



Minutes

Measure M2 Environmental Oversight Committee

*Orange County Transportation Authority
600 South Main Street, Room 154
Orange, California
April 1, 2015 at 2:30 p.m.*

Committee Members Present:

Chair Lori Donchak, OCTA Board of Directors
Vice-Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck, Measure M Support Groups
Lisa Bartlett, OCTA Board of Directors
Charles Baker, Caltrans
Dr. David Chapel, Brandman University
Spencer MacNeil for Veronica Li, US Army Corps of Engineers
David Mayer, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Derek McGregor, Public Member
Philip La Puma, Measure M2 Taxpayer Oversight Committee
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League
Jonathan Snyder, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Committee Member(s) Absent:

John Walsh, California Wildlife Conservation Board

Orange County Transportation Authority Staff Present:

Marissa Espino, Community Relations Officer
Janice Kadlec, Public Reporter
Dan Phu, Project Development Section Manager
Monte Ward, Measure M Consultant

Guests

Rich Gomez
Delma Johnson

1. Welcome

Chair Lori Donchak called the Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. She introduced Spencer MacNeil of the US Army Corps of Engineers who was sitting in for Veronica Li. EOC members around the table introduced themselves.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of March 4, 2015 minutes

Chair Lori Donchak asked if there were any additions or corrections to the March 4, 2015 EOC meeting minutes. A motion was made by Melanie Schlotterbeck, seconded by Jonathan Snyder, and passed unanimously to approve the March 4, 2015 EOC meeting minutes as presented.

4. New Irvine Ranch Conservancy Restoration Projects Update

Dan Phu provided an overview of the restoration projects selected for M2 funding as well as specific project revisions. Delays occurred on the New Irvine Ranch Conservancy restoration projects as a result of additional documentation required by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Spencer MacNeil indicated the 2008 Mitigation Rule added a great deal of additional requirements, such as long term protection and financial assurance that need to be approved and in place before some projects can begin. He further elaborated there was a host of requirements resulting from this rule, which was established over six years ago.

Spencer indicated the OCTA restoration project are doing good things for the environment and the Corps wants them to move forward. However, since compensatory mitigation is being sought, there are additional requirements.

A motion was made by Melanie Schlotterbeck, seconded by Dr. David Chapel, and carried unanimously to:

1. Endorse staff's recommendation to adjust the New Irvine Ranch Conservancy's restoration projects as outlined herein.
2. Direct staff to reflect revisions as appropriate in the final Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

5. Public Access Focus Group Meetings Update

Marissa Espino, OCTA
Monte Ward, OCTA

In preparation for the release of the Resource Management Plans (RMPs) the EOC will discuss the next steps in addressing the public access concerns and questions that were submitted during the public comment period.

Monte Ward said focus groups will be formed in advance of the RMP release in order to review the NCCP/HCP and RMP goals and requirements and discuss and help develop potential options for public access. This would allow OCTA to meet directly with stakeholders, land managers, and representatives from the resource agencies to gather ideas on what should be done with the properties.

Marissa Espino talked about how the focus groups will be formed. Three focus meetings will be held, the first one taking place in April.

6. Committee Member Follow-up

Dan Phu, OCTA

Monte Ward, OCTA Consultant

Dan Phu provided an overview of recent actions pertaining to an adjacent property to the Aliso Canyon property, which is potentially being considered for acquisition by OCTA. The adjacent property went through a California Coastal Commission permitting process and one of the conditions of approval involved possible new trails that may affect Aliso Canyon. Monte Ward believes there is a very low risk of a new trail impacting Aliso Canyon. If the issue of trail access was to come up, the Coastal Commission would have to acquire an easement. It is unlikely OCTA would do anything on the property that would trigger a requirement to provide trail access.

7. Public Comments

Rich Gomez is a Board Member of Equestrian Trails, Inc. (ETI) Corral 357 – the Saddleback Canyon Riders. ETI is a national organization representing over 2,000 riders and solid ties to the equestrian community in Orange County. They have formal association with groups in Orange Park Acres, Laguna Niguel, and San Juan Capistrano.

ETI remains committed to helping OCTA accomplish their goals and objectives with regard to the Measure M funded preserves. They are advocates of public access to the preserves but have a clear understanding that the primary goal is preservation. They look forward to the workshops planned for the spring and thank staff for arranging these. It seems reasonable to the equestrian community to increase the frequency of the number of planned hikes and rides on the preserves.

ETI is not advocating for new additional trails but to continue to ride as they have done on the four previous occasions under OCTA supervision on existing fire roads. They do ask for some clarity on the trail alignment specified in the Foothill-Trabuco Specific Plan and how those few trail alignments may be considered part of a public access plan in the future.

Delma Johnson said she was a little upset and surprised because she came from a public service background and when she looks at public service personnel she thinks

about protecting the rights of the average individual. Within the Foothill-Trabuco Specific Plan there is one constant key provision that needs implementation. This should have been done prior to the finalization of any other OCTA Environmental Impact Report.

In 1991, the County of Orange chose 10 trail connections, which shall be required to dedicate access with legal recorded easements from sunrise to sunset to conform with the master trail system running from the Cleveland National Forest to O'Neill Regional Park.

8. Next Meeting – May 6, 2015

The next EOC meeting will be May 6, 2015 at 2:30 p.m.