TO: Board of Directors
FROM: COSCA Staff
DATE: May 8, 2019

SUBJECT: Wildwood Park Update

Wildwood Park is a regional park acquired in 1969 consisting of 1,732 acres located in the northwest section of Thousand Oaks. The dirt parking lot at the west end of Avenida de los Arboles was established in the mid-1980s (Attachment 1).

Staff from the City of Thousand Oaks (City), Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD), and COSCA set up a community meeting on March 7, 2017 in response to concerns about the trailhead raised by residents. Residents living within 500 feet of the parking lot were invited to attend to discuss various concepts to mitigate issues related to increased visitation. Over 100 people attended this meeting, where a discussion ensued between residents and staff about issues and potential solutions related to the trailhead parking lot. The main topics are listed below, along with a summary of the efforts staff took to address the neighborhood’s issues. The Board was updated on these efforts in September 2017 and September 2018 (Attachments 2 and 3).

1. Lack of signage regarding park hours, gate closure times, after-hours use of the trailhead parking lot.

   A private security firm was hired to open the gates at 6:00 A.M. and close them at 9:00 P.M. daily, in accordance with posted park hours. Signs were installed in the parking lot informing the public of park hours, gate closure time and locations of other nearby parking lots.

2. Loud visitors at trailhead and car burglaries.

   The Thousand Oaks Police Department (TOPD) increased their patrols of the west end of Avenida de los Arboles, including the Wildwood trailhead parking lot, particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings. In addition, TOPD installed signs in the parking lot informing the public to lock their vehicles and not to leave valuables in vehicles, as well as surveillance cameras to monitor parking lot activity. TOPD is available to respond to issues in the parking lot that require immediate attention. TOPD does not consider the trailhead parking lot to be a major generator of calls for service. Since January, they have averaged about one call a week.
3. **Dust generated by the parking lot.**

   Staff inquired about the neighborhood’s position on paving the parking lot to address the dust issue. Residents in attendance did not support this because they believed paving the lot may attract even more visitors to the trailhead.

   As a result, staff explored environmentally-friendly dust suppression compounds, and treated the Wildwood trailhead parking lot in 2017 and 2018. A significant reduction in dust generation from the parking lot was observed compared to prior years. Ongoing treatment is scheduled to maintain low dust levels.

4. **Lack of signage for alternative parking locations;**

   The Wildwood Park trail map was updated to show other parking lots serving Wildwood Park, including Wildwood Elementary School and two lots at Wildflower Park. Notes were also added advising people to avoid parking on residential streets. Trail maps are available online and at trailheads.

5. **Car accidents at the corner of west Avenida de los Arboles and Big Sky Drive.**

   The City’s Public Works Department studied the intersection and developed and installed median improvements, which have reduced vehicle accidents significantly.

6. **Request that COSCA identify and advertise other trailheads that provide parking and access into Wildwood Park, and that trails outside of Wildwood and other open space areas be promoted.**

   COSCA began to publicize and encourage use of non-Wildwood trails throughout the open space system. The trails featured in the 2017 Conejo Open Space Challenge (an annual event initiated many years ago to increase open space awareness) did not include any trails in Wildwood. The 2018 event and the upcoming 2019 event also did not include any Wildwood trails, and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Regular posts on COSCA’s Facebook page feature non-Wildwood trails and the *Thousand Oaks Acorn* ran a series about hiking locally called “Trails Less Traveled”, which does not include any Wildwood trails.

   The planning for the Conejo Canyons Bridge project has been accelerated, which will provide an alternate access point into the Wildwood Trail network from a parking lot along the road leading to Hill Canyon Treatment Plant. Staff informed neighbors that once this bridge is constructed, the address for Wildwood Park would change from Avenida de los Arboles to 10240 Hill Canyon Road. The address change may redirect some out-of-town visitors using social media and map applications away from the existing trailhead parking lot. Engineering plans have been completed and the authorization to bid this project is scheduled for the City of Thousand Oaks City Council on May 14. Construction is expected to begin in August, with completion in early 2020.
7. **Request that some CRPD Outdoor Unit programs be moved to areas other than Wildwood.**

   CRPD committed to implement the neighborhood’s request, and several Outdoor Unit programs have been moved from Wildwood Park to Sapwi Park.

8. **Request that park rangers assist with addressing additional visitors, including the idea of a permanent on-site ranger.**

   Rangers now spend a greater number of hours at Wildwood Park, proportionally more than other COSCA open space areas.

Staff introduced several options at the 2017 community meeting intended to address underlying resident concerns about parking at the trailhead:

- **Add parallel parking along Avenida de los Arboles.** Residents did not support adding parallel parking due to perceived aesthetics and safety impacts, and the potential result of losing the bike lane.

- **Increase the size of the parking lot at the trailhead.** Residents opposed this idea out of concern that a larger lot would attract even more visitors to the trailhead.

- **Expand parking at Wildflower Playfields.** Residents opposed this idea out of concern that additional parking at Wildflower would attract even more visitors to the general neighborhood.

- **Institute neighborhood permit parking.** Residents were informed about the City’s program, and while there was some interest shown at the community meeting, no action to formally start the process has been initiated by the residents.

Staff has worked toward mitigating the issues raised at the 2017 neighborhood meeting and to be responsive to concerns and requests from residents. Staff remains in regular contact with neighbors that continue to have concerns with the trailhead. Staff remains focused on mitigating (reducing) the impacts of the trailhead usage. While we have put in place measures to influence positive visitor behavior, we cannot prevent a small minority of visitors from actioning or behaving in a disrespectful manner.

Staff recommends that the Board receive and file this report.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Peter Gilli, Deputy Director of Community Development  
Anna Huber, Assistant Planner  
Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency

**Attachments:**  
Attachment 1 – Aerial Photograph  
Attachment 2 – 2018 Wildwood Update  
Attachment 3 – 2017 Wildwood Update
Wildwood Regional Park - Main Parking Lot
TO: Board of Directors

FROM: COSCA Staff

DATE: September 12, 2018

SUBJECT: Wildwood Park Update

Wildwood Park was acquired in 1969. This regional park is 1,732 acres in size and is located in the northwest section of Thousand Oaks. The dirt parking lot at the west end of Avenida de los Arboles was established in the mid-1980s.

In 2017, an update was presented to the Board and posted on the COSCA website (see Attachment 1). This is the second update, which expands upon the 2017 update, and describes continued coordinated efforts by the City of Thousand Oaks (City), Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD), COSCA, and the Thousand Oaks Police Department (TOPD) to respond to increased visitation.

1. **Gate Closure**: A private security firm is contracted with to open the gates by 7:00 A.M. and close them at 9:00 P.M. on a daily basis, in accordance with posted park hours.

2. **Dust Control**: EnviroKleen®, an environmentally-friendly dust suppression compound was applied to the Wildwood trailhead parking lot on August 15. This product is expected to be more effective than the product applied last year.

3. **New Signage**: Signs have been installed in the Wildwood trailhead parking lot informing the public regarding park hours, gate closure time and locations of other nearby parking lots. Additional signs will be installed in the lot advising visitors that overflow parking is available at Wildflower Playfields and Wildwood Elementary School, and requesting that they not use neighborhood streets for parking.
4. **Trail Map Update**: The Wildwood Park trail map was updated to show nearby parking lots, other than the lot at the west end of Avenida de los Arboles, including Hill Canyon, Wildwood Elementary School and two lots at Wildflower Park. Notes were also added advising visitors to avoid parking on residential streets. Wildwood trail maps are available online as well as at trailheads. In addition, staff has initiated dialogue with the National Park Service to discuss updates to a regional trail map they maintain to discuss how Wildwood Park is presented in that document.

5. **Increased Patrols and Safety Signage**: The Thousand Oaks Police Department patrols the west end of Avenida de los Arboles, including the Wildwood trailhead parking lot at various intervals. As deputies are available, additional monitoring of the parking lot will occur on Friday and Saturday evenings. TOPD also installed signs in the lot informing the public to lock their vehicles and not to leave valuables in vehicles. In addition, TOPD is in the process of installing cameras to monitor parking lot activity. TOPD is available to respond to issues in the parking lot that require immediate attention.

6. **Hill Canyon Creek Crossing**: A permanent bridge providing a second crossing for Arroyo Conejo Creek in Hill Canyon is in the beginning phases of design by an engineering firm retained by the City specifically for this purpose. Construction is anticipated to be complete in the Fall of 2019. Once the bridge and associated new trails are complete, the address for Wildwood Park will be changed to 10240 Hill Canyon Road on social media and in map applications, in order to redirect out-of-town visitors away from the existing trailhead. The trailhead on Conejo Center Drive (near the Municipal Service Center) will also be advertised as a parking area for Wildwood in the future. In addition, the City, COSCA, and CRPD are also working with the developer of new commercial properties near the end of Rancho Conejo Road to preserve existing and construct additional trail access in this area.

7. **Median Improvements**: The City's Public Works Department has completed median improvements at the intersection of Avenida de los Arboles and Big Sky Drive. In conjunction with these improvements, directional signage to the Wildwood trailhead parking was installed on Avenida de los Arboles east of Frontier Avenue and east of Big Sky Drive, to keep visitors from using Bright Star Street to access the trailhead.

8. **CRPD Programming**: CRPD continues to move Outdoor Unit programs away from Wildwood Park and into other open space areas as feasible. As Sapwi Trails Community Park nears completion, it is anticipated that some Outdoor Unit programs will be hosted there.
9. **Trail Ambassador Program**: Volunteers monitoring Wildwood Park continue to share information about other trails and open space around the City with visitors in an effort to raise awareness of these alternative destinations.

10. **Publicizing Other Trails**: COSCA continues to publicize and encourage use of other non-Wildwood trails throughout the open space system. The 10 trails featured in the 2018 Conejo Open Space Challenge did not include any trails in Wildwood, which was purposely done to increase awareness of other trails in the network. Regular posts on COSCA’s Facebook page feature non-Wildwood trails and the *Thousand Oaks Acorn* is running an occasional series about hiking local called “Trails Less Traveled”, which does not include Wildwood trails.

11. **Social Media**: References to Wildwood Park have been removed from City, CRPD and COSCA social media outlets. These agencies are encouraging trail users to explore other open space areas throughout the City and have worked with the Chamber of Commerce, the Conejo Valley Tourism Improvement District and other organizations to limit Wildwood Park coverage and advertising. Trail user etiquette information has been circulated on social media to encourage trail users to be respectful of neighborhoods surrounding trailheads.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Anna Huber, Assistant Planner  
Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency
TO: COSCA Board of Directors
FROM: COSCA Staff
DATE: September 13, 2017
SUBJECT: Wildwood Park Update

Wildwood Park is 1,732 acres in size and is located in the northwest section of Thousand Oaks. Currently Wildwood’s most popular trailhead is the dirt parking lot at the west end of Avenida de los Arboles.

In response to concerns from residents regarding increased visitation at the main Wildwood trailhead, staff has initiated the following short and long-term actions. These are the result of coordination between the City of Thousand Oaks (City), Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD), and COSCA.

Recently, Wildwood neighborhood resident, David Lake, voiced his concerns about the trailhead during public comments at the August 29, 2017 City Council meeting. COSCA and Thousand Oaks Police Department (TOPD) staff met with Mr. Lake after the meeting to discuss his concerns and the actions that have been taken to address them.

**Short-Term Actions**

1. **Gate Closure**: Residents complained about trail visitors parking in the trailhead parking lot after hours. A private security firm was hired on June 1, 2017 to open the gates by 6:00 A.M. and close them at 9:00 P.M. on a daily basis, in accordance with posted park hours.

2. **Dust Control**: Residents complained about dirt generated from trail visitors driving on the dirt parking lot. An environmentally-friendly dust suppression compound was applied to the Wildwood trailhead parking lot on July 6, 2017.

3. **New Signage**: Residents complained about a lack of signage informing the public of park hours, gate closure times and other parking lots that provide access to Wildwood. Signs have been installed in the Wildwood trailhead parking lot informing the public regarding park hours, gate closure time and locations of other
nearby parking lots. Additionally, signs were placed in the adjacent neighborhood
discouraging people from parking on residential streets near the trailhead.

4. **Trail Map Update**: Residents complained that other parking lots providing access
to Wildwood Park were not being advertised to the public. The Wildwood Park trail
map was updated to show nearby parking lots, other than the lot at the west end
of Avenida de los Arboles, including Hill Canyon, Wildwood Elementary School and
two lots at Wildflower Park. Notes were also added advising people to avoid
parking on residential streets. Trail maps are available online and at trailheads.

5. **Increased Patrols and Safety Signage**: Residents were concerned about after
hour activity, car burglaries and loud trail visitors at the trailhead. The TOPD has
increased their regular patrols on Avenida de los Arboles near the Wildwood
trailhead. TOPD also installed signs in the Wildwood trailhead parking lot
informing the public to lock their vehicles and not to leave valuables in vehicles.

6. **Hill Canyon Creek Crossing**: Residents requested that different trailheads be
identified and advertised to provide parking and access into Wildwood Park. City,
CRPD, and COSCA staff met to discuss installing a second bridge in Hill Canyon
to cross the Arroyo Conejo, bringing trail users from the Conejo Canyons Open
Space into Wildwood, and keeping trail users off Hill Canyon Road. While the
permanent bridge is in the planning stages, COSCA Rangers are scouting a
crossing location where a temporary structure can be installed.

7. **Median Improvements**: Residents were concerned about car accidents at the
west end of Avenida de los Arboles as well as map applications directing cars
down Bright Start Street to access the trailhead. The City’s Public Works
Department is moving forward with median improvements at the intersection of
Avenida de los Arboles and Big Sky Drive and anticipates construction will begin
at the end of November. In conjunction with these improvements, directional
signage to the Wildwood trailhead parking lot will be installed on Avenida de los
Arboles east of Frontier Avenue and east of Big Sky Drive, to keep visitors from
using Bright Star Street to access the main trailhead.

8. **CRPD Programming**: Residents requested that some CRPD Outdoor Unit
programs be moved to areas other than Wildwood. CRPD is working on moving
Outdoor Unit programs away from Wildwood Park and into other open space
areas. These changes will be reflected in the winter program guide.

9. **Trail Patrol/Ambassador Program**: Residents asked COSCA to promote other
open space areas. When volunteers patrolling in Wildwood Park interact with open
space users, they are informing them of other trails and open space around the
City to encourage visitation of areas outside of Wildwood.
10. **Publicizing Other Trails**: Residents asked COSCA to promote trails outside of Wildwood to the public. COSCA continues to publicize and encourage use of non-Wildwood trails throughout the open space system. The 10 trails featured in the 2017 Conejo Open Space Challenge (an event designed to increase open space awareness) did not include any trails in Wildwood. Regular posts on COSCA's Facebook page feature non-Wildwood trails and the *Thousand Oaks Acorn* is running a series about hiking locally called “Trails Less Traveled”, which does not include Wildwood trails.

11. **Social Media**: Residents asked COSCA to promote other open space areas to the public. References to Wildwood Park have been removed from City, CRPD and COSCA social media outlets. These agencies are encouraging trail users to explore other open space areas throughout the City and have worked with the Chamber of Commerce, the Conejo Valley Tourism Improvement District and other organizations to limit Wildwood Park coverage and advertising. Trail user etiquette information has been circulated on social media to encourage trail users to be respectful of neighborhoods surrounding trailheads.

**Long-Term Actions**

1. **New Address for Wildwood**: Residents requested that different trailheads be advertised to provide parking and access into Wildwood Park. On social media and in map applications, the main address for Wildwood Park will be changed to 10240 Hill Canyon Road in order to redirect out-of-town visitors away from the existing trailhead on Avenida de los Arboles. This address change is contingent on the construction of trails and related improvements in Hill Canyon. The trailhead on Conejo Center Drive (near the Municipal Service Center) will also be advertised as a parking area for Wildwood in the future.

**SUBMITTED BY**: Shelly Mason, COSCA Manager