



# Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Uhring and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Kristin Riesgo, Community Services Director

Approved by: Steve McClary, City Manager

Date prepared: May 23, 2024 Meeting date: June 10, 2024

Subject: Charmlee Wilderness Park Nature Center

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** 1) Review the facility conditions of the Charmlee Wilderness Park Nature Center; and 2) Provide direction to staff regarding moving forward with the name change in honor of Walt and Lucille Keller.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Funding for these services was not included in the Adopted Budget for FY 2023-24. Funding for this project, Charmlee Wilderness Park Nature Center Repairs, is included in the Proposed Budget for FY 2024-25 in the Capital Improvement Projects Account No. 310-9121.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY:** This item was not included in the Adopted FY 2023-24 Strategic Priority Project List. At the Council's direction, this project can be brought back at a future Strategic Planning meeting for prioritization.

**DISCUSSION:** At the November 27, 2023, Regular meeting, the Council approved renaming the Charmlee Wilderness Park Nature Center (Nature Center) in honor of Walt and Lucille Keller. Mr. Keller, a Malibu resident for over 50 years, began serving the community long before the city was incorporated in 1991. Mr. Keller served on the Malibu Township Council and helped organize the Malibu Committee for Incorporation, two organizations that were vital to Malibu obtaining cityhood. Mr. Keller was honored by the Malibu City Council at the City's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on March 28, 2011, in recognition of his election as Malibu's first Mayor and his dedicated service on the City Council from 1990-1994 and 1996-2000. Walt and Lucille Keller continued to be active members of the Malibu community and supported efforts to improve water quality in Malibu Lagoon, Malibu Creek, and Surfrider Beach.

### Charmlee Wilderness Park

On June 29, 2019, the City resumed control of Charmlee following the termination of a five-year reciprocal lease agreement with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy). Charmlee sustained substantial damage during the 2018 Woolsey Fire and reopened the trails in 2020 following extensive trail repairs and erosion mitigation. The same year, the City completed repairs to the onsite modular home, which had been neglected and damaged. On March 1, 2022, the City and California State Parks entered an Agreement to house a State Ranger at Charmlee Wilderness Park.

Since Chamlee reopened, staff have prioritized trail maintenance, re-establishment of native gardens, replacement of damaged picnic areas and signage, assessments of damaged trees, and general park maintenance with limited resources. Outdoor programming has also resumed, with the City offering staff-led hikes, nature walks, and educational programs.

The next phase of maintenance and repairs includes the Nature Center, which has been closed since 2019. Staff completed an assessment of the facility, which outlined maintenance and structural issues resulting from years of neglect and the effects of the Woolsey Fire. From 2022 to 2023, rainstorms exacerbated the maintenance issues, with flooding and water damage inside the building (Attachment 1).

Staff have identified the Nature Center as a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) to be included in the FY 2024-25 Proposed Budget. This Fiscal Year, an inspection of the exterior walls and foundation will occur to determine the extent of repairs needed to resolve the building flooding issues. Proposed repairs and upgrades include refurbishing the indoor space and replacing the entrance doors, windows, restroom fixtures, roof, HVAC system, and new paint. Additional considerations include installing solar tubes and solar panels. The estimated cost of repairs is \$500,000.

Prior to 2014, the City opened the Nature Center on weekends and showcased native plants, animals, and the land's history, including information on Rancho Malibu and Chumash Native American artifacts, maps, and photographs. Staff inspected the items left in the Nature Center by the Conservancy, and nearly all the displays and interpretive signs were damaged, outdated, or unusable. The salvageable artifacts were stored and will be incorporated into the refurbished facility. This year, staff plans to research and propose new display options for consideration for a proposed reopening in 2025-26.

Staff anticipates the repairs could take more than a year, contingent on the CIP schedule, contractor agreements, and availability of equipment and supplies. Depending on the Council's direction and decision to move forward with the renaming of the Nature Center, staff will return to the Council with a Resolution to finalize the process of renaming the facility.

ATTACHMENTS: Charmlee Nature Center Photographs

Charmlee Wilderness Park Nature Center  
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