
**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
Minutes of December 13, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Khoury – Vice Chair
Jill MacDonald
Consuelo Martinez
Marni von Wilpert
Greg Kazmer, Alternate
Dustin Fuller

REPRESENTING

Citizens Advisory Committee
City of Solana Beach
City of Escondido
City of San Diego Dist. 5
County of San Diego Dist. 2
22nd Agricultural District, Ex Officio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brian Pepin
Terra Lawson-Remer
Joe LaCava – Chair
Dan Quirk, Alternate

REPRESENTING

City of Poway
County of San Diego Dist. 3
City of San Diego District 1
City of Del Mar

VISITORS/STAFF PRESENT

Shawna Anderson
Nathan Lacy
Dewanda Vandermost
Maggie Brown
Adi Harshwal
Roja Rani Seelam
Robert Dudley
Kevin Kidd
Kelly Clemeshaw
Richard Engelhardt
Brian Caldwell
John Anshus
Paul Bernstein
PJ Lynch
Kurt Reindel
Paul Bennett

REPRESENTING

San Dieguito River Park JPA
San Dieguito River Park JPA
San Dieguito River Park JPA
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley
Harshwal & Company LLP
Harshwal & Company LLP
Citizens Advisory Committee
Del Dios Town Council
Del Dios Town Council
Del Dios Town Council
Del Dios Town Council
Lake Hodges Resident
Citizens Advisory Committee
Lake Hodges Resident
Lake Hodges Resident
Lake Hodges Resident

Introduction and Announcements:

Vice Chair Khoury convened the meeting at 11:18 a.m. A roll call was taken and a quorum of five board members were present to begin the meeting. Chair Khoury explained that the board meeting must conclude by 12 noon while quorum is present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of the Minutes of September 20, 2024

Board Member Alternate Kazmer moved to approve the minutes and Board Member MacDonald seconded the motion. All in favor.

Yes votes: Khoury, Martinez, Kazmer (Alt), von Wilpert, MacDonald

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Pepin, LaCava, Quirk,

Abstain: None

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Anderson displayed a slide show of recent events at the river park.

CAC Chair's Report – No report

Public Comment – No public comment

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. FY22-23 Audit Follow-Up

Recommendation: None

Executive Director Anderson explained that although the FY22-23 Audit was received and filed by the JPA at the September 20, 2024 meeting, several board members had questions that were not adequately addressed, and the auditors were asked to clarify their comments. Vice Chair Khoury welcomed the auditors, Jr. Partner Adi Harshwal and Roja Rani Seelam, representing Harshwal & Co. Mr. Harshwal provided clarification on the audit report, specifically addressing the last paragraph on page one, which references the term “going concern”. He explained that this is standard language as per SAS No. 134, updated in December 2021, and is included in all audit reports. Mr. Harshwal also emphasized that there were no findings in the audit report, as indicated on the final two pages. There were no further questions or comments from the JPA Board members.

Public Comment- no public comment

2. Whale Tail Grant Application for Watershed Explorer Program

Recommendation: Approve JPA Resolution 24-4 for California Coastal Commission Whale Tail Grant and authorize Executive Director to execute grant should it be awarded.

Executive Director Anderson stated that the JPA's grant application was submitted by the grant deadline but requires JPA Board approval of the resolution as a requirement of the grant. The grant award decision is to be announced in February 2025.

Board Member Kazmer moved to approve Resolution 24-4 and authorize the Executive Director to execute the grant should it be awarded and Board Member Martinez seconded the motion. All in favor.

Yes votes: Khoury, Martinez, Kazmer (Alt), von Wilpert, MacDonald

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Pepin, LaCava, Quirk,

Abstain: None

Public Comment- no public comment

3. Lake Hodges Dam Replacement and Water Level

Recommendation: Discuss situation and consider request to City of San Diego staff to provide information.

Vice Chair Khoury briefed the board on the Lake Hodges Reservoir water level agenda item.

Executive Director Anderson reported on recent Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings, highlighting concerns raised by the CAC about the low water level at Lake Hodges Reservoir, including impacts to wildlife, increased vegetation and wildfire risk of maintaining the lake level at 280 feet. The CAC voted at their August 2, 2024 meeting to recommend that the JPA Board ask the City of San Diego to evaluate and consider upstream consequences from restricting the lake level to 280 feet when making decisions about the Lake Hodges water level.

Director Anderson stated that the reservoir is owned and managed by the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department and although the JPA manages the Coast to Crest Trail adjacent to the reservoir, the JPA has no authority over the operation of the reservoir. .

She reported that staff will continue to monitor potential impacts from the water releases and dam replacement project on the JPA's East Gorge Habitat Management Area located just downstream of the Hodges Dam.

Public Comment-

Speaker: Maggie Brown, member of The Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, supported raising the Lake Hodges water level to 293 feet.

Speaker: Robert Dudley, a member of the CAC and a resident of the Lake Hodges area, emphasized the importance of evaluating the upstream versus downstream impacts, including the potential loss of life to the north and to the west.

Speaker: Kevin Kidd, president of the Del Dios Town council, requested more detailed information to be used in the consideration of probability to make a good decision environmentally and for loss of life.

Speaker: Brian Caldwell, a resident of the Lake Hodges area, provided a historical overview of the water levels in Lake Hodges and their effects on the Western Grebes' breeding. He also recounted his experience during the 2007 Witch Creek fire, noting that his house was saved due to the fire being stalled by the water level in Lake Hodges.

Speaker: Paul Bernstein, a member of the CAC and a resident of the Lake Hodges area, summarized points regarding his concerns over the low lake level including wildfire risks, ecosystem and Grebe violation of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, water security, economic and energy costs and the dam consequence

report failure to consider upstream effects and all related consequences of not maintaining the water level at 293 feet. Bernstein requested assistance in negotiating the next steps needed to engage the State Department of Dam Safety to increase the dam water level to 293 feet.

JPA Board members expressed appreciation for the public's comments. Board member von Wilpert emphasized that the Department of Dam Safety has mandated the City of San Diego to lower the water level at Lake Hodges Dam to protect the integrity of the dam structure and to protect public safety. She also explained that inquiries regarding the Dam Consequence report and the water level of Lake Hodges Dam should be directed to state representatives.

Board member von Wilpert stated that extensive fire safety measures are being taken by the City of San Diego, to include a dip tank at the San Diego Safari Park for firefighting helicopters, installation of cameras in the back country for immediate smoke detection and fixed rate agreements with CalFire. She further explained that the City is making good progress on the dam replacement project thanks to recent federal and state awards of grant funds and provided a timeline for the project

Several board members provided information and suggestions for contacting their state representatives on the matter.

4. FY24-25 Q1 Budget Report and New Format

Recommendation: None

Board member Kazmer motioned to continue agenda item 4 to the next board meeting and board member Martinez seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Khoury, Martinez, Kazmer (Alt), von Wilpert, MacDonald

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Pepin, LaCava, Quirk,

Abstain: None

Public Comment- no public comment

5. East San Pasqual Valley Trail Feasibility Study Results

Recommendation: None

Board member Kazmer motioned to continue agenda item 5 to the next board meeting and board member Martinez seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Khoury, Martinez, Kazmer (Alt), von Wilpert, MacDonald

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Pepin, LaCava, Quirk,

Abstain: None

Public Comment- no public comment

INFORMATION

6. Project Status Updates

- a) **Osuna Segment of Coast to Crest Trail** – No report
- b) **Reach the Beach Fairgrounds Trail** – No report

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- c) **San Dieguito Lagoon Phase II Restoration (aka W-19)** – No report
 - d) **CTC Trail – East San Pasqual and Sutherland Gaps Project** –No report

4. **Coordination Reports (oral)**

- a. **San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy** -No report
- b. **Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley**- No report
- c. **Volcan Mountain Foundation** – No report
- d. **San Dieguito Lagoon Committee**- No report

5. **Jurisdictional Status Reports** – No report

6. **Correspondence** – None

7. **Adjourn to Closed Session** – None

Vice Chair Khoury adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

These minutes were approved by Board action on January 17, 2025.



Shawna Anderson, Executive Director