



## ***Minutes***

### ***Measure M2 Environmental Oversight Committee***

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#### **Committee Members**

*Lisa Bartlett, Chairman  
Melanie Schlotterbeck, Vice Chair  
Laurie Davies, Board of Directors  
Chris Flynn, Caltrans District 12  
David Mayer, CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Derek McGregor, DMc Engineering  
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League  
Jonathan Snyder, US Fish & Wildlife*

*Orange County Transportation Authority  
550 South Main Street, Room 07  
Orange, California*

***Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 2:30p***

#### **Member(s) Absent**

*Dr. David Chapel, Grand Jury Assoc. of O.C.  
Eugene Fields, Taxpayers Oversight Comm.  
Veronica Li, US Army Corp of Engineers  
John Walsh, CA Wildlife Conserv. Board*

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact the OCTA Clerk of the Board, telephone (714) 560-5676, no less than two (2) business days prior to this meeting to enable OCTA to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

#### **1. Welcome**

Chairman Lisa Bartlett called the Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Chair Bartlett introduced OCTA Board Member Laurie Davies who has joined the committee. She represents the fifth district and the City of Laguna Niguel. Chairman Bartlett asked everyone to introduce themselves.

#### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Lisa Bartlett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **3. Approval of November 7, 2018 Minutes**

Chairman Lisa Bartlett asked if there were any additions or corrections to the November 7, 2018 EOC minutes.

Vice Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck said there was discussion last meeting by Derek and herself about the parcel at Trabuco Road being slivered off there. She wanted to make sure that in the future the minutes capture everyone's contributions. Chair Lisa Bartlett asked if there was anything specific to be noted on Item 5 from last meeting. Vice Chair Schlotterbeck said the most important thing was the requirement for the distance of the structure and the clearance.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck, seconded by Derek McGregor and passed unanimously to approve the November 7, 2018 EOC meeting minutes with changes.

#### **4. North Coal Canyon and Chino Hills State Park Restoration Project Update**

Lesley Hill provided background on the North Coal Canyon and Chino Hills State Park Restoration Project. She said previously OCTA had contracted with Chino Hills State Park to provide restoration on these two parcels. When that did not work out, the EOC directed staff to go back out to bid for these restoration projects. Lesley thanked the Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Caltrans for providing staff for the evaluation panel. She said two consultants have been awarded the contract and OCTA is finishing up the process. Lesley said both contracts are within the budget allocated for the projects.

Vice Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck said it was a disappointment to see that the state parks could not get the project done, but thanked staff for getting new groups on board and pushing for a solution.

#### **5. Fire Management Plans**

Lesley Hill provided background on the Fire Management Plans (FMPs). Lesley introduced Carol Rice who is a consultant helping OCTA with the FMPs. Carol leads Wildlife Res Management which has emphasized fire management for over 40 years – especially in urban/wildland interface – she has a BS in Forestry and an MS in Fire Science and Management, she helped with the Nature Reserve of Orange County FMP Implementation Guide and Orange County Community Wildfire Plan.

Carol Rice provided background on her team. She said they have been to many of the OCTA preserves and are digging into the analysis. Carol started the presentation with what a FMP is and why they are needed. She talked about the methodology used to create the FMPs and what would be included in the FMPs. She went over how the analysis is done, preliminary findings, and outreach. Lesley Hill said OCTA is also mapping cactus which is an important component to the plan. The final FMPs will be presented in 2020.

The committee discussed mitigation requirements in terms of dozer and hand lines and if there is an expectation that additional mitigation and restoration will ensue. She asked if the co-benefits of wildfire funding available statewide could be tied to invasive species removal. Carol Rice said sometimes removing the invasive species is enough and it will be looked at in the plan.

The committee discussed the public process of the plan. Lesley Hill said this is a focused point of the plan and OCTA would reach out to stakeholders. Carol Rice said there will be public outreach in the summer time, but we have not yet focused on exactly what that will entail. She said the Laguna Beach property and the Trabuco Rose property may have more impacts on the surrounding communities. Vice Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck said if the process is going to be different it needs to be clear to the public. Marissa Espino said she does not foresee it being any different, but our audience will be more targeted.

The committee also talked about the regulatory review. Carol Rice said the process structures will be identified and will determine exactly where the hazards are in relation to the structures. OCTA will identify the best way to mitigate the hazards with the least amount of insult. The committee said it is key for this plan to be site specific, so that restoration is protected and that we actually provide some sort of field markings (not just a map) to delineate where the restoration areas are located. Lesley Hill said we are already working with OCFA on the planning and the Final FMPs will get into the details.

The committee discussed how the analysis is done and how the “red areas” are where the species in most need of protection are located. Carol Rice said in their analysis they always assume the worst-case scenario of wind and slope direction.

The committee asked about “role of landscape scale mitigation.” Carol Rice said this pertains to larger mitigations – like a public landowner that does a large mitigation like grazing. The committee said Cal-Fire believes a larger area around structures is the best way to do mitigation, but really the structures need to be less flammable along with limited defensible space. Mitigation should not be done by treating landscapes, removing vegetation, prescribed burning, grazing, herbicides, etc. because this can be counterproductive.

The committee discussed the need to present OCTA’s priorities to the fire agencies when the Final FMPs are done.

The committee discussed what is happening with the fire areas now that Orange County is having an abundance of rain. Lesley Hill said so far the slopes in the Holy Jim Fire area are holding. She said a bridge was closed near the Trabuco Rose Preserve limiting access. Lesley said staff has not yet been into the interior of the preserves to check for erosion, etc. She said once everything dries out, we will look to see if anything is needed.

The committee discussed the PG&E bankruptcy and how some utility lines run through the Preserves. Carol Rice said that will be addressed in the FMPs.

The committee asked who actually signs off on the FMPs. Lesley Hill said the wildlife agencies are responsible for the Conservation Plans and the FMPs are part of that plan, so OCTA would be looking to them for final approval, but there will need to be a concurrence with local fire agencies on the mitigation.

The committee said being proactive is really important so things like power lines that are looking defective or trees too close to lines need to be reported and people need to speak up before it becomes a problem.

The committee asked about the funding opportunities. Carol Rice said there are millions of dollars available for fire hazard reduction. She said it was a commitment from Governor Brown for five years and now Governor Newsom put forth more money on top of that money. There are restoration and cultural grants available for natural resources. There are also funds through federal resources. Lesley Hill said we want to look to see if there is a potential for a reimbursement through some of these sources and through this plan OCTA has asked Carol's group to identify where we might be missing opportunities for funding. The committee said it would be great if we can be applying for grants each year to advance our preserves.

The committee suggested communicating with neighbors to see if lessons learned can be hashed out, like when there is a state of emergency we need to get money from that pot to help the damaged preserves.

## **6. 2019 Hikes and Rides Schedule**

Marissa Espino presented the 2019 hikes and rides calendar. She said unfortunately, it looks like the first hike will be canceled on February 16 due to the rains and poor trail conditions. Marissa said we are monitoring trail conditions for the ride on February 23, but it also will likely be canceled.

Marissa Espino also mentioned getting the committee together in the spring to visit the Harriett M. Weider Regional Park. She said she will be sending an email to the EOC to find a date that works best for the majority of the committee.

The committee asked if signs are posted when there are dangerous conditions on the trails. Marissa said the majority of OCTA properties are not open to the public and are gated. Lesley Hill said on the Laguna Beach preserve OCTA does not have the manpower to provide signage, but it is adjacent to another park that does have signage.

Vice Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck suggested adding an asterisk on the hikes and rides calendar stating tours might be canceled due to weather, etc. It was also suggested to write "canceled" across February when redistributing this calendar. The committee talked about having a rain policy based on the amount of rain and the duration of the trail closure. It was suggested that for every quarter inch of rain, the trail be closed for 48 hours.

**7. Public Comments**

There were no public comments

**8. Committee Member Reports**

Jonathan Snyder announced the retirement of the field supervisor for the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife office and they are recruiting for someone to take his place.

**9. Next Meeting – May 1, 2019**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 1, 2019.

**15. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.