

HACIENDA HEIGHTS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE REPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
JEFF YANN, CHAIR

MEETING DATE: March 16, 2015

ORANGE GROVE/LOS ROBLES GATE CLOSURES

On February 26, at their monthly board meeting, the Board of Directors for the Habitat Authority voted 3-0-1 to close the gates at Orange Grove and Los Robles Avenues on a full time basis. Voting in favor of closure were Grace Hyde, General Manager of the Sanitation Districts, Bob Henderson, Whittier City Councilman and Mike Hughes. The abstention was by Andrea Avila, field deputy to Supervisor Knabe. It is noted that this vote may have served no purpose other than to support the Districts' position that their liabilities as a result of keeping these gates open have grown unacceptable. In context, it should be noted that Hacienda Heights residents have used these entrances to the hills for the entire 45 years Sanitation Districts have owned the property without these liability issues being raised.

In addition to loss of many walk-in hiking routes used almost daily by local residents, the closure concentrates all use of this popular trailhead area to Seventh Avenue. On Monday, March 9, Ellen Gervase and I met with Angie Valenzuela and Andrea Gullo (Executive Officer of the Habitat Authority) to explain how these trails are used by locals and describe the impacts to residents of Old Canyon Drive. Not only are there more homes along this street that adjoin the trail, these homes are not separated from the trail to the extent that the homes along Beech Hill are. Ellen described counting 81 cars parked on local streets near the Seventh Avenue Trailhead at one time over the weekend. In addition, this situation now puts mountain bikers, who predominantly used Orange Grove Avenue for access, on the same trail as families and hikers. Alternative ways of reducing local impacts of both trailheads were discussed.

Angie stated that the closure was never intended to be permanent and that Parks and Recreation, which manages the trails and development of the new regional park, has been tasked with an evaluation of how these issues should be resolved. They will be providing their recommendations to Supervisor Knabe's staff in early April. Following that internal review, it is anticipated that community input will be solicited.

SANITATION DISTRICTS EARTH DAY

The Earth Day event at the Sanitation Districts headquarters will be held on Saturday, April 18 this year. In addition to over 50 green exhibitors, there will be entertainment and tours of the water treatment plant and materials recovery facility.