



London N. Breed, Mayor  
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

## McLaren Trails Priority Improvements

2012 Clean & Safe Neighborhood Bond Project

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### Trail Walk: Upper Reservoir and Inner Core, Meeting Notes

Meet at Upper Reservoir Parking Lot  
7/14/2022 8:30-10am

#### Participants:

##### RPD

Lauren Dietrich Chavez, PM: [lauren.chavez@sfgov.org](mailto:lauren.chavez@sfgov.org) o: 628-652-6643  
Christopher Campbell, Acting Director of Natural Resources  
Anthony Copioli, Trails Manager  
Jessica Solis, Planning Intern  
Hailey Malone, Planning Intern  
Kelli Rudnick, Project Manager

##### SFPW

Solange Guillaume, Landscape Designer

13 park users/ public

#### Meeting Goal:

To share proposed priority trail improvements, highlight natural resources, and hear park user suggestions for signage that will help people navigate and appreciate McLaren Park.

#### Meeting Minutes:

1. Gather, introductions
2. Access improvements near Upper Reservoir parking lot
  - a. Lauren reviewed the planned improvements and there were no comments or concerns
  - b. New ADA van parking place, curb ramp, and related improvements at the corner of the parking lot
  - c. New curb cut and crosswalk at Shelley Drive
  - d. Improved path, with "easy" trail designation from parking lot to Shelley crosswalk
3. North of Upper Reservoir



- a. Existing box steps between parking lot and reservoir are planned to be removed and replaced in-kind, with a stabilized natural surfacing material rather than asphalt.
    - i. Discussion of the large paths adjacent to both sides of the box steps
      - Park users noted that many people don't like box steps, and asked if staff would consider creating a trail alongside the steps
      - Staff noted that box step design has improved in recent years, and that steep slope trails cause erosion issues and Park staff cannot maintain
      - Staff mentioned that the "official trail network" will include box steps in this location
  - b. Hillside north of Upper Reservoir is proposed for natural feature restoration, and the creation of a seasonal wetland habitat:
    - i. Invasive plants to be removed
    - ii. New swales to catch and sink water
    - iii. Asphalt drainage to be removed and primary drainage path to be reinforced
  - c. General enthusiasm for habitat enhancement proposed in this area
  - d. Park users mentioned how much they like the existing trail from asphalt path north of reservoir to Philosopher's Way. Lauren noted how staff have been thinking about reinforcing that route if funding is available.
    - **Staff to consider inclusion of a trail across new seasonal wetland in base project scope**
  - e. If route across seasonal wetland is maintained, park user suggestion to add signage "To Philosopher's Way"
4. Lauren noted how the asphalt path to the east of the reservoir has been recently replaced and the project is not planning to do further improvements here.
5. Trail to Philosopher's Hill from intersection of asphalt path and west end of access road
- a. Lauren noted staff proposal to install box steps near the top of the trail, as slope is steeper than per trail best management practices
  - b. Several park users noted preference for no box steps, mentioning people will create a new path to the side and asking if steps are really necessary as the trail has been there for a couple years and does not seem to be eroding
    - **Staff to consider not including box steps here**
6. Top of Sidalcia Hill/ viewpoint on north side of Philosopher's Hill
- a. Staff mentioned that the two steep trails on NE and NW sides of slope are planned to be decommissioned.
    - **Park users offered recommendations to support decommissioning, including placement of "Not a Trail" signs and large wood at the bottom of these trails**
  - b. Christopher Campbell explained what a rich and diverse grassland remnant exists on this north slope, and how staff and volunteers have worked for many years to enhance the native plant populations
  - c. Staff mentioned plan to put split rail fence in this area to protect native plant habitat and reinforce trail decommissioning

- i. Several park users opposed to the idea; don't want fencing and don't want the view to be blocked; noted that folks sometimes sit and picnic in the clearing area at top of the hill where group was gathered
  - **Staff to consider fence alternatives in this area**

7. Group walked east down VoCal trail, past Field of Dogs, and to south side of creek

- a. Staff plans for erosion control work and hazardous tree removals or pruning on the north side of Philosopher's Hill
- b. Staff noted plans to reinforce a trail connection from the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Main (where N-S path that is east of the Field of Dogs meets the access road) to VoCal trail

8. Grey Fox Creek

- a. Christopher Campbell explained that Natural Resources staff and volunteers have been working on improving habitat in the Grey Fox Creek riparian zone for decades, noting the importance of this surface water resource for local wild species, particularly resident, nesting, and migratory birds
- b. Project scope in the riparian area adjacent to the creek is focused on reducing human and dog impacts on the creek and increasing native plant diversity to enhance habitat
  - i. The trail that cuts across the creek will be closed and trails outside of the creek bed decommissioned
  - ii. Trees will be removed in this area for both hazard and habitat enhancement purposes (according to prescribed measures in the Natural Resource Management Plan)
  - iii. The project proposes a riparian zone viewing area, off re-routed E-W trail through trees
- c. Discussion on how staff have tried to close the trail across creek several times in the past, and park users keep re-establishing
  - **Suggestion that staff post trail closure signs at least 30 days in advance of work in the area**
  - **Suggestion that staff add volunteer opportunity information to interpretive signs**
- d. The group looped over the creek at the asphalt path between parking lot and amphitheater, and continued to the north side of the creek

9. West of the Jerry Garcia Amphitheater

- a. Staff noted that there is a pedestrian loop trail around the entire perimeter of the amphitheater, that remains open to public access, even during ticketed events
- b. West of that loop trail is a band of oak trees, and then a patchwork of rich chaparral and grassland habitat zones, as well as a remnant wet meadow
- c. Staff explained that project scope in this area is intended to consolidate trails to support circulation and wayfinding, and provide larger areas of contiguous habitat. The group paused in an area where multiple trails moving in the same direction were visible.
  - **Suggestion that staff blaze/ add flags to the trails they want park users to use**

10. Access Road

- a. The group walked back to the Upper Reservoir along the access road
- b. Staff noted that the access road would be slightly re-routed east of 1<sup>st</sup> and Main, in order to mitigate erosion issues
- c. Staff noted the importance of the 1<sup>st</sup> and Main intersection, noting that trails intersecting this area will be consolidated to support wayfinding/ improve circulation
  - **Staff note plans for wayfinding posts here, to general agreement of group**

#### 11. South and west of Upper Reservoir

- a. Staff noted that additional funding has been secured to include asphalt path improvements to accessible path between the parking lot and the south end of the Upper Reservoir

#### 12. Thanks, parting, and final comments

- a. Park users mentioned how challenging it is to navigate in McLaren and mentioned need to better understand what paths one can take with young children or elderly; shared stories of starting to explore and needing to turn around at unexpected steps or too-steep slopes
- b. Staff noted that part of the McLaren Trails Priority Improvements project is review of the accessibility of the trail network, and increasing options for “easy” (less than 8% slope, firm and stable surface) and “moderate” (less than 10% slope, and semi-firm and stable surface) loops through the park
  - **Staff to share proposed revisions to trail map/ network of easy, moderate, and challenging trails at next meeting**