

Mayor and city staff take an informational tour of Fairview Park wetlands

Mayor Sandy Genis joined city staffers and the city's consultant biologist Barry Nerhus for a tour of the Fairview Park wetlands on Thursday Nov. 30 to inspect the conditions of the habitat and water flows, and to further investigate the potential for mosquito breeding in the ponds.

The mayor was joined by Public Services Director Raja Sethuraman, Parks and Community Services Director Justin Martin, City Engineer Bart Mejia, Fairview Park Administrator Cynthia D'Agosta and Janet Hauser and Tony Doderio from the City Manager's Office.

The group spent the morning observing several things, including the flow of water to the park's five wetland ponds, local wildlife and habitats, native plants and vegetation, cattail removal efforts and evidence of debris and trash left in the ecosystem by transients.

Some of the wildlife observed by the group were white tail kites, osprey, falcons, turkey vultures, egrets, mallard ducks and other waterfowl. Also observed were northern harriers. The harriers have nested in the trees in the lowlands and there

are only about a dozen nesting pairs in all of Orange County.

The total 23-acres of riparian habitat and wetland ponds were officially christened by the city in 2013 and was part of a decades-long plan to restore wetland areas in Fairview Park that was approved in 2003-2005 in the Fairview Park Master Plan.

The project called for restoring the native plant community and habitat, building and grading wetland ponds and streams and installing an irrigation system to assist with the plant and tree growth.

The ponds capture storm runoff and flood control water and are designed to flow at a rate of 350 gallons a minute to be treated naturally and sustain the constructed habitat.

Recently, the ponds have been the subject of questions about how they impact the breeding of mosquitoes. City staff, Nerhus' crew, and Orange County Vector Control officials test the pond water frequently for mosquitoes. Several abatement measures have been put into place including adding mosquito fish to the pond and clearing cattail that inhibits water flow.



On Thursday, maintenance crews were busy at work clearing the cattails from one of the ponds with a goal of clearing the cattails from all the ponds prior to the next nesting season.