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Subject: PRM Strategic Plan - film crew El Dorado Park

-EXTERNAL-

I sat through the Council Meeting on Tuesday Jan 18th watching the zoom but was unable to speak due to having contracted Covid.

I appreciate all the work done on the Parks Recreation & Marine (PRM) Strategic Plan and was impressed with the amount of input collected.

The Friends of El Dorado Park East turned in our input long ago (in a 2019 meeting with Director Mouet). I recall that the disparity in our group's goals and what was at that time on the city PRM website included a **lack of intention to care for and protect wildlife, wildlife habitat and plants**. In the final published Strategic Plan, I'm sorry to report that this oversight was not corrected. Just doing a word search in [PRM STRATEGIC PLAN](#) on "wildlife" "habitat" or "ecosystem" produces nothing meaningful in the 150 pages.

In watching the presentation of the PRM Strategic Plan at Council the focus seemed entirely about "parks are for people." One has to admit that part of the reason people go to parks relates to the intangible satisfying emotional response we all get by engaging nature. How calming it feels to walk across an expanse of open space in the shade of mature trees, encounter egrets and herons, baby ducklings, hawks cruising overhead, owls perched in the canopy and the many migrating birds that visit our lakes along with all the other creatures (turtles, snakes, raccoons, rodents, possums, coyotes, fish, etc) that inhabit our parks and streams and call them home. It behooves us to maintain a healthy eco-system to keep them around.

I've seen the steady loss of habitat where herons from the eastside beach area are being chased out by development, intentional over trimming of palm trees where they nest and very soon there will be installation of multitudes of new oil wells that will undoubtedly cause major disturbance to the wetlands area. I was surprised at how smart and resilient the herons were in choosing a safer location (El Dorado Park) and moving their nests there to rear their young. We may end up with a heron colony in our park. It really is heartbreaking that we can't leave them a small space that is safe and undisturbed to nest and raise their young.

Without a goal to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat in our strategic plan, encroachment will continue. All the large organizations committed to the environment (Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society etc.) will tell you that the greatest danger to wildlife is loss of habitat. Letting a random film crew come in and disturb a nesting site indicates either ignorance (that the nests were at that location) or a profound lack of caring (knowing the nests were there but allowing human financial interest to trump our job as humans to take care of the vulnerable creatures in our park). It would be easy to solve the

problem. All that is needed is a map of nest locations that indicate a "caution - do not disturb" area that we share with film location scouts during the nesting season.

I joined the Friends of El Dorado Park East group in 2018 in hopes of having a positive impact on El Dorado park. At that time, a great many trees were dying due to lack of water. In spite of spending 3 years meeting with our volunteer team and communicating park needs with the Council office, I'm afraid I left that group, feeling ineffective. We couldn't even get trash can lids installed to stop the **daily harm** that comes to wildlife with fishing line and tackle left in uncovered trash cans. Not all the victims wrapped in fishing line with hooks embedded in their flesh survive. The meager \$10K that had been approved in the budget for trash can lids (across all parks in the city) was cut at the first sign of budget deficit.

Our job as stewards of this earth is to take care of our planet and all the plants and creatures here with us. We need to teach the next generation about that responsibility. I haven't read Genesis in a long time, but seems I recall that was the initial job given to mankind.

"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." was a statement our Director of Supply Chain at Hughes Space and Communications Group repeated every week in our staff meetings. Without a stated goal in our Long Beach PRM strategic plan, I fear we will continue to fail the creatures that call El Dorado Park home. IMHO, there are park employees that have the sensibility needed to craft a plan that integrates caring for wildlife and plant life while serving park patrons. They only need to be empowered to craft that plan and lead the way.

Corliss Lee
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