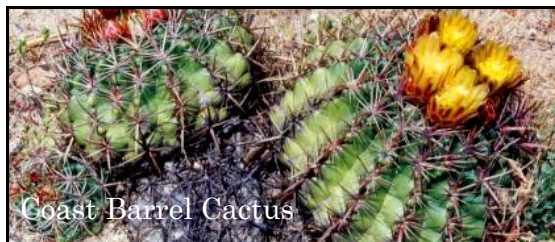


Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates



November 2021

www.dictionaryhill.info

DHOSA Selects New Leaders

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates (DHOSA) unanimously voted in new members for its Board of Directors and a slate of officers at its official Annual meeting in October.



Jim Merzbacher

On October 16, 2021, the non-profit's members approved three individuals for DHOSA's governing board and filled four officer positions to guide the group's activities for the next two years. Those selected were:

Board of Directors
Jim Merzbacher

Ute Powell

Karen Follingstad

President

Karen Gless

Vice President

Rachel Clibborn

Treasurer

Joyce Brody

Secretary

Cindy Schmidt

All have been DHOSA members for several years and worked as volunteers to promote the public acquisition of Dictionary Hill and surrounding habitat-rich parcels .



Like all San Diego County Parks, Dictionary Hill has rules to preserve the beauty and keep us all safe. These rules are posted on signs on all our trail heads.

Dogs must be kept on a leash. We want you and your dog to enjoy walking on the hill, but don't want our wild birds, reptiles and mammals disturbed by loose dogs.

There must be no open fires. We are in a wildfire high risk area.

All off road vehicles are excluded.

Dictionary Hill is open to us only in daylight hours.

The natural open space and scenic beauty of this special preserve are community assets in the heart of Spring Valley. They deserve to be conserved and protected for everyone's enjoyment for generations yet to come.

Dictionary Hill belongs to all of us.

The County of San Diego purchased the land in 2017 to create the Dictionary Hill Open Space Preserve. DHOSA continues to work in partnership with the County Parks Department as it plans trails and improvements for the preserve.

What are the Access Points for Dictionary Hill?

- The south end of South Barcelona Street.
- The north end of Buena Vista Avenue. South slope.
- The top of Ivy Street off Helix Street. West slope.
- The north end of Grand Avenue. South slope.

The Ferns and Spike Mosses of Dictionary Hill

By our resident Spring Valley botanist
Jim Merzbacher.

Dictionary Hill has eleven species of Ferns and Spike Mosses. The first plants to colonize dry land were Mosses and Lichens whose water-proof waxy covering prevented dehydration. Their more visible descendants, the Ferns and Spike Mosses, share the ability with Mosses and Lichens to capture energy from the sun. They lack flowers but more importantly have a vascular system with tubes to transport water to their leaves, sometimes as far as several feet. They reproduce with seed-like structures called spores which are in capsules on the underside of the Fern's leaves. Spike Moss spores are on stalks rising fractions of an inch above their ground dwelling parent plant.

Dictionary Hill's largest fern, California Polypodium is seldom seen. It has 1-2-foot-long fern leaves. Look for it deep in Dictionary Hill's ravines where shade can conserve water. All our other Ferns are smaller with leaves that are less than an inch to several inches in width and length. They are considered "nearly desert plants". They include Cotton Fern, Coffee Fern, San Diego Silverback and Golden Back Ferns. Like California Polypodium the delicate Maidenhair Fern needs cool shade. Our Ferns shrivel in summer but swell with



Silver Back Fern

the first moisture of the rainy season. Even more primitive ancestors of these ankle high Ferns are the ground dwelling Spike Mosses. They have spore capsules mounted

on their stalks and tiny leaves the size of lizard scales. The rarest is the stubby rooted Ashy Spike Moss which forms a living biocrust over bare soil. It can slow soil erosion on up to 25% of the preserve's hilly slopes. With the first rains it resurrects itself from the parched mat of grey ash of the hot summer, and swells to become a green carpet. Its close relative Bigelow's Spike Moss - aka Bushy Spike Moss - towers 2 to 3 inches, swirling around the lower spines in the folds of Barrel Cactus and several other plants. This micro-habitat is a forest in miniature generally less than one inch high. If trampled this fragile biocrust may take years to recover. These green carpets are thought to be the nurseries for native flower seedlings. They also inhibit invasive weeds.



Coffee Fern

As they become visible after early rains these "little ones" are one of the reasons the preserve's biologists are planning trails which will give everyone access to experience nature while preserving the most fragile of Dictionary Hill's habitats. It is our responsibility to protect them.

DHOSA Monthly Meetings

Throughout the pandemic we have been meeting each month on Zoom. From January as more of us are fully vaccinated and have booster shots we are planning to hold our meetings in person again.

If you want to be included email Chris Heiserman at chaise9400@aol.com