

San Dieguito River Valley Park--Summary of the CAC Orientation Meeting ~ July 14, 2008

by Jean Potosky, CAC member representing the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board

Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee attend an orientation meeting to review the history, purpose, and procedures of the San Dieguito River Valley Park.

The River Park serves three main functions:

- 1. To preserve civilization by providing a natural setting for indigenous plants, bodies of water, and animal life**
- 2. To provide a model for democracy through the structure of the governing matrix**
- 3. To be a setting for inspiration to the people living in San Diego County translating to economic progress through the ideas conceived in the nurturing atmosphere by those visiting The Park**

The governmental structure of the park starts with encouragement of the citizens to contribute and comment on ideas to improve the park. These ideas are shared during the CAC community meetings on the first Friday of each month.

Five cities border this 80,000 fifty-five mile park and co-operate in the decisions influencing the progress of the park. The cities are San Diego, Solana Beach, Del Mar, Escondido, and Poway. Government owns 75% of the land in The Park and approximately 20,000 acres are privately owned.

These CAC committee meetings and the actions voted upon at those meetings are forwarded to the Joint Powers Authority--JPA. This JPA board includes selected members of the city council of the cities and selected members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Items voted upon at the JPA are forwarded to the full city council of the cities involved to discuss and vote to approve to become policy for The Park.

The Park has a staff of eleven people including five Rangers. Most noticeable is the dedication and devotion of the staff members to the ideals of The Park.

The region of metropolitan San Diego is fortunate that early government officials created the park because other regions in the United States grew

with urban sprawl and it is too late to recreate the natural nature setting which involves such a large amount of land.

Plans to improve the park include expansion of the Coast to Crest Trail, continue habitat enhancement, prevent invasive plants from destroying the native plants, and to provide signage to educate park visitors. In the planning stage is to construct a Nature Center building as a focal point for visitors to enter the park.

The San Dieguito River Valley Park is poised to become a major destination site for visitors worldwide as a symbol and showplace of how government works in the best interests of its citizens to improve their lives and the lives of many future generations.

Trail systems within the park such as the entry to these trails for the Rancho Bernardo community through the Rancho Bernardo Community Park on West Bernardo Drive provide uplifting recreation and exercise. A walk in pure nature for ten minutes or an hour could be the highlight of your week and bring much happiness, peace, and relaxation into your life. The photo below is of the trail at the south end of Bernardo Bay which is part of Lake Hodges.

