



Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance

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March 29, 2006

To: Santa Cruz City Parks and Recreation Department

Re: Comments on Arana Gulch Master Plan & EIR Drafts

From: Roberta Haver, Watershed Coordinator for the Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance

We are pleased that the Arana Gulch Greenbelt is getting a Master Plan for resource management. I commend the City and Planner Susan Harris on the fine draft and hard work in preparing the document as well as the staff that prepared the Draft EIR. The City of Santa Cruz is one of largest landowners in the Arana Gulch Watershed; it is our wish to work with the City on projects identified within the City's jurisdiction. As coordinator of the Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance (AGWA) I will focus my comments on erosion and water quality issues as they pertain to the larger Arana Gulch Watershed.

AGWA, a grassroots watershed coalition formed in 1997, is comprised of landowners and users. Our mission is to restore and protect natural resources throughout the watershed. I work with volunteer landowners, agencies and business to conduct restoration and outreach education to reduce erosion and to improve habitat for steelhead in Arana. Erosion in Arana Gulch is a naturally occurring condition. Land use changes over time have increased the acceleration of erosion. Erosion has become detrimental to fish habitat and the Santa Cruz Harbor. Landowners lose thousands of tons of soil each year to erosion. These sediments transported in the water column get deposited in the North Harbor. Our goal is to return the Arana Gulch Watershed to a naturally functioning system.

In 1998 CA Fish and Game and CA Coastal Conservancy awarded funds to conduct a watershed assessment and write an Enhancement Plan for Arana Gulch Watershed. The plan is referenced in the Arana Gulch Master Plan. There are two projects in the Enhancement Plan that exist on the Green Belt property; Site #18 - Gully widening and Site #19 Tidal Reach. The draft Master Plan is heavy on management solutions for the Santa Cruz Tar Plant but light on addressing the critical need to stop excessive sediment loading into the Harbor. We hope there would be resolution on projects #18 and #19 before Phase II in 2009 as stated in the draft.

I recommend a revision of projects; page 47 under Preliminary Phasing, Phase I, bulleted item 2 *Pursue funding to conduct gully repair and further analyze Arana Gulch Creek tidal reach erosion* should be moved to the top of the list of priorities. Page 47, Phase II I again recommend bulleted item 4 - *Conduct analysis of eroded tidal reach of Arana Gulch Creek and identify possible solutions. Implement stabilization of tidal reach* be moved to the top of the list.

C11-1

C11-2

Page 48 of the draft addresses the need for *funding to help fund natural resource enhancement and erosion control studies and implementation* that should be started this year or at least as soon as the Master Plan is adopted.

Studies of sediment transport from Hagemann Gulch are needed now! Hagemann is a significant contributor of sediment into the Harbor.

Erosion being created on the property is a serious concern, it deserve immediate and the Highest Priority attention. We have an opportunity to create a healthy tidal reach that will benefit fish and wildlife while capturing sediments before reaching the Harbor. Federal and State agencies support improvement, as does the Santa Cruz Harbor. A call for remedies is needed now!

My concerns in regards to the EIR draft are in the Geology section 4.3 and Hydrology section 4.4 in regards to erosion currently happening on site and future erosion. Given that the findings in the Geology and Hydrology sections of the report have Potential Significant Impacts means that identified mitigations measure in the be strictly adhered to in any Master Plan activities.

Residents living in the upper watershed are working with the Arana Gulch Watershed effort to do their part in resource management, now it's up to the City to take the lead in the Green Belt to stop erosion and improve water quality and wildlife habitats. We are here to support and collaborate with the City in any way that is useful.

Respectfully submitted



Roberta Haver, Coordinator
Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance

C11-3

C11-4

LETTER C11**Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance**

- Response C11-1: Comment noted.
- Response C11-2: These comments address the Master Plan rather than the DEIR, and therefore no response is necessary.
- Response C11-3: The Hagemann Gulch Bridge has been designed to minimize erosion impacts. Refer to the text on pages 4.4-11 and 4.4-12 of the DEIR, especially Mitigation Measure HYDROLOGY-1.
- Response C11-4: Comment noted. Recommended mitigation measures would be required of the project.

Susan Harris

From: Lisa McGinnis
Sent: Friday, March 31, 2006 4:30 PM
To: Susan Harris
Subject: FW: Arana Gulch litter

From: Craig Kochersberger [mailto:craigkochersberger@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Fri 3/31/2006 11:34 AM
To: Lisa McGinnis
Cc: dpw023@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Subject: Arana Gulch litter

Hello-

I often walk Capitola Avenue along Arana Gulch between Soquel Drive and 7th Ave. and am always shocked at how much litter there is, on both sides of the road, well into the brush. I believe while some of it is from passing traffic, much is from the numerous homeless people camping in the area. The main problem areas are at the north end, where Arana Creek runs under Capitola Road, and a few hundred feet south, where a small tributary runs under Capitola Road near 7th Ave., at the base of Harborview Court. At this point there are tent like shelters in the brush surrounded by trash.

While I support the Arana Gulch plan, I feel the litter problem, which will likely increase with more people using the area, is being overlooked as a threat to the well being of the land and the general environmental health of the area.

Please advise me.

Thank you.

Craig Kochersberger
2110 Harborview Court
Santa Cruz 95062

408-234-1533 (cell)
831-477-7113

C12-1

LETTER C12**Craig Kochersberger**

Response C12-1: Illegal camping and associated litter may decrease as recreational use increases at Arana Gulch. The City Parks and Recreation Department has found that illegal camping tends to occur in areas less visited by the public.

Susan Harris

From: Marsea [marsea@got.net]
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2006 8:15 PM
To: Susan Harris
Subject: Arana Gulch

Hi Susan,

Just wanted to voice my opinion that I do not want to see an asphalt path or a bridge in Arana Gulch. It is a beautiful place that I believe will be brought down in quality and up in expense by adding these thoroughfares. I am particularly concerned about the vagrants that will have to be policed and the need for lighting which will disturb wildlife and neighbors.

This project is not worth the expense. It's lovely the way it is, let's leave it that way.

Marsea Marcus
87 Hagemann Ct.
Santa Cruz, CA
95062

C13-1

LETTER C13
Marsea Marcus

Response C13-1: Refer to Master Response No. 1 regarding lighting and Response C12-1 regarding illegal camping.

Susan Harris

From: Dee Kenville [ndwoods@cruzio.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2006 10:47 AM
To: Susan Harris
Subject: Arana greenbelt

I am saddened to see the master plan for Arana Gulch. I have watched the wildlife cycle thru generations for 30 years. There are the mated red tail hawks in the Eucalyptus on the north side of the harbor end of the gulch. A paved path would chase them away...if you even stand under their tree and look up they fly off. Then there is the nesting ducks in the lower estuary section. Undoubtedly noone in the city knows when they nest so as to avoid construction during that time. In the last 30 years I have seen the foxes, gophers, owls, vultures, hawks and numerous smaller animal and birds make the gulch their home or feeding place. That is now coming to an end and they will have to fight others in other areas for what precious little remains to them as all the construction and paving equip will make it unsafe for them. Reminds me of that 70's song with the words "Put up a Parking Lot." Welcome to Santa Cruz...the city who pretends to be guardians of all.

Dee Kenville
161 Hagemann Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
831 425-5561

C14-1

LETTER C14
Dee Kenville

Response C14-1: The DEIR includes a number of mitigation measures to protect on-site wildlife. Refer specifically to Mitigation Measure BIO-8 on pages 4.2-46 and 4.2-47.