



Minutes

Measure M2 Environmental Oversight Committee

Committee Members

Brian Goodell, Chairman

Melanie Schlotterbeck, Vice Chair

Karen Drewe, CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Chris Flynn, Caltrans District 12

Ajay Khetani, Taxpayer Oversight Committee

Derek McGregor, DMc Engineering

William Miller, US Fish & Wildlife

Bev Perry, Civic Engagement Consultant

Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League

Orange County Transportation Authority

Conference Room 07

550 South Main Street

Orange, CA

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at

2:00pm

Member(s) Absent

Veronica Li, US Army Corp of Engineers

Joe Navari, CA Wildlife Conservation Board

OCTA Board of Directors-Vacant

1. Welcome

Chair Brian Goodell called the Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) meeting to order. He welcomed new members William Miller, Karen Drewe, and Joe Navari.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Brian Goodell lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of February 2, 2022 Minutes

William Miller and Karen Drewe abstained since they are new members. A motion was made by Derek McGregor, seconded by Chris Flynn and passed to approve the February 2, 2022 EOC meeting minutes.

4. Environmental Mitigation Program Endowment Fund Investment Report

Dan Phu provided updates on the Environmental Mitigation Program Endowment Fund Investment Report for periods ending on March 31 and June 30, 2022. He said OCTA has made a total of 6 deposits to date. The balance in March was over \$21 million which was slightly above the \$20.1 million projected target. Due to volatility in the market, the ending balance for June dropped down to \$19.3 million which was slightly below the \$20.1 million projected target. As always, OCTA is closely monitoring the health of the economy.

Committee Member Comments:

Dan Silver asked how they arrived at the \$46.2 million number. Dan Phu said the \$34.5 million comes from the \$2.9 million deposits over a 10–12-year period, and with the interest earnings added on the total is \$46.2 million.

Derek McGregor asked how the current expenses are covered. Dan Phu said the expenses for management come from the existing cash flow from the sales tax revenue.

5. Coastal Fire Update

Lesley Hill gave an update on the Coastal Fire which impacted approximately 35 acres of the OCTA Pacific Horizon Preserve in Laguna Beach. She said their main goal is to keep recreation out of the area, but it is common for bicyclists to break through the fencing and use the trails illegally. Archaeologists searched the area for artifacts uncovered by the fire, but none were discovered. Engineers from OC Parks/OC Public Works are assessing the area and identifying potential risks such as debris flows and landslides. <This presentation available upon request.>

Committee Member Comments:

Melanie Schlotterbeck asked if the burn pattern was consistent with what was forecasted in the Fire Management Plan (FMP). Lesley said she would confirm how much the FMP aligned with the burn pattern.

Derek McGregor asked about erosion issues related to Aliso Creek. Lesley said she is anticipating getting some recommendations from OC Parks in about a month or so.

Ajay Khetani asked if OCTA is waiting for natural regrowth or planting new seeds. Lesley said the natural vegetation had been there for so many years that the native seed bank in the soil should still there. She said if the area is left alone and the upcoming season provides rainfall, the plants should regrow, and the vegetation will establish itself.

6. OCTA Conservation Plan Annual Report

Lesley Hill shared the Conservation Plan Annual Report which goes over freeway projects status, new documented impacts, progress on the restoration projects, maintenance on the preserves, and public outreach efforts. She said in 2021 the two major freeway projects (on-going) were the on the I-405 and I-5. To date, four of OCTA's restoration projects have met the success criteria requirements including the UCI Restoration Project in 2021. Lesley said OCTA conducted focused bird surveys on the Preserves to monitor the effectiveness of their conservation efforts. They found an increase of Cactus Wren activity at four preserves with a substantial increase on the Trabuco Rose property. <This presentation available upon request.>

Committee Member Comments:

There were no committee member comments.

7. Restoration Project Tour Summary

Dan Phu gave an overview of the May 11 restoration project tours attended by State and Federal wildlife agencies. They visited the UCI Ecological Preserve and the Bolsa Chica Conservancy (BCC) project at Harriet Wieders Regional Park. Dan noted that the BCC has not been officially signed off on.

Committee Member Comments:

Brian Goodell asked what needs to be signed off on the BCC project. Dan said the objective is to replace the non-native plant species with natural communities. He said this has been accomplished but they are still in the replanting process which is reliant on the cooperation of the weather.

8. Southern California Edison Coordination Update

Lesley Hill provided a brief update on OCTA and Southern California Edison's (SCE) coordination efforts. She said OCTA and SCE's legal teams have been working together on a draft access agreement and easement language for all the Preserves.

Committee Member Comments:

Melanie Schlotterbeck asked if OCTA would be compensated for the resources and staff hours spent on resolving issues caused by SCE. Lesley said she would bring the topic to legal, and Director Goodell added that they can raise the issue to the Board.

9. Hikes and Equestrian Rides

Marissa Espino said the next hike is September 17 and ride is September 18. She said there are 30 signed up for the hike and 10 signed up for the ride. The following and final hike and rides for the 2022 calendar year will take place on November 5 (hike) and November 19 (ride).

Committee Member Comments:

Dan Silver asked how much public participation we have been receiving. Marissa said the hikes have had a good turnout recently and the rides have remained consistent because most participants are locals.

10. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

11. Committee Member Reports

Dan Silver said we should allow hybrid meetings when receiving reports and the committee should have the option for some meetings. Marissa said this is something we will agendaize so we can have a more robust discussion, and she will share this with management. Bev Perry agreed with both Dan and Marissa. Ajay added that anyone who lives local should still be required to attend in person.

12. Next Meeting – February 1, 2023

13. Adjournment