



## San Diego Canyonlands Proposes Dedication of City-Owned Open Space

San Diego Canyonlands (SDCL) is undertaking a visionary plan to conserve San Diego's Canyons through *dedication* of open space and establishing a San Diego Canyonlands Park. SDCL is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ***promote, protect and restore the natural habitats in San Diego's canyons.***

SDCL's programs have centered on community education and organizing for canyon/creek stewardship including youth-nature programs. In 2009 SDCL established a Canyon Enhancement Planning (CEP) committee comprised of planning and environmental professionals, including landscape architects, and planners with the participation of relevant city departments.

The CEP committee promotes visual and physical canyon access, connections into communities, restoration, conservation, environment-based education, and ecologically sensitive recreation. The committee will create a CEP Guide that will be a resource to community and agency stakeholders to cut time, cost and red tape for comprehensive canyon-enhancement planning and projects. **The guide will facilitate a systems approach for integrating our natural open spaces within the fabric of the urban environment.**

The purpose of ***dedicating*** city land is to provide for reliable preservation of open space and recreational opportunities within our communities. Lands that are merely "designated" as open space may be transferred, sold, exchanged, or developed for non-park uses with five votes of the city council, but lands that are ***dedicated*** require a 2/3 vote of the electorate to be converted for non-park uses. Dedicated lands may only be preserved as natural open space or developed for active, outdoor recreation. Also, the city council retains the authority to grant easements for utility purposes in, under, and across dedicated property, if those easements do not significantly interfere with the park and recreational uses.

After a public vetting process, which is initiated by citizens and includes review by Parks and Recreation Councils, and the Department of Parks and Recreation, the San Diego City Council can approve parcels for ***dedicated*** open space. The city charter allows dedication of park lands to occur either through a city process or through a bill passed by the Legislature.

In December 2007, the City ratified state legislation, authored by Senator Christine Kehoe and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger, that dedicated ~6,600 acres of open space land. This legislation allowed the city to save over \$1 million dollars in surveyor and entitlement costs that would otherwise have been required by the City Charter process.

San Diego Canyonlands is pursuing ***dedication*** of approximately 10,000 more acres. We have produced maps and aerial graphics for each City Council District that depict the City-owned parcels that we are recommending for ***dedication***.

## **Dedication Selection Criteria**

The site selection criteria focused on parcels that have remained in a relatively *natural* condition, are *accessible*, and provide *connectivity* between other open space and habitat, or to neighborhoods or schools. **The specific criteria included the following:**

1. **Current Designation:** The site is owned by the City of San Diego, and is currently designated by the city as one of the following:

<i>Designated Open Space</i>	<i>Flood Control</i>
<i>Vernal Pool</i>	<i>Drainage</i>
<i>Mitigation</i>	<i>Designated Watershed Area</i>
<i>Access</i>	<i>Hold for Study</i>
<i>Pedestrian Right of Way</i>	<i>Sale - Public Auction</i>
<i>Bike Path</i>	<i>Not Designated (no current designation)</i>

2. **Undeveloped Condition:** The site contains no improvements or structures, and by-in-large retains a natural land form.
3. **Size and Proximity to Other Open Space:** The site is of significant size, or is located near other open space that – when taken together – constitutes an area of significant size or contiguity, particularly within a canyon or open space network. Open space “contiguity” may include existing parks or open spaces owned/managed by other public bodies or undeveloped private property.
4. **Riparian Wetlands Zone:** Sites whose parcels fall within a stream/drainage network.
5. **Habitat:** The site contains key ecosystems and habitat areas.
6. **View-shed:** The site contains the bulk of a significant view-shed.
7. **Proximity to Schools:** Sites located near a school and provide connectivity.

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