

May 2017

Dear Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley,

In 2016, The Friends celebrated 30 years of active advocacy on behalf of the San Dieguito River Valley. In our 2016 annual letter, we introduced our concern about the forthcoming negotiations of a new lease on the polo field property, between the City of San Diego and two bidders, Surf Cup Soccer LLC and Fairbanks Polo Club. Our 2017 letter details our lawsuit against the City, Surf Cup, and others, asserting that the lease to Surf Cup Soccer, LLC (who aspires to develop the site into a major sports complex) violates the law because there was no EIR. An attachment summarizes the history.

In May 2016, the Friends hired an environmental land use attorney, with whom we personally presented our concerns to all members of the City Council. Adam Birnbaum, Dwight Worden, and many others, supported our views with letters to the city. Our attorneys presented our concerns at the two public meetings of the Land Use Committee, and the full council. The lease was approved by the San Diego City Council in July 2016. Only our representative, Sherri Lightner, responded to our concerns, and strongly dissented.

The Friends filed a lawsuit against the City of San Diego, requesting that the lease be set aside until an EIR is performed. We feel there has not been a larger abuse of lands in the history of the Friends, and no better utilization of the funds we have received from our community of supporters over the years. For those funds, we are eternally grateful.

This is a classic case of the small non-profit standing up to corporate interests and land use policy. The city has a desperate need for revenue to shore up its poor stewardship of public monies. Surf Cup Soccer is a multi-million dollar operation. The Friends are not adverse to kids playing soccer; we are against the ongoing damage to the habitat, and believe an adequate EIR will lead to less abuse of the watershed.

The Friends thank all of you who have supported us through the years. If ever we had a reason to ask you to dig as deep as possible, it is now. The court has denied two motions, and if the case is lost, we will likely appeal. Although our attorneys have taken the case on a contingency basis, moderate costs are incurred each month. Given the many competing donation opportunities, the Friends are more grateful than ever for your loyal support, both philosophically and financially.

We note the passing of Stu Smith, (April 28, 1936 ~ September 4, 2016), a long-time, valued board member, and welcome the membership of Larry Forman. We would welcome your presence at our monthly meetings and continue to seek new board members.

Maggie Brown

FSDRV President