
**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
Minutes of November 14, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jill MacDonald – Chair
Chris Khoury – Vice Chair
Brian Elliott
Consuelo Martinez Jenny
Maeda
Terry Gaasterland
Marni von Wilpert Dustin
Fuller

REPRESENTING

City of Solana Beach
Citizens Advisory Committee
City of San Diego District 1, Alt
City of Escondido
City of Poway
City of Del Mar
County of San Diego Dist. 2
22nd Agricultural District, Ex Officio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Terra Lawson-Remer
Joel Anderson

REPRESENTING

County of San Diego Dist. 3
County of San Diego Dist. 2

VISITORS/STAFF PRESENT

Shawna Anderson
Dewanda Vandermost
Nathan Lacy
Wayne Brechtel
Lizzy Bendrick
Katy Chappaz
Jonathan Muenkel
Udo Wahn
Victoria Touchstone
Kristina Leyva
Jeff Carmel
Ryan Ewart
Polly Wheatley
Barbara Casino
Candice Bowman
Beth Nelson
Rick Leyva

REPRESENTING

San Dieguito River Park JPA
San Dieguito River Park JPA
San Dieguito River Park JPA
San Dieguito River Park JPA, General Counsel
County Parks & Recreation Department
RECON Environmental, Inc
General Counsel for Surf Sports
City of Del Mar Lagoon Committee
Rancho Bernardo Planning Board
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley
Resident
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley
Carol Canyon HOA and resident
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley
San Dieguito Planning Group
Resident

Introduction and Announcements:

Chair MacDonald convened the meeting at 11:04 a.m. at Solana Beach City Hall and welcomed staff and attendees. Chair MacDonald also highlighted the significance of meeting near the polo fields, given the upcoming discussion on the Surf Cup Sports lease.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair's Statement

Chair MacDonald read a prepared statement regarding the October 27, 2025 San Diego City Council meeting regarding Surf Cup Sports' lease on the Polo Fields property, removing open space deed restrictions and exempting the property from CEQA review.

The full text of the Chair's statement is hereby incorporated into these minutes as **Attachment 1** and is included for the official record.

Approval of the Minutes of October 17, 2025

No corrections or additions were noted for the October 17, 2025 minutes. Board Member Martinez moved to approve the minutes and Board Member Khoury seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Yes votes: MacDonald, Elliott (Alt), Maeda, Martinez, Khoury, Von Wilpert

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Anderson, Gaasterland

Abstain: None

Executive Director's Report – No Report

CAC Chair's Report – The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met on November 7, 2025. Chair Khoury was unable to attend the CAC meeting, so Executive Director Anderson gave the report.

One of the primary agenda items was the Polo Fields and a recap of the recent San Diego City Council meeting. The CAC did not take action on the item but expressed disappointment about the outcome and supported JPA staff's actions to explore property rezoning and park dedication.

In addition, the CAC reviewed updates on two habitat conservation areas that the JPA recently assumed responsibility for: the Sycamore Westridge area in Poway and Caltrans mitigation site near the Lagoon Restoration Project adjacent to the freeway.

The Trails Committee also presented results of their CTC Trail user survey similar to the one conducted last year.

Public Comment – None

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. Polo Fields Report

Recommendation: This information is provided for further Board discussion, potential action, and/or further direction to staff.

Executive Director Anderson provided an overview of the San Diego City Council's October 27, 2025 decision to terminate the open space deed restrictions on the City-owned Polo Fields property. The Council approved removing the grant deed restrictions and amending the Surf Cup lease to:

- Remove deed restrictions from the lease.
- Add a Coast to Crest Trail completion deadline of June 30, 2027 (requested by the JPA).
- Require annual payments of \$100,000 to the City's Park and Recreation Opportunity Fund.
- Adjust lease payments.

The new required deadline for the Coast to Crest Trail aligns with the planned Osuna Trail connection in spring 2027 and future linkage to the CTC trail undercrossing as part of the El Camino Real Bridge Replacement project, expected by 2030, creating a continuous 5-mile trail.

Anderson emphasized that while sports fields are considered recreational uses allowed in open space zones, the removal of deed restrictions leaves the property vulnerable to incompatible uses. Current zoning (Agricultural-Residential) permits development inconsistent with open space goals. To address this, she recommended working with City staff to explore and advocate for:

1. **Rezoning the property to Open Space** ("Open Space – Parks" or "Open Space – Conservation") to align with its community plan designation.
2. **Exploring permanent parkland dedication**, revisiting efforts from 2012 when dedication was supported but ultimately denied due to lease restrictions on public access.
3. **Establishing a 100-foot habitat buffer** along the river in the future to protect sensitive wetlands, which has been a longstanding JPA request.

These measures would not conflict with the current lease but would provide certainty for the property's future after the lease expires in 2044. Anderson asked for Board direction for next steps.

Board Discussion

Board members expressed a range of concerns and recommendations regarding the termination of deed restrictions and Surf Cup lease amendments. They acknowledged Councilmember von Wilpert's support for the community's and JPA's concerns with her vote in opposition.

Board members noted appreciation for the inclusion of a deadline for completing the Coast to Crest Trail but raised concerns about the trail's vulnerability to riverbank erosion. Khoury asked whether provisions exist to reposition the trail if erosion occurs. Executive Director Anderson responded that the lease does not include such a requirement and confirmed the trail's proximity to the river makes it susceptible to erosion. She noted that the JPA is responsible for maintaining the new trail after it is completed and signed off by the City.

Board members encouraged pursuing a zoning change to Open Space and stressed the need for improved lease enforcement and proposed working with Council President LaCava to designate a city staff contact for oversight and community inquiries.

Additional comments focused on the significant traffic impacts associated with Surf Cup events and the importance of documenting these impacts for future City Council consideration. Members expressed support for rigorous enforcement of lease terms and reiterated concerns about the scale of Surf Cup's operations and their environmental and community consequences.

Public Comment -

The Chair recognized members of the public to speak regarding the termination of open space deed restrictions and Surf Cup lease amendments.

- **Barbara Casino** (Carol Canyon HOA): Questioned the exemption from CEQA requirements and stated compliance would likely have prevented Surf Cup's operations at this scale.
- **Kristina Leyva** (Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley): Urged inclusion of a qualified project manager and an independent monitor for trail completion, raising concerns about invasive plant disposal and restricted public access.
- **Polly Wheatley** (Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley): Clarified that lease amendments remain pending until a January 16, 2026 court hearing and emphasized compliance with current lease terms.
- **Rick Leyva** (Resident): Raised concerns about communication, safety risks from a fuel depot, environmental compliance, and noted strong community opposition with 2,500 individuals prepared to support legal challenges.
- **Beth Nelson** (San Dieguito Planning Group): Reported the planning group's unanimous opposition to removing deed restrictions and would have liked clarification on the \$100,000 annual payment, suggesting it should be significantly higher based on property use.

No further public comments were offered.

2. Status of CTC Trail – Surf Cup Presentation (Oral)

Recommendation: None

Jonathan Muenkel, General Counsel for Pioneer Sports gave a slide presentation on Surf Cup's plans and timeline for completing the Coast to Crest Trail within Surf Cup Sport's lease area. He acknowledged the amended lease deadline approved by San Diego to complete the trail by June 30, 2027, and their plan to finish the trail earlier, anticipated by end of 2026. He reviewed the construction timeline and that a pre-construction meeting with contractors and City inspectors will be held next week.

Katy Chappaz, Recon Environmental, Surf Cup contractor for project management, outlined technical aspects of the trail construction including invasive species removal and native plant restoration and compliance with environmental regulations. She stated their intent to request modifications to the plans to improve trail drainage and trail tread with additional surfacing and will discuss with City inspectors.

Mr. Muenkel committed to quarterly updates and collaboration with JPA staff throughout the project.

Pioneer Sports representatives agreed to the following as requested by Board Members:

- Provide notification and communicate with JPA staff regarding project updates and status, scheduled meetings, and site visits, as appropriate.
- Provide written project schedule/timeline.
- Develop a communication plan and email list to share updates and documents with stakeholders, and community.
- Quarterly progress reports and improved communication

Public Comment- None

3. Reach the Beach and SDRP Western Gateway (Oral)

Recommendation: None

Executive Director Anderson updated the Board on the JPA's project and other plans at the project site that affect the JPA's project timeline and ability to meet the state grant deadline, such as uncertainties with SANDAG's LOSSAN rail realignment project (north alignment alternative) and Del Mar Living Levee Project. These changes affect the ability to construct the project within the project's state grant deadline of June 2027. Anderson explained that JPA and Del Mar staff are communicating, and Del Mar has incorporated the Reach the Beach trail into their Living Levee proposed project design. Del Mar is pursuing construction funds for the levee and trail.

Staff's recommendation is to work with the state grant officer to separate the Gateway component of the project from the Reach the Beach Trail and proceed with Gateway design and construction at a relocated site adjacent to the lagoon. Staff identified two potential sites for the Gateway that could be temporary or permanent locations. The trail component would proceed as part of Del Mar's Living Levee project.

Chair MacDonald made a motion to authorize Executive Director Anderson to proceed with staff's recommendation and Board member Martinez seconded the motion.

All in Favor.

Yes votes: MacDonald, Elliott (Alt), Maeda, Martinez, Gaasterland, Khouri, von Wilpert

No votes: None

Absent: Lawson-Remer, Anderson

Abstain: None

Public Comment- None

INFORMATION

4. Project Status Updates

- a) **Osuna Segment of Coast to Crest Trail** – No Report
- b) **Reach the Beach Fairgrounds Trail** – Discussed in Agenda Item 3.
- c) **San Dieguito Lagoon Phase II Restoration (aka W-19)** – Director Anderson reported that SANDAG is hosting the Wildlife Conservation Board meeting on November 20, at the San Elijo Nature Center. The event will include informational tables for each lagoon, including the San Dieguito Lagoon, and the opportunity to interact with WCB board members.
- d) **CTC Trail – East San Pasqual and Sutherland Gaps Project** – Work is continuing on the project design in coordination with relevant stakeholders.

5. 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

6. **Jurisdictional Status Reports –**

Councilmember Martinez attended the California Native Plant Sale at Sikes Adobe and plans to attend the Sikes Adobe Harvest Tea. Additionally, she highlighted the upcoming Artisan Faire Holiday Market at Sikes Adobe December 7.

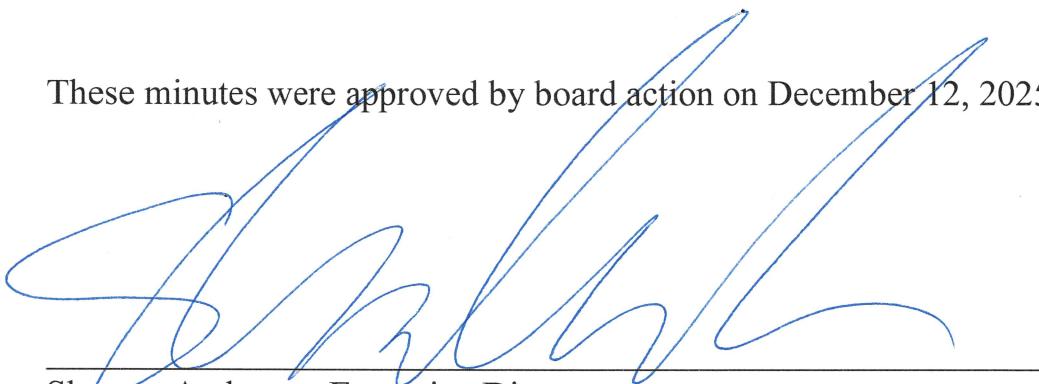
Executive Director Anderson expressed appreciation to Councilmember Von Wilpert for the new San Pasqual Valley Agricultural Preserve sign, noting its attractive design. Councilmember Von Wilpert highlighted the San Pasqual Valley Winery Trail, which spans both Escondido and county areas, and encouraged members to visit local wineries for Thanksgiving wine purchases.

7. **Correspondence – None**

8. **Closed session with Legal Counsel:** None

Chair MacDonald adjourned the meeting at 12:50pm

These minutes were approved by board action on December 12, 2025



Shawna Anderson, Executive Director