Facility upgrade/provide modern features: [ranch house]
 - 1. Provide conference call & projector capability in the indoor conf. room

 - 18 Provide overnight facilities for youth group use (inspired by Hidden Villa)

Input from Group 3

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- 1 Integrate Simms property with rest of Park
 - 1. Remove house
 - 2. Restore land
 - 3. Trail on west side of creek

 - 2 Consider Blacksmith building
 - 1. Restore it? (could be an educational resource)
 - 2. Remove it?
 - 3. Make it a pavilion?

 - 3 Build a better Nature Center Facility

 - 4 Implement limited creek restoration
 - 1. Concrete removal
 - 2. Don't harm trees

 - 5 Reduce fire hazard
 - 1. Beyond fire breaks
 - 2. Mowing/sprinklers

 - 6 Provide stairs from Stevens Creek Trail to the 4-H barns

 - 7 Provide additional non-profit space
 - 1. Don't change ranch building

 - 8 Refresh the meeting space by nature center, Map Area 11 [between milk barn & nature museum; bleacher

 - 9 Add sheltered group areas
 - 1. One large one
 - 2. Multiple small ones (+/- 10 people)

 - 10 No additional parking at McClellan OR Simms
 - 1. Use shuttles; Blackberry parking lot
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Input from Group 4

- 1 Preserve, leave it as **IT IS**
- 2 Implement creek restoration; remove non-natives and replace with natives
- 3 Implement habitat restoration; volunteers and groups
- 4 Implement creek restoration, removing previous use material
- 5 Provide raptor perch in community gardens area
- 6 Provide signage in BBF leading people to McClellan Ranch
- 7 Provide historical signage; Barn, Milk barn, Tank house
- 8 Provide Nature Center
 1. Wet lab
 2. Exhibit space
 3. Class space
 4. Storage space
 5. Office space
- 9 [Big] Barn; restore it and make it ready for exhibits- e.g., make soap, churn butter
- 10 Simms Property- provide native plant nursery, study/research plots
- 11 Simms Property- plant 6 types of native oaks
- 12 Provide safe pedestrian entrance at McClellan
- 13 Provide more canine accessible areas (on-leash)
- 14 "Horseshoe" [shaped] parcel next to Scenic Circle- zone as park land

Additional input submitted in writing

- 1 Milk House Use: To better tell the historical story of the dairy and other farm uses of McClellan, I propose that we remove the restroom from the west side of the Milk House and restore this portion of the building to the milk processing room that it was previously. Until this restoration takes place, it's pretty hard for the kids to see how milking the cows in the east side room gets translated into milk being loaded for shipment to the bottling plant.
- 2 ...the aging and deteriorated restroom facility could easily be replaced by a prefab building elsewhere on the grounds. I've put a couple of these prefab restrooms in other local parks, and they are relatively low cost and vandal resistant. Also the exterior can be designed to fit in with the style of the existing buildings, complete with porch, etc.
- 3 Barn Use: I would also like to see the Barn be used by the 4-H program to raise cattle, cows or similar to its original use. A few horses could still be boarded there. This would fit modern needs, while still staying within the Secretary's Standards. That's the way old barns are often re-utilized in my area, rather than building a whole new facility for the animals.
- 4 All activities in McClellan Ranch, which includes the west side Simms Addition, should be consistent with the McClellan Ranch Mission and the Regulations and Guidelines.
- 5 No new or moved buildings on open land that provides wildlife habitat, nature enjoyment, 4H activities and community garden. Exception is the pad that remains after the trailer home that housed the caretaker for many years was removed. This is the area that a new nature center should be built, even though it is shaded and may not be feasible to mount solar panels on the roof.

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- 6 The new nature center should provide adequate space and equipment
 - for class and other meetings
 - for wet lab facilities (with water, electricity, microscopes, & other equip. that provide for nature & ecology study)
 - for an office that accommodates the city naturalist, other staff, and volunteers
 - for exhibit space
 - for storage space for teaching materials

It is time for Cupertino to provide a modern, professional, fully equipped nature center as many other cities

 - 7 The historic McClellan Ranch Barn must be saved from decay and disintegration! Whatever that involves should be included in the new plans. The rebuilt or renovated barn should be repurposed for public access, programs, and exhibits.

 - 8 No additions to the historic McClellan Ranch house, but adequate upkeep, repair, and renovation for the use of environmental groups, that is groups whose primary purpose is nature and rural education, conservation and enjoyment. SCVAS should be allowed to remain as long as the organization wishes to locate their offices and nature store in the house. The house was named the Cupertino Environmental Center in the MR Master Plan

 - 9 All other historic building should be repaired, renovated, and made attractive and useful to fulfill the mission of MR.

 - 10 The native plant garden around the ranch house must not be allowed to again deteriorate due to neglect. The city should facilitate the maintenance of the garden, whether that involves a volunteer group or specially trained city staff, or a combination. It must remain attractive and illustrative, for educational purposes, of the benefits of a native plant garden. This garden was established in the memory of Nancy Hertert with monetary and in-kind donations. Her legacy in Cupertino, especially her key role in saving both the McClellan Ranch and Simms properties for nature and rural preserves designation and mission should continue to be honored and respected.

 - 11 The goals and objectives of the 1993 master plan should be revived and pursued. This includes especially the removal of concrete blocks and slabs from the creek where feasible without destabilizing creek banks or irreparably damaging desirable habitat. It also includes riparian habitat restoration on both sides of the creek.

 - 12 No new trails.

 - 13 The meadow should be managed for optimal habitat values and research projects.

 - 14 The area of the orchard not planted with native plants could be restored as a nut and fruit orchard and used in the manner described in the MR 1993 Master Plan should an interested group express interest in doing that.

 - 15 The recommendations of the Simms Task Force should be adopted. This includes:
 - removal of the base rock deposited by the private McNair house building project and the driveway.
 - removal of the Simms house for the reasons described by the task force. This is contrary to the recommendation of the MR Master Plan.
 - native plant restoration of the riparian zone
 - no parking
 - removal of chain link fencing along McClellan Rd. and construction of a white fence similar to the one within the main area of McClellan Ranch.
 - Recognition that it was added to McClellan Ranch in 1990 as a logical designation for the property purchased to fulfill the open space section of the General Plan. Dropping the name Simms from all future references in city documents, statements, and signage.

 - 16 Changes to the 1993 Master Plan - There is no longer a desire for a bridge connecting the northern area of the Simms Addition to the main section of McClellan Ranch. The Scenic Circle bridge in Blackberry Farm fulfills the ability to make a circular route for nature walks.

 - 17 The Simms house should be removed. It has no historical value, it is too close to the creek bank, it costs the city to maintain it, it is not ADA accessible, and it should not be used for rental as a private residence as this use is not consistent with the mission of McClellan Ranch.
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