

Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Western Fence Lizard



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A Dream Come True

Dictionary Hill now belongs to us all

15 Years in Pursuit of a Vision

The County Board of Supervisors voted in November to acquire and preserve 175 acres of coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitat in Spring Valley. The property, which includes Dictionary Hill and adjacent canyon and ridgeline areas, will be added to the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).



MSCP lands are preserved to ensure the long-term survival of sensitive plant and animal species to balance the public need for development and open space. Supervisors authorized the County General Services Department to complete the purchase for an appraised value of \$5,467,000. The Board also approved additional funds for signage, access control and vegetation management.

The County Parks Department will be responsible for maintaining the preserve and will partner with DHOSA in its management, conducting volunteer patrols and litter removal. DHOSA President Chris Heiserman told the Board that preserving this valuable open space in the heart of Spring Valley for everyone to enjoy was a great investment in the community that would pay dividends now and for future generations.

Proper stewardship of valuable open space resources like Dictionary Hill will require cooperation from all visitors who come to enjoy the natural environment. The rules are clear on each sign – Pets on Leash and sanitary; no defacing of trees and plants, no alcohol or glass, no littering, no motorized vehicles, and no smoking. Preserve hours are sunrise to sunset. It's all simple and commonsense.

We know that the people of Spring Valley and San Diego County will rise to the challenge and help us preserve this open space sanctuary for us all, and for the remarkable range of wild life that flourishes on the hill.

Our Special Thanks Go To

1. County Supervisor Dianne Jacob and members of the Board of Supervisors for their support in making this fifteen year dream come true.
2. Brian Albright, Director of the County Department of Parks and Recreation, for his vision and diligence in pursuing protection of natural wild habitats like Dictionary Hill and saving them for future generations.

Remember to like us on Facebook. It's one more way we can publicize the importance of Dictionary Hill.



New Directions for DHOSA

After 15 years of focus to save the hill from further development, the members of Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates are now turning our efforts in new directions.

We especially want the next generation of local young people to be aware of the treasure on our doorstep. We hope to extend our guided walks on the hill and perhaps bring workshops to our local elementary, middle and high schools.

We will be meeting with the County Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate our future role in protecting and promoting the Dictionary Hill preserve. DHOSA still has dreams for the future.

We Need Your Help

Dictionary Hill now belongs to the people of San Diego County. The Parks and Recreation Department will be active in improving access and protecting the hill, but we need all of us as local residents to take an active role.

If you see vandalism, illegal dumping or off road vehicle activity please contact the Sheriff's non-emergency number 858-565-5200, or the County Parks at 619-644-5492.

Together we can make Dictionary Hill a preserve we all treasure and appreciate.

Winter on Dictionary Hill

Surprisingly life still exists even without our normal winter rains. Our Artemisias, Sages, and



White Crowned Sparrow

Buckwheats have been pale and grey but deep inside the stems there is still life.

If the drought continues there will inevitably be some dying off of Coastal Sage Scrub but with luck and moisture we will see a recovery. December typically sees the coldest temperatures when the

cloud cover is missing and temperatures plummet to near freezing. Spring will come with the first rains. Several plants will begin to break their dormancy. Matchweed and the crustose habitat mosses such as the rare Ashy Spike Moss will begin to come alive along with the first buds of Variegated Dudleya. Laurel Sumac is never dormant. The migrating birds



California Gnatcatcher

flock to its remaining seed clusters. It is a time with less human activity so some more secretive birds may appear. Look for migrating White Crowned Sparrows and Rufous Crowned Sparrows, and resident Bewicks Wrens. Occasionally Flycatchers such as Say's Phoebe will be seen in the sparsely vegetated and bare patches on Dictionary Hill. Recently Coopers Hawks, and Kes-

trels have been spotted. The shy but noisy Rock Wrens may be seen occasionally amongst the boulders near the summit. If you are lucky you may spot Canadian Geese circumnavigating the hill on their way to the Sweetwater Reservoir. Frequently heard but seldom seen are the Wrentits with their percussive buzzing.



Rock Wren

The more common every day birds will be Spotted Towhees and California Thrashers. With luck you may get a glimpse of our rare resident California Gnatcatchers near the hilltop.

Our birds, plants, insects, reptiles and mammals are now much more secure. They are now protected by the Dictionary Hill preserve status.

If you want to join our team or know more about the work of Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates, contact Chris Heiserman at cheise9400@aol.com