

Johanna DeLong

From: Karen Sullivan <greymare56@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 9:33 PM
To: Karen Sullivan; Johanna DeLong
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Highland Springs Trails Volunteers comments on Appeal (AB24-02) for Highland Farms, LP (UP 20-96)
Attachments: HSTV timeline.docx

The Highland Springs Trails Volunteers (HSTV) would like to submit comments on (Appeal (AB24-02) for Highland Farms, LP (UP 20-96)). We are concerned that the permit was approved for Highland Farms without adequate EIR of proposed grow site or access road, any traffic studies, or outreach to neighbors or stakeholder groups

HSTV has been a dedicated, hard working group for 3 decades focused on stewardship and improvements to the Highland Springs Recreation Area. Our efforts have cleared and reopened almost 30 miles of trails, inventory and protection of California native plants, rare species, giving wildflower hikes and talks, assisting with a park Master management plan..history presentations at the park, trash pick up, community outreach and partnering, developing a trail map and signage for the park, and reporting illegal activities

Members have worked on Mt. Konocti County Park Master Plan committee, the Konocti Regional Trails Master Plan Committee, The Tribal Ecorestoration Alliance and the recent Lake County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan and have included members of Lake County Dressage Society, Hooves and Wheels Driving Club, Lake County Horse Council, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society and others.

We have been endorsed by: Lake County Sheriff Search and Rescue, Lake County Sierra Club, Lake County Historical Society, Lake County Horse Council and other numerous local stakeholders.

We support the appeal because there have been many violations of Federal, State and County laws and ordinances. These also include: no notification of property owners adjacent to the park of the project no traffic studies, no mitigation of the unsafe corner on Highland Springs road before the park, no consideration or studies on effects of serpentine (asbestos) dust on air and water runoff from grading, no mention of trail proximity to the site site and access road. No biological studies on the serpentine bluff with rare and endangered species, on County land that the access site would cut through.

Please do not grant this permit until all laws and ordinances have been followed and a complete EIR done

The Highland Springs Trails Volunteers.
Current contacts, Karen Sullivan 707 349-1559 Dave Lowrie 707 245 1249
Kim Riley and Dana Adams
Attachment:

Timeline and information for Highland Springs Trails Volunteers

HIGHLAND SPRINGS TRAILS VOLUNTEERS (HSTV)

(Previously known as the HS Equestrians, the name was changed to acknowledge the enthusiasm, hard work and long volunteer hours put in by an expanding list of Sierra Club members and hikers

PURPOSE

To maintain, preserve and advance the historic foot and horseback trails at Highland Springs Recreation Area, educating and encouraging active participation in safe, sustainable trail recovery, and protecting natural resources.

HIGHLAND SPRINGS HISTORY and FORMATION OF HSTV

Hunting and horseback trails have existed at Highland Springs for over 50 years (there was once a resort hotel there). The Highland Springs Trails Volunteers have evolved over a 29-year period, beginning with a few friends who loved the area and got together now and then to pick up trash, clear some brush or otherwise maintain a trail system that had fallen into disrepair over the decades. Beginning 19 years ago, the group dramatically expanded its membership and its accomplishments.

The HSTV have recovered approximately 30 miles of overgrown trails and fire roads. Since 2007 they have organized over 25 public trailwork days. Their labors & accomplishments include:

- * Botanical surveys
- * Clearing brush and downed trees
- * Clearing critical fire breaks
- * Documenting area history for Highland Springs Historic Archive
- * Educational Presentations
- * GPS tracking all trails
- * Hosting the LC Historic Society for a seminar on the history of the resort and area
- * Identification and protection of endangered native plants
- * Leading hikes for the Sierra Club and wildflower enthusiasts
- * Locating county monument markers
- * Locating historic landmarks such as original hotel and outbuilding footprints
- * Mapping and creating trail maps

- * Picking up trash
- * Protecting sensitive areas from illegal Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use
- * Reporting illegal activities
- * Removing poison oak from trails
- * Signage
- * Installing step-over to allow trail access for hikers and horses and keep ORV out

Though the first members were equestrians, over time their efforts and enthusiasm attracted interest from many other recreation area users including hikers, birdwatchers, joggers, native plant aficionados and dog walkers, so the group recently dropped the word “equestrian” from its name in acknowledgement of the diverse interests of their expanding membership. Collectively, they put in 50-150 hours per month.

Along with the California State Horsemen's Association (CSHA) and Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC), the Highland Springs Trails Volunteers support the California Equestrian Trails & Lands Coalition's Safety Considerations for Multi-use Trails

ENDORSEMENTS from local partnering organizations and fellow trail users, including:

LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF SEARCH AND RESCUE

Lake County Sierra Club

Lake County Historical Society

numerous local stakeholders

TIMELINE

1990 Individual trail clearing and work – friendship formed into Equestrian Women of the Toll Road (EWOT's)

2001 Invited by Lake County Director of Public Works Bob Lossius to a meeting requesting public input on trail system at Highland Springs. (county project which sought funding via grant applications)

2002 Researched with veteran Lake County trail-blazers Ann and Wayne Dunnebeck to locate 50+ year old trails system; begin to flag and recover old trails.

2004 EWOT's were presented by the Lake County Board of Supervisors with the Lake County Volunteer of the Year for trash pick up along Toll Road

2006 Meetings with Lake County Flood Control Deputy Director Pam Francis to continue the county's trail plan. Began compiling research on safe multi-use trails. HSTV sent letter regarding safety concerns on HSRA trails from speeding bikes

2007 Lake County's Dept of Flood Control became the Dept of Water Resources (LCWR). Group (then known as HS Equestrians) participated in routine monthly meetings with Water Resources Deputy Director Pam Francis. Per Pam Francis, the funding that had been sought via grant applications was not obtained, therefore work towards the proposed Highland Springs trail system would continue to rely upon volunteer labor and donations.

Group's 2007 activities included:

- Continued work on old Dunnebeck trails.
- Utilizing equipment issued to them from the County, GPS'd most established and recovered trails at HSRA.
- Data from GPS was downloaded by County.
- Created a power point program highlighting trailwork and development at HSRA for fundraising purposes.
- BLM SWECO Trailcat was loaned to LCWR for 2 days in February – assisted operator in identifying trailwork needed.
- Reported off-road offenders, illegal campers with fire rings, illegal hunting, vandalism, illegal dump, and found marijuana growing supplies (ongoing)
- Installed step-over near Disc Golf course
- Installed step-over at gate on Toll
- Posted self-made temporary signs on trails "Please Do Not Ride Wet Trails" (ongoing, at Dept of Water Resources request)
- Sprayed County-provided Round-Up on poison oak encroached trails -multiple trails – approx.10 miles of trail (ongoing)

2008 Full-scale organized public work parties began, with intensified personal volunteer work.

2009 Group's 2009 activities included:

- When County lost the original downloaded data, group re-GPS'd all established and recovered trails at HSRA. Data downloaded to County (again).
- Ongoing Botanical Survey. Protected rare and endangered lily (Fritillaria Purdy) on county-created Lake Trail

-Posted (at "Y" dam parking lot and at the gate entering horse staging area in HS park) and handed out flyers requesting public input on multi-use trail systems

-To create business case for another loan of BLM SWECO Trailcat, group created detailed report on specific trail work to be done by the BLM SWECO Trailcat in 2009; including Google maps, potentially wet areas, ephemeral streams.

-BLM SWECO Trailcat was loaned to LCWR for 3 days in May 2009, and HSTV again coordinated that effort and assisted operator.

2010 Group's 2010 activities included:

-More public trailwork days, more poison oak eradication, more community presentations and nature hikes and tours (ongoing)

-Assisted Hooves and Wheels Driving Club in making a business case to improve the recovered trail network through the gun range area and assisted with trail development.

-Working with property owners and Lake County surveyors to locate property monuments to further trail system

-Reorganized into Highland Springs Trails Volunteers

Public Trail Work Days coordinated by HSTV:

2007: November 3

2008: February 9, March 15, April 19, November 15, December 3

2009: February 9, April 18, October 31, December 12

2010: January 30, March 20, April 24, May 15, Sept 18, Oct 30, November 13

Total = 957 Volunteer Work Hours on Work Days (not including below additional hours)

Trail Work and Happy Hour at Highlands:

Beginning in June 2010, we initiated Trail Work and Happy Hour at Highlands. Every Wednesday evening, through the summer, we had anywhere from 3-6 people volunteer for 2-3 hours of work, followed by snacks and drinks and jocularly. Trail Work + Happy Hour dates:

June 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30

July 7, 14, 21, 28

August 4, 11, 18, 25

September 1, 8 = 319 additional Public Work Hours during summer 2010

TOTAL Volunteer Hours: 1276

2010 TO 2011 HSTV and LCHC members write HSTV Draft Management plan at the request of Water Resources Director Scott DeLeon

HSTV leaders and members serve on LCHC Trails Advisory Committee; Kim Riley elected Secretary for LCHC Trails Advisory Committee.

2010 and forward. 4 more years of partnering with the Lake County Horse Council to have them as umbrella organization to hold the user contract with County of Lake.

Continued botanical surveys and trail work by individuals to present time.

2022 to 2024 after huge storm, HSTV have cleared the following blocked trails: Boot, Kneeknocker, Puppy Dog, Jackass lower and middle, Coyote, Anns, Lake, Lone Pine, Canter, Round Up and other.

2023 Partnered with the County and the Tribal Ecorestoration Alliance (TERA) to create an accurate map with recent GPS, and more botanical work.

Continued trail clearing and trash reporting

GOING TO THE COMMUNITY- Presentations Made for Purpose of Education and/or Fundraising:

2007 - Kiwanis – Power Point

2007 - Back Country Horsemen – Power Point

2007 - Clear Lake Horsemen – Power point

2007 – Lake County chapter of Sierra Club

2008 - Lake County Dressage Society

2009-10-30 Sunrise Rotary

2010-01 Lake County Trails Symposium

2010-04 Hooves and Wheels Society

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TO HIGHLAND SPRINGS – HSTV events and projects:

2010-02 Sierra Club Hike

2010-06 Sierra Club Hike

2010-05-16 Wildflower / Native Plant Hike

2010-06-13 Hosted the Lake County Historical Society at the Highland Springs Equestrian Camp for special lecture by Dr. Neal Woods “Memories of Highland Springs Resort”

2010-07 Sierra Club Hike

2010-10 Sierra Club Hike

DONE Highland Springs Trail Map (under revision)

DONE: Planning/Building new Kiosk at Dam Staging Area (installation pending)

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY:

HSTV leaders have attended all meetings of the Konocti Regional Trails.

HSTV leaders have attended all meetings of Friends of Mt. Konocti

HSTV leaders attend meetings and trail work days for Friends of Boggs (FOB)

HSTV leaders initiated formation of the Lake County Horse Council, served as members of the LCHC Ad Hoc Steering Committee, attended all meetings, wrote articles for the LCHC journal, and made Highland Springs presentations at LCHC public meetings.