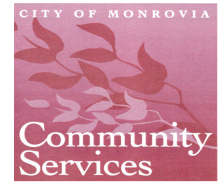




**CITY OF MONROVIA  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION  
AGENDA REPORT**



**DEPARTMENT:** Public Services

**MEETING DATE:** October 13, 2015

**PREPARED BY:** Eugene Suk, Hillside Wilderness  
Preserve Supervisor

**AGENDA LOCATION:** AR-1

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**TITLE:** 2014-15 Canyon Park Volunteer and Hillside Wilderness Preserve Park Ranger Reserve Program Evaluation

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide the Community Services Commission with an evaluation of the Canyon Park Volunteer and Hillside Wilderness Preserve Park Ranger Reserve Program.

**BACKGROUND:** Volunteers have donated their time to Canyon Park since 1911 when a group of volunteers built the first road into the Canyon, giving Monrovia access to the foothills. In 1999 the Volunteer Program was formalized to provide support to Canyon Park operations, including but not limited to: facilities maintenance, trail maintenance, Nature Center assistance, interpretive outdoor programming, and general preservation of the aesthetic and ecological resources of Canyon Park.

In 2010, the Hillside Wilderness Preserve (HWP) Park Ranger Reserve Program was created to provide operational support to Monrovia's hillsides. Reservists assist with trail construction and maintenance, habitat restoration, fuel reduction projects and surveys alongside the Fire Department, wildlife monitoring, and patrols. All volunteers and reservists participate in an extensive orientation before being assigned to service. Training includes a review of department policies and procedures, trail construction and maintenance, interpretive docent training, Nature Center support, and patrol training. The program took a hiatus in fiscal year 2012-13 due to limited Staffing needed for program supervision. The program was re-instated in the 2013-14 fiscal year with the main goal of supporting trail maintenance and construction.

**ANALYSIS:** The Canyon Park Volunteer and the Park Ranger Reserve Program consists of 46 active volunteers who provide daily support. Volunteers contributed a total of 9,666 hours in 2014-15 compared to 10,239 hours in 2013-14. Canyon Park Volunteers and Ranger Reserves also support non-Canyon Park programs including all city-wide special events (Fountain to the Falls, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Show, etc.), City grand openings, and on-going mud and debris removal in the hillside neighborhoods.

The table illustrates specific tasks and hours for fiscal year 2014-15 as compared to 2013-14.

**AR-1**

## Canyon Park Volunteers

Canyon Park Volunteer Hours		
	2013-14	2014-15
Activities	Hours	Hours
Trail Maintenance	3,037	3,152
Trail Patrol	2,302	2,468
Interpretation & Nature Center	286	302
Facility and Grounds Maintenance	151	124
Special Projects & Events	2,246	624
Monthly Meetings and Training	151	324
Administration	45	162
Staffing Kiosk	402	487
Other	56	97
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>8,676</b>	<b>7,740</b>

The decrease in volunteer hours is directly related to the elimination of the Canyon Park Haunted Hike event in 2014. This event requires a significant amount of volunteers and hours.

## Ranger Reserve Volunteers

Ranger Reserve Hours by Category		
	2013-14	2014-15
Activities	Hours	Hours
Trail Construction and Maintenance	798	746
Interpretation	94	102
Lower Clamshell Road Repair	40	40
Braunton's Milk-Vetch ( <i>Astragalus brauntonii</i> ) monitoring	74	52
Restoration and Fuels Reduction	233	425
Patrols	78	304
Meetings and Training	120	111
Special Events	126	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,926</b>

The increase in volunteer hours is attributed to the following:

- Growing popularity of the program;
- Additional program recruitment including hosting a booth at the LA County Fair; and
- Continued partnerships with local colleges.

The majority of Ranger Reservists were recruited from the Citrus College Natural Resource Management Program, and Mount San Antonio College's Administration of Justice Program. The Reserves knowledge and understanding of natural resources is crucial as the Department continues to move forward with the Resource Management Plan. The Reservists have, for several months, primarily focused on the maintenance and repair of the Lower Clamshell Motorway, and Lower Clamshell Connector Trail, and assisting the Park Rangers with daily patrols.

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION:**

Canyon Park Volunteers and Ranger Reserves are recognized for their efforts in the following manner:

- Summer kick-off party with awards and recognitions including the Golden Pine Cone Award;
- Holiday party with awards and recognitions including 100 plus hours of service, the Spirit Award, and Volunteers of the Year;
- Quarterly thank you lunches;
- Community Services Commission recognition for the Volunteers of the Year; and
- City Council recognition for the Volunteers of the Year.

These events give volunteers the opportunities to socialize, and honor their colleagues for their numerous contributions to Canyon Park and the hillsides.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:** All volunteers participate in on the job training with regard to stewardship of Monrovia’s hillside flora and fauna. Good stewardship includes removing invasive species, restoration of native flora, resource protection, wildlife monitoring, and interpretation. Recent weather patterns along with impacted burn areas of Madison Avenue and Highland Place called upon volunteers to assist in the remediation of mud and debris slides for Monrovia foothill residents.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Canyon Park Volunteers and Ranger Reserves provided \$256,149 in staff cost savings for fiscal year 2014-15.

<b>Volunteer Cost Savings</b>		
	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
Canyon Park Volunteer Hours	8,676	7,740
National Volunteer Hourly Rate	\$23	\$26.50
Total	\$199,548	\$205,110
Ranger Reserve Volunteer Hours	1,563	1,926
National Hourly Rate	\$23	\$26.50
Total	\$35,949	\$51,039
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>\$235,497</b>	<b>\$256,149</b>

The increase in the Volunteer Cost savings is related to the increase in the National Volunteer Hourly rate and the increase in service hours by the Ranger Reserves.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. With the success in partnering with neighboring colleges, Staff will continue to connect with other colleges including Pasadena Community College and Rio Hondo College.
2. As noted in the 2013-14 Canyon Park Volunteer and Ranger Reserve Program Evaluation, staff had hoped to work with teachers and educators so college volunteers could receive extra credit for their work experience. Unfortunately, college administrators had expressed a concern about revising current curriculum to allow for this. Staff will continue to explore this option.
3. This past fiscal year Ranger Reserves and Canyon Park Volunteers were assigned specific areas of responsibility. This new format encouraged volunteer ownership and allowed the volunteers to become experts in their areas. Staff will continue to offer this, and create cross-training opportunities where the volunteers will assist in the training of their designated areas.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Community Services Commission move to receive and file 2014-15 Canyon Park Volunteer and Hillside Wilderness Preserve Park Ranger Reserve Program Evaluation.

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUIRED:** If the Community Services Commission concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion to: ***Receive and file 2014-15 Canyon Park Volunteer and Hillside Wilderness Preserve Park Ranger Reserve Program Evaluation.***