

Mary Sweeney

James Yeramian

From: Mary Sweeney <mqswee@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 1:54 PM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: Submission for MRCA / SCPA Board Vacancy
Attachments: MSweeney letter to MRCA.PDF; Resume - Mary Sweeney.pdf

Dear MRCA Governing Board,

Attached, please find my official letter of submission and resume for the MRCA designated SCPA Board vacancy that was recently publicized. I believe I am well qualified for this position and I am excited to be considered as a candidate.

Thank you for making this process open to all who are interested - the work you do is so very important and it is good to know you are making the time required to evaluate all who share your passion.

I look forward to meeting each of you in the interview on February 1st.

Best regards,
Mary

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Mary Sweeney
mqswee@gmail.com
cell: 310-422-5522

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Mary Sweeney - Resume

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

ORIGINAL FOUNDING MEMBER, CEO & Director

SULLIVAN CANYON PRESERVATION ASSN. - CONSERVATION MISSION 2000 - 2008

- Established the SCPA and its mission to acquire the open space in Sullivan Canyon
- Raised over \$400k (\$300k in loans) to underwrite the project. Raised additional funds from a *private foundation to acquire the property.*
- Partnered with MRCA for the rights to purchase the property taken by LAUSD by condemnation.
- Acted as primary liaison with:
 - SCPA Counsel Stanley Lamport, and MRCA's Joe Edmiston and in-house counsel Laurie Collins
 - Los Angeles Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski and her team
 - LAUSD - Director Marlene Canter, and Head of Real Estate Office: Scott Graham
 - Sullivan Canyon community members to garner support for the initiative
 - Robert Janovici in the LA City Planning. for use entitlements
 - LAUSD independent counsel in negotiating and finalizing the purchase contract & escrow
 - LA County Assessor Office for property tax matters
 - Worked very closely with the major donor's Foundation team

FUND RAISING DIRECTOR & ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INITIATIVES 2003 -2008 & 2015-16

- As Head of SCPA Fund Raising, organized, worked hands-on & completed a 3 year project (2003-2006) *on the SCPA site to include: eradication of invasive, non-native species, planting 160 native seedlings California Live Oaks & Western Sycamores. Grading for walking paths, horse paths and the arenas on the site were raised using native soil.*
- Spearheaded various smaller fundraising campaigns to buy equipment, and make repairs and improvements
- *"Footing the Bill"* – Conceived & launched largest fund raising project since acquisition of site, a four week 2016 initiative to successfully raise \$125k to refurbish all arenas for horse & rider safety

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CO-CREATOR & LEAD -LAUSD/SULLIVAN CANYON YOUTH EDUCATION INITIATIVE 2000-19

- Established and ran SCPA sponsored field trips for LAUSD second graders with the goal of bringing underserved youth onto the SCPA site and exposing them to equine-related education programs.
- Ahead with Horses – I have supported this worthwhile nonprofit program by donating a pony named Zuni on a weekly basis for use by AWH instructors for their special needs clients.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

- Meals on Wheels
- California Women's Law Center
- Susan G Komen Foundation
- Aids for Aids
- Green Bean Venture for Autism
- Autism Speaks
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

REAL ESTATE

- Founder and CEO of Vanguard Prop. - residential & comm. property mgmt.
- California Realtor License – 1980

RESTAURANTS OWNED & OPERATED

- The Croissant Place 1981
- Marix Tex Mex – W. Hollywood 1984
- Marix Tex Mex - Santa Monica 1985
- Marix Tex Mex - Encino 1988
- Basix Food & Bar W. Hollywood 1992
- Wraps – W. Hollywood 1994

EDUCATION – QUEENS COLLEGE - NY, NY

- Political Science and Spanish
- Captain of Tennis & Basketball Teams

Mary Sweeney
1671 Old Oak Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

January 17, 2023

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Attention: George Lange, Chairman
Jim Hasenauer, Vice-Chairperson
Irma R. Muñoz
Dan Paranick

Re: MRCA Designated Director to the SCPA

Dear MRCA Governing Board,

My story with Sullivan Canyon is a long and diverse one. However, to bring you up to speed on who I am - forty-five years ago I drove out from my hometown of Orange, New Jersey with a few hundred bucks in my pocket and the belongings that would fit in the back of my 1970 Mercury Capri. I arrived in Los Angeles and "found myself". Turns out, I could create something from nothing. I bought and sold vintage watches, designed silk screen T-shirts, taught tennis, all trying to establish a new life in this amazing spawning ground! After opening my first retail food business in 1981, I met Victoria, my life partner, and she introduced me to her family and her incredible Latino community - the beautiful language (which I promptly learned); the music; the incredible food (!!)

I instantly fell in love with everything LA, and there was no looking back. Years later, Victoria and I found Sullivan Canyon. Back then it was a simple equestrian community, surrounded by old Cliff May ranch homes where everyone had access to the very mountains the MRCA works so hard to protect. People could ride for hours and hours.

Among the proudest accomplishments (in my entire life, quite frankly) was successfully helping to preserve this LA treasure as open space for the public to enjoy, equestrian activities and outreach programs. For those who don't know, the 7 acres of land that comprise the SCPA site today, might have been something quite different, a real estate developer's dream. Thankfully it was protected from this fate due to the work of a very small group of dedicated neighbors who formed the SCPA and joined forces with the MRCA. I am proud to say that I was an integral part of this group and in fact, a driving force. I worked day and night to raise the funds, acquire the land, navigate the government agencies, learn the ins and outs of local ordinances, land variances, etc, etc. Today, the SCPA is one of the last remaining neighborhood horse facilities in LA, and by agreeing to be our partner, the MRCA was integral in the acquisition and conservation of the land. No matter what else I do in life, knowing that the land at the base of Sullivan Canyon is forever conserved is something that has profound meaning to me.

Which brings me to the present. Why am I so deeply interested in the MRCA appointed seat? Because the person who sits in this seat is crucial to the future direction of the SCPA. I am uniquely suited for this position: I have a full understanding of the nuances of the organization, why certain decisions were made when the SCPA was first created, how the SCPA would meet the needs of its riders, the surrounding community as well as the larger public and underserved communities beyond.

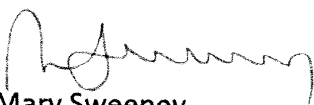
Why do I think I am the right person for the MRCA board seat? First and foremost, My values are aligned with those of the MRCA. I support and applaud the MRCA's mission of conserving and protecting open space. I am a proven advocate with a monumental conservationist project under my own belt. I know we will complement and enhance one another's efforts going forward.

Equally important, I know community outreach programs are an important component of the SCPA mission, and I am aware that the MRCA strongly advocates this as well. My history as a founding SCPA board member was focused on these efforts and I always worked hard to make community programs a part of the Sullivan Canyon ethos. Since our inception, the SCPA has partnered with elementary schools in underserved communities with a mission to expose kids to nature, and these visits have been a highlight for me personally. We hire the buses to bring the kids to the site, and upon arrival I greet the kids and provide an orientation in both Spanish and English. We have activities with the horses, arts & crafts, Mounted Police and Animal Control Officers who bring snakes (which elicits huge squeals and laughter) and many other various creatures we know they'll love. They hike on the wooded hill, see roping exhibitions, people jumping, and more. We make them lunches, and swag bags, and send them home tired!! I promise you, these events are very special for all involved. Covid paused these programs and I have been actively looking to reinstate them. If selected, I would be 100% committed to re-focusing board energy on this and other programs and making this the priority that it should be.

Finally, I believe it is important to have someone in place that will enhance SCPA's partnership with the MRCA and the organizations' missions, be mindful of the supporting stakeholders' interests, and know when to raise a hand and stand a little taller for the benefit of underserved communities.

Twenty years ago, a few others and I, sat down to write the SCPA mission statement: "To maintain open space in the Sullivan Canyon area of Los Angeles, with an equestrian use, education and community outreach". It would be my honor to work to protect the original intent of the preservation and further the goals of the MRCA.

Sincerely,



Mary Sweeney

MS:mm

Attachment: Resume – Mary Sweeney



LAUREN ROJANY

226 N Salfair Ave Los Angeles, CA 90049 | 310-892-6092 | laurenrojany@mac.com

January 17, 2023

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

james.yeramian@mrca.ca.gov

Dear MRCA,

I am a 20+ year member of the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association and I am writing to offer my support of Mary Sweeney for the vacancy on the board.

I sincerely feel that my daughter Natasha who started riding when she was six years old and continued through college and I have been nurtured and guided for all these years by Mary. She has not only looked after me and my family but countless families with the same dedication and enthusiasm that she continues to nurture that site.

I have also volunteered in every capacity over the 20 years and Mary Sweeney has been right there eagerly lending a hand for whatever was required.

I am considered an independent rider which means that I am not associated with a big, costly show barn – I am there to enjoy the simplicity of my horse and the nature that surrounds us in Sullivan Canyon I often don't even ride I just hang out with my horse in his barn or take him for a walk. If the current conditions guiding the Board continue, I will soon not be able to afford this time I enjoy there. If not for Mary, I could not participate in this process which feeds my soul and continues to keep me healthy during times of actual health challenges throughout the years.

Mary has been there to support the SCPA at every turn. Over the years I have seen her come out and oversee rebuilding of crumbling infrastructure sometimes out of her own pocket. I have seen her send out her own work crews to do work no one else would, help with rainy day emergencies, deal with broken sprinklers when no one's around to shut off the water, and literally pick up fallen riders (and help them get back on, myself include). Mary is the fabric of this canyon she embodies who we want as members, she is a role model for all the kids. I have asked her to mentor my own daughter because of these qualities. She does what she does for the good of others and for the welfare of our beloved CANYON. Mary is incredibly knowledgeable and has dedicated herself to the study of best practices unlike others who have the desire to help but not the experience or knowledge of how to carry out the important tasks at hand.

Mary is literally the only person left who honestly works to uphold the values and original intent of the SCPA and I know that the new guard does not understand what she represents. I have seen too many changes occur that are not for the good of the "preservation" of our site. I truly believe with Mary on the board she will continue to champion all that is for the good of the SCPA.

Please do not miss this opportunity to place a proven environmentalist and supporter of the "little guy" in this position.

Sincerely,

Lauren Rojany



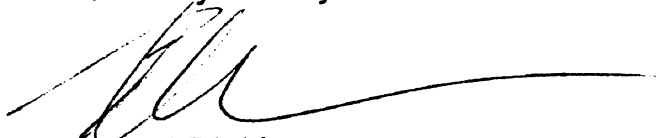
1/26/23

call a “play day.” Mary was enthusiastically involved every year. It was important for her to serve other communities and give back. For most of the students, this was their first interaction with a horse. SCPA provided a day of fun filled activities including lunch and transportation. As the bus would pull in, Mary was the first person to greet them. Additionally, SCPA would also do neighborhood community events; every year SCPA hosted a halloween parade for all the young members of the community. Mary was always the MC for our costume parade. Mary always goes out of her way to include new neighbors and was an ambassador for the community.

Mary really set the bar high when I became the site manager. She knew Sullivan Canyon like the back of her hand and was so helpful in showing me everything on the site. Mary became my go-to-person. She acted more like my co-worker than a volunteer. In all my years of working for non-profits, I have never worked with someone as dedicated and tireless as Mary. Once a pipe broke in the middle of the night, and I called Mary at 6am—she was already working on it. Mary’s home is located directly across from the site, and so during my time as site manager, Mary was constantly checking to make sure there were not any leaking sprinklers, fallen tree branches, etc. Mary showed tremendous leadership in dealing with the recent wildfires and was indispensable in putting an evacuation plan in place so that all the horses got out of the neighborhood safely.

Mary cares a lot about Sullivan Canyon and its future. She cares about the community and the neighbors. She cares about the horses and where they live. She cares about the beautification of the site and its employees. She would like to continue to preserve this site so everyone can continue to enjoy the site. Mary deserves the seat on the MCRA board, and she will serve and put forth the same magnitude of work as she always does.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marci Dinkin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marci Dinkin
(Member since 1994)

1/26/23

To whom this may concern,

My name is Marci Dinkin, and I am a former Board director and president of the SPCA organization. After leaving my position on the board, SCPA hired me as their site manager. I managed the site from 2018 to 2022 and resigned a year ago to focus on a family health crisis. While I do not reside in Sullivan Canyon, it has been my second home for years. I care very much about the community and have concerns for the future of Sullivan Canyon. It is very important that the MRCA board replaces Anne Dobkin's seat to the right person. I believe this person is Mary Sweeney. Like Anne, Mary has a long history as a member and neighbor of the Sullivan Canyon community and would be an excellent replacement for the open seat on the MRCA board. Mary also shares the same passion, values and philosophy as Anne. In addition, Mary is deserving of the position after decades of hard work and dedication for the good of the Sullivan Canyon community. Mary was instrumental in orchestrating and raising funds in 2001 to help build what the SCPA is today. She is an outstanding community member and is extremely passionate regarding the preservation of one of the last equestrian neighborhoods on the westside of Los Angeles.

I feel that my voice is unique in this decision process because I have experience with both participating on the board and working as a site manager. They are very different positions, and it is interesting to have the perspective from both areas. During my time in each position, I worked very closely with Mary. I would describe Mary as an extremely hard worker and volunteer. She is an excellent problem solver and is willing to lend a hand in any situation. She is generous with her time and will even utilize her own employees to help when needed. Mary is also fluent in Spanish, which is crucial for communicating with SCPA's senior employee Antonio, who has worked on site for 35 years.

The following are a few examples of what Mary and I accomplished in our time working together at the site. In 2015, Mary and I started a fundraising campaign to replace the footing in all 3 arenas. The site was desperate for new footing; several horses fell as a result of the old footing. Together we raised 125K; while significant, it was not enough to cover the job. Mary, however, was able to broker a deal with Tractor Dean, and we successfully replaced the footing. We also continued our annually elementary school visits. SCPA invited 60 inner city, second graders to the site for what we

January 19, 2023

To the MRCA Board,

I am pleased to recommend Mary Sweeney for a position on the MRCA Board of Directors.

My partner is an active member of the SCPA, and through my frequent visits to the facilities to watch her ride I have had the opportunity to witness Mary's exceptional dedication and commitment to the preservation and continuation of the facility's mission and values. As a founding member of the SCPA, Mary has consistently gone above and beyond to maintain and improve the facilities, always with the goal of making the sport of horseback riding and access to nature accessible to all.

Her knowledge and expertise in horsemanship is incomparable, and her passion for people and animals is clearly evident in her interactions with riders, trainers and horses alike. Frankly, I am not aware of another person at the SCPA who has anywhere close to such a comprehensive knowledge base in horsemanship and better character than Mary. And her patience and demeanor are truly remarkable, making her an excellent leader and mentor.


Her vision for continuing and expanding the SCPA's public programs is likewise impressive, and her work to get the site back on track post-covid is admirable. She wants the facilities to serve as a platform for education, hosting LA school children to connect with animals and nature, a hugely important endeavor for the local community.

I cannot recommend Mary highly enough for a position on the MRCA board of directors. She is a true asset to any organization and I know that she will excel in this role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon M. Overmyer', written in a cursive style.

Brandon M. Overmyer



ANDIE B. SIMON

820 Broadway, Santa Monica CA 90401 | 917-538-6333 | andiebsimon1@gmail.com

January 18, 2023

James Yeramian
Mountains Recreation & Conservation
570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA
90065


Dear James Yeramian,


It is my true delight to recommend Mary Sweeney for a board seat at MCRA. You would be getting a delightful and incredibly committed woman to your board.

I met Mary a little over a year ago when I was looking at joining SCPA. It was an early winter morning, and I was aimlessly driving around trying to figure out where to park. Mary was in the middle of the road, directing heavy trucks on the street, making sure they were able to set up for tree trimming without obstructing traffic. I rolled down my window and asked her if I was okay to park by her house. Her response was Classic Mary, I have now learned. "Of course!" She replied. "And thank you for asking!" (I admit I was pleased with myself.) "Hold on one minute and I'll help you out!"

In a matter of minutes, Mary walked me to main office, introduced me to Marie the manager, then introduced me two or three riders and trainers all while asking who I was, why was I there, what kind of riding did I do, etc. As we walked and talked, she addressed everyone she met with a wave and a smile.

In the months following that fateful day, I have had the pleasure to get to know Mary and the SCPA community better. As one of the founders of SCPA she is truly the heart and soul of the place. Mary clearly understands the value of preserving land and keeping open spaces for communities. Only through her commitment, attention to detail and drive that she showed me that first day directing trucks and traffic on the streets flipping easily from English to





Spanish, was she able to work out a way to keep the riding facility and its land from being developed.

In short, Mary does not "phone it in" as they say. When she does something, it's with a full heart, mind, and spirit. Her friendliness and passion is an inspiration to me every time I have the pleasure of her company.

Sincerely,

Andie B. Simon

January 18, 2023

Dear Mountains Restoration Conservation Authority Governing Board,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mary Sweeney for almost four years. I came to Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association in search of finding a place to ride but was unable to secure a position with any of the trainers who teach fulltime onsite. They either had no availability or were priced well outside my means.

By the Grace of God, I was referred to Mary, who immediately took me under her wing as a fellow Independent SCPA Rider. Simply by knowing Mary, I now ride with a few SCPA trainers. Although I have been riding, training, competing, and caring for horses since the age of 10, the most I have learnt from any single person is Mary. Her willingness to share her wealth of knowledge is a combination from her dedication and selflessness: Everything from horse care to the proper management of footing, to her extensive intelligence on nature and the proper upkeep of various types of trees, foliage, and more.

You see, Mary is not your average horsewoman, horse owner, SCPA member, or woman. In truth, she isn't average by any means or in any category. Mary is extraordinary.

Mary is the first one anyone calls in an emergency, when there is uncertainty in how to move forward with the site's maintenance, and she donates uncountable hours of her time to keeping the site safe, visitor-friendly, and upkeeps the true integrity upon which SCPA was created.

Before the covid pandemic shut down many of the extracurricular programs at SCPA, Mary coordinated school trips for disadvantaged communities to come visit, meet the horses, and have a chance to interact with these beautiful animals in a safe and learning environment. Mary has championed starting this program up again and has asked me to help.

Mary's level of cultural respect and intelligence is astounding. She speaks Spanish fluently and while I have some conversational ability, Mary is always willing to help correct my conjugations or grow my vocabulary. I enjoy practicing Spanish around the stables to increase my fluency. Since most of the students attending the field trips speak Spanish, I know continuing my skills will enable me to make them feel as welcome as Mary does, a valuable quality in a volunteer.

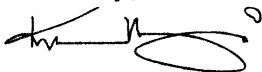
In addition to helping the site, managing community-driven programs, taking care of many horses, and helping others become more horse-aware and better horse people, Mary also cares for our resident Fell Pony named Zuni (who I help exercise) to use with the Ahead with Horses program on SCPA's site, an equine therapy for children with special needs.

Mary's unparalleled capability ranges wider than anyone I've met: Her integrity is unequivocal, she has an unwavering work ethic, and to top it off, she is warm hearted and kind with only pure intentions.

I could not fathom entrusting anyone other than Mary Sweeney to be the MRCA's SCPA Board Member and with full confidence, strongly recommend her for your consideration.

I can certainly guarantee you won't regret electing her for this position.

Sincerely,



Kimia Nozari
Director of Operations

Nozari + Nozari Architects, AIA NCARB

Ms. Marci Dinkin
SCPA Board of Directors
Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association
1640 Old Oak Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

April 9, 2020

Dear Marci Dinkin and SCPA Directors,

I understand there are some questions regarding the removal of the blue gum eucalyptus trees at the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association site. I am writing this letter to explain the Master Plan and the thoughts behind the plan.

Approximately 15 years ago, my company was brought in by the SCPA to design an environmentally sensitive landscape plan featuring native plantings for the SCPA's equestrian facility and its adjunct use as a public open space. At the time, the SCPA site had a dozen or more very large eucalyptus trees, and a smaller number of oak trees, sycamore and pepper trees randomly scattered about the flatter terrain on the property. Aside from these existing trees, most of the site was heavily populated with weeds, sand, dirt and broken-down fencing. The hillside, however, was generously populated by native oak trees along the winding switch back trails. The hillside also had an abundance of weeds, and various plants poisonous to horses such as castor bean and thistle (all of those were removed at the onset).

I designed and presented a Master Plan that was approved by the SCPA Board of Directors. The plan included all grading of the site, the location of arenas, and trails around the arenas. It included the design of entry walls and gates, fence lines, and a specific palette of native trees and plants. The plan also set forth a palette for color and building materials. Additionally, for reasons explained below, the plan called for the steady removal of the eucalyptus trees as the new native saplings grew towards maturity.

In the months following Master Plan approval, we guided the SCPA workforce in grading the site. We supervised the creation of planting rivulets as well as drainage features designed to water the plantings and return rainwater to the water table below the site. This design also served to keep horses and people from trampling the plants, and to eliminate or greatly reduce the rainwater run-off onto the street, into the Los Angeles City storm drain system and the Santa Monica Bay.

After the site was cleared and graded, the arenas and surrounding trails were built, we ordered for delivery to the site several hundred plants and over 150 trees. All plant and tree material specified was in accordance with the SCPA Master. Installation details were provided to SCPA personnel, and regular site visits were conducted for oversight

of the SCPA's installation of the plants and trees, as well as the building of all hardscape.

Over 150 native trees were planted with the clear objective of removing the blue gum eucalyptus trees. The removal of the eucalyptus trees (native to southeastern Australia) was included in the master plan for many different reasons. The Eucs are not native to the United States, and they grow very, very fast. The branches get extremely heavy, break easily, and are therefore often referred to as "widow makers". These facts necessitate regular and frequent tree trimming which is very costly. The eucalyptus trees can often consume a large portion of a tree maintenance budget. Often, this results in specimen native trees (which are much lower-maintenance trees) being neglected. Those native trees end up paying the price decades later by way of broken limbs or disease. Equally important, for this residential community, and California at large, is that the blue gum eucalyptus trees have a very high oil content (think eucalyptus oil) and can be explosive in a wildfire. The blue gum eucalyptus tree burns hot and fast, sending flying embers that contribute to the rapid spread of fire. It is for this reason many municipalities (Malibu, Santa Barbara) are codifying limitations on the new planting of eucalyptus trees. Based on solid reasoning in the Master Plan, the goal has always been to remove the eucalyptus trees as the site grew into its natural beauty with the abundance of new native trees. As the trees planted on the site are now mature and the fire seasons in California are becoming longer and more ferocious, I highly recommend the remaining blue gum eucalyptus trees be removed.

I hope this helps to create a better understanding of the Master Plan for the Sullivan Preservation Association site, and also serve to accomplish the removal of the Eucs. Please keep me informed as to when the removal is completed. Thereafter, I will make myself available pro bono to consult with the SCPA to assess its needs, whether for aesthetic or functional (shade?) reasons, and provide a plan to install trees as needed to complement the extraordinary SCPA site and riding facility.

Regards,



Jay Griffith

January 19, 2023

Dear MRCA Board,

My name is Jay Griffith, and I was asked to write a letter of recommendation for Mary Sweeney who is applying for the MRCA appointment to the SCPA Board of Directors.

I have been creating original landscapes in southern California for over 40 years. I believe in site-specific design, the recycling of site materials and responsible, yet dramatic planting palettes. In 2003, I was interviewed by Mary Sweeney for a job to transform a 7.5 acre weeded sand pit owned by the SCPA into what it is today, a beautiful place for the public to find peace and pleasure in nature; native plantings with sunny skies or rainy afternoons, a moonlit stroll, or a horse out enjoying all the very same things.

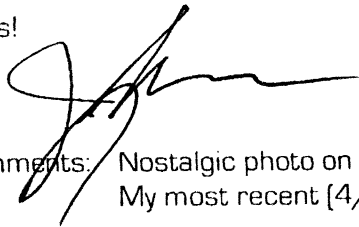
The SCPA site transformation was a very special project, and I did the job for almost no money because, well, I wanted to, and Mary Sweeney was very convincing. The unexpected booby prize turned out to be Mary herself. She is a unique and interesting person, she worked every day on the project, and I dubbed her the "heat seeking missile." She was on top of every phase of the project, completing tasks in record time, and keeping me on my toes to keep up with her pace.

Along with the workers she supervised, Mary executed my directives in an exacting manner. I placed, and she planted, over 160 native Western Sycamore and California Live Oak saplings. My philosophy of "put a \$5 plant in a \$10 hole" was consistently exceeded by Mary and her team. She always gave me a \$12.50 hole, or better. The saplings thrived and today we see an open space filled with hundreds of healthy, mature native trees. Mary was very keen on the water conservation measures and rainwater collection methods incorporated into my master plan. She easily grasped concepts and was a joy to work with, not to mention the delicious lunches and homemade cookies she served to always keep my full attention on her pet project.

Over the twenty years since we met, Mary has remained true to the landscaping mission, worked hard and even fought to maintain the palette and the plan. She has, at times, called me back to the site, or have me write a letter to help bring new board members or new site management along to stay on track, within the palette, and on the master plan. Mary has a unique brain. She asks tons of questions, does a lot of listening, and gets to the right conclusions with a "can do" mentality. Rarely have I seen a volunteer like Mary, the MRCA would be smart to snap her up.

Cheers!

JAY



Attachments: Nostalgic photo on the job, Mary working with my associate Russ
My most recent (4/9/2020) letter to SCPA restating the Master Plan

CAROLINE ROWLAND
150 MABERY ROAD SANTA MONICA 90402 CALIFORNIA USA
CAROLINE@ROWLAND.GLOBAL

January 20, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

Mary Sweeney Board Recommendation

My name is Caroline Rowland and I'm a UK citizen living part time in Los Angeles since 2014. In 2020, I started a media technology business which has me committed to endless hours at a desk and in front of a screen – not the reason I chose to spend so much time in LA. In England, I am lucky enough to be able to address my work / life balance with riding my 26-year old Irish eventer and having dressage training on a wonderful Advanced dressage horse.

However, my efforts to ride in LA went thwarted for several years and I simply could not find an affordable option to allow me to ride. After several very costly, unsuccessful and inhospitable attempts at other locations, a friend introduced me to Marci Dinkin and Mary Sweeney and there at Sullivan Canyon I found the answer to my longing to be around horses and nature.

Marci identified immediately that as a new comer who didn't own a horse (and who wasn't likely to buy a horse while continuing a Transatlantic commute) I was considered an 'independent' and Mary would be my only resource. Mary 'got it' and at our first meeting she literally wrapped her arm around me and enthusiastically told me the story of how she, together with other locals, came to preserve it. From the start she was extremely welcoming and inclusive although made it very clear that the rules of the association needed to be taken seriously and any breach would not be tolerated. Acknowledging that I took this seriously, she kindly offered to let me ride one of her horses to assess my skill level. Fortunately I am a competent rider and since then, she has allowed me to ride her beautiful horses from time to time. Last summer I signed up as a summer member as I was here for a protracted period and the joy of being able to enjoy the incredible facilities at SCPA was truly appreciated.

As a prospective Board Member, Mary Sweeney embodies everything that the original intention of SCPA sought to achieve. Any community member such as myself who can't afford or doesn't want a big commercial barn is simply not accepted anywhere else. I had hoped to find a place where I could ride a horse in nature, much like back home in the UK, without the pressure and frills of an expensive trainer. Mary provided that to me.

Without hesitation, I recommend Mary Sweeney as the MRCA Board Member of SCPA. I cannot imagine a more mission-driven, community-minded person to take on that role. I have no doubt at all that through her contribution to the Board, the story and unique experience of the SCPA will be preserved and protected long into the future.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Rowland

Mea Argentieri
321 South Beverly Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

January 18, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

I am a Founding SCPA member and served as the CFO of the 501c3 from its inception thru 2006.

I lived in Mandeville Canyon and was there when LAUSD property in Sullivan Canyon went up for sale.

I witnessed first hand how Mary Sweeney led the charge of the neighbors to save the land, and thanks to the MRCA's partnership, the SCPA was formed.

Twenty three years ago, we began working around the clock for 3 years to figure out not only how to raise the money to purchase the site, but we also took on the enormous legal challenges around preserving the open space for public use in a residential community. Yes, I was part of this team but Mary lead the charge.

She even came up with name "Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association" as she felt it was critical to have the word "Preservation" in the title as that was our mission, to keep the land alive. Once it was official, we sat down and wrote the SCPA's Mission statement: to maintain open space in Sullivan Canyon area of LA, with an equestrian Use, education and community outreach. Yes, we all had a voice in writing it, but -and this is important, the "education and community outreach" wording was all Mary! That is where her heart lies, and that is why I can't think of a better person to hold the MRCA seat on the SCPA board.

Over the years, many of the original ranch homes have been torn down and you can guess what's in their place today. Members no longer have equestrian access to the Santa Monica Mountains due to this development. Things have changed.

And yet, there's Mary, organizing school trips for kids from underserved areas. She always participates and often runs the school visits from these communities, always greeting the kids in both English and Spanish when they arrive. She gets all of the trainers involved, and works hard on the detailed planning all activities.

To this day, Mary is always ready to give people a tour of the property, making sure they feel welcome.

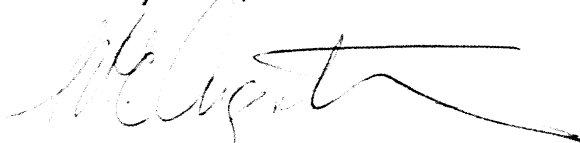
Thus upholding the promise that the SCPA's 7 acres are to benefit the public.

She has the moral compass and inner strength needed to maintain Sullivan's original mission statement, making sure everyone has access this pocket of tranquility; nature at its best.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that Mary was CEO of the SCPA. It is Mary's name on the use variance, as well as on the SCPA Conservation Easement with MRCA and the Declaration of Use agreement.

I am confident that she is the person who can seamlessly bridge MRCA's mission within the SCPA's mission.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mea Argentieri', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mea Argentieri

James Yeramian

From: Luana Romanelli <lulumanelli@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 9:58 AM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: SCPA Board Endorsement

Dear MRCA Board of Directors:

My name is Luana Romanelli and I was a founding board member of the SCPA. I am writing to provide my enthusiastic endorsement of Mary Sweeney for the upcoming MRCA seat on the SCPA board.

Having worked with Mary for a number of years in our efforts to secure and preserve the Sullivan Canyon equestrian site, I can assure you that Mary would be an outstanding representative for the MRCA. Mary worked tirelessly and professionally through the long and complex process of preserving the space. Her dedication to the project never wavered and she was able to form critical partnerships, encourage fundraising, raise community support and navigate through the complicated legal requirements with great diplomacy.

Mary spearheaded the overall mission statement, focusing on public access with the goal of preserving the land and creating an environment for equestrians, nature lovers, and families to enjoy and treasure.

As a founding SCPA board member, and a former neighbor, I feel Mary is uniquely qualified to fill this board position. Her years of experience, her history, her overall vision, her ability to work with and through all facets of the association... and her never ending devotion to this beautiful environment make her the perfect addition.

Sincerely,

Luana Romanelli.

Sent from my iPhone

Christy Hobart
1101 Yale Street
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Jan 21, 2023

To Whom It May Concern at the Mountains Recreations & Conservation Authority:

I would like to recommend you appoint Mary Sweeney to the vacant seat on the MRCA, which is partnered with the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association.

It is thanks to Mary that my daughter, husband, and I started riding horses at the SCPA. Though the beautiful grounds of the SCPA are open to the public, entering them, especially if you would like to ride horses there, can feel a bit intimidating. You need a welcoming presence. For us, that was Mary, a stranger who became a friend.

Mary takes intense pleasure in introducing people to her love of horses. As she lives right across the street, she seems to always be around with an authentic smile and accurate information. I've witnessed her interact with a mother and daughter who came by to "check it all out." During the time she spent with them, she was encouraging, gracious, and generous.

Before Covid, she would host students from the inner city and treat them to jumping demonstrations, bringing in one of her professional riding friends to jump her horse ever higher. It meant so much to her to see the kids marveling at the sight, that she would share videos of the different events. On other occasions she's been a matchmaker, putting interested children of friends, neighbors, or visitors together with another friend's pony or gentle horse. And for her own pleasure as much as for theirs, Mary would take the time to walk with them, leading them around the grounds with a rope, or just help them feel comfortable in the saddle.

Mary truly takes joy in sharing her passion with others.

Friendly by nature and there from the very start of the SPCA (crucial to its formation, actually), Mary knows everyone involved with riding there—from the children of the grooms to the riding students and their instructors—and will chat with and welcome anyone who wanders by, including dog walkers, local movie stars, and simply the curious.

It is thanks to Mary that I've had the joy of leading her horse, Fidel, to the hill behind the arenas to munch on fresh, green grass after a rain. It was just the horse and me. It was a small moment, but one I'll never forget.

Having Mary on the board of the MRCA to share her her passion and expertise would be a real asset to the LA community at large.

Sincerely,
Christy Hobart

James Yeramian

From: Marcy <marcyaslo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 11:03 AM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: Mary Sweeney Letter of Recommendation

Dear MRCA Board Members,

I'm writing in support of Mary Sweeney for the MRCA seat on the SCPA Board.

I was born in 1943 in Los Angeles and my great grandmother actually arrived in a stagecoach in the early 1900's! When I was growing up, horse paths wound their way all over Los Angeles and the valley was full of orange groves. And, it was the era of Will Rogers and horses, Sullivan Canyon was a horse mecca, Paul Revere School was a polo field and you could ride for hours in the Santa Monica Mountains.

So much of Los Angeles lost that equestrian feel due to urban growth, but Sullivan somehow hung in there. In the 1980's my relatives rode in the run down field that is now the SCPA. They'd even ride their horses into town and tie them to a hitching post while they ran in to get an ice cream.

When I think of Mary Sweeney, I think of those times. She's one of the few people who holds the value of that era, when neighbors didn't build massive fences around their property and everyone easily had access to nature. I'm immensely proud of how hard Mary worked twenty years ago (along with MRCA) to preserve the land at Sullivan Canyon. And, ever since, she has put her heart and soul into continuing to fight to make the site accessible to anyone, from new riders to people just walking their dog, to creating many, many LAUSD school field trips. Mary understands how special the SCPA is- and she has an immense desire to care for the land as well as share it with everyone. This is a rare trait.

Today my daughter rides at Sullivan and she gets the same joy from those special 7 acres that our family did in the 80's. And that is in thanks to Mary who has safe-guarded the SCPA with everything she has.

I can't think of a more appropriate person to carry the torch and represent your impressive organization.

Best,

Marcy Adams

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS LETTER

Recommendation for Mary Sweeney for the appointed SCPA Board Member position.

My name is Susan Zolla, 1617 Old Oak Road, and am 45-year resident of Brentwood. I live across the street from the riding facility. All three of my daughters learn to ride in Sullivan Canyon.

I am recommending Mary Sweeney for the current appointed open board position.

She has been a guardian and caretaker of the equestrian center for many years. And living across the street from the rings, she literally does live and breathe the facility.

Her horsemanship is well known. Her care of the horses under her care is diligent and affectionate. She not only taught my granddaughters how to ride, but also taught them how to care for horses.

She has also worked with Ahead with Horses, a nonprofit riding experience for children with special needs. She procured my pony Zuni, for them to use.

Her contractor knowledge and experience is crucial to the maintenance of the grounds. She has vast knowledge of the best way to build and keep an environmentally sound outdoor ring. Footing affects both the rider and the horse so consistent management in dust control and safety is crucial. Mary keeps baggies of the stuff in her pockets.

Many of the innovations at the ring such as some of rider entrances are hers.

She watches related occurrences affecting riding outside of the rings. She stopped the plantings of oleander (poisonous to horses) along a newly constructed property on Old Oak Road. Her familiarity with a riding accident occurring on the road helps her warn riders to walk the horses on the street.

Her years as a restaurant owner/manager translates into the ability to oversee the various employees and trainers utilizing the equestrian center. She is quick to praise and work with issues.

These are the experiences and skills that make Mary an ideal candidate for the appointment to the SCPA board.

She knows the riders, the horses, the facilities, the maintenance of the ring, the grooms, the trainers, and the safety procedures to ensure an enjoyable safe riding experience for all.

Above all else, Mary cares.

Dear MRCA Governors Board,

I'm writing in from London to endorse Mary Sweeney!

Although I live in the UK, I come to LA every so often for work and stay with friends who live near Sullivan Canyon. Often jet lagged and up early, I take early morning walks. A few years ago I came upon the beautiful SCPA, as well as Mary Sweeney. She immediately made sure that I knew I was welcome to walk on the site, showed me around, and told me a bit of the history. And, within moments I found magic in the middle of Los Angeles.

Ever since that morning, I make it a ritual to walk on the SCPA's land upon my arrival into LA. And, I often see Mary, who continues to be gracious, and I've gotten to know her. I've observed her showing others around just as she did for me, she helps the maintenance man during these early hours and all in all, doing what Mary does, which seems to be a steward of the land.

My friends who's house I stay at mentioned that Mary is hoping for the upcoming MRCA seat on the SCPA's board and after looking into your organization's important work and mission, I insisted that I write in. In my opinion, Mary is the ideal representation for your organization, she absolutely supports the site as a place for public use and most importantly, she's a high integrity person who's heart is aligned with your organization.

Warmly-

Sarah Kerruish

Mary Sweeney

James Yeramian

From: Mary Sweeney <mqswee@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 1:54 PM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: Submission for MRCA / SCPA Board Vacancy
Attachments: MSweeney letter to MRCA.PDF; Resume - Mary Sweeney.pdf

Dear MRCA Governing Board,

Attached, please find my official letter of submission and resume for the MRCA designated SCPA Board vacancy that was recently publicized. I believe I am well qualified for this position and I am excited to be considered as a candidate.

Thank you for making this process open to all who are interested - the work you do is so very important and it is good to know you are making the time required to evaluate all who share your passion.

I look forward to meeting each of you in the interview on February 1st.

Best regards,
Mary

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Mary Sweeney
mqswee@gmail.com
cell: 310-422-5522

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Mary Sweeney - Resume

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

ORIGINAL FOUNDING MEMBER, CEO & Director

SULLIVAN CANYON PRESERVATION ASSN. - CONSERVATION MISSION 2000 - 2008

- Established the SCPA and its mission to acquire the open space in Sullivan Canyon
- Raised over \$400k (\$300k in loans) to underwrite the project. Raised additional funds from a *private foundation to acquire the property.*
- Partnered with MRCA for the rights to purchase the property taken by LAUSD by condemnation.
- Acted as primary liaison with:
 - SCPA Counsel Stanley Lamport, and MRCA's Joe Edmiston and in-house counsel Laurie Collins
 - Los Angeles Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski and her team
 - LAUSD - Director Marlene Canter, and Head of Real Estate Office: Scott Graham
 - Sullivan Canyon community members to garner support for the initiative
 - Robert Janovici in the LA City Planning. for use entitlements
 - LAUSD independent counsel in negotiating and finalizing the purchase contract & escrow
 - LA County Assessor Office for property tax matters
 - Worked very closely with the major donor's Foundation team

FUND RAISING DIRECTOR & ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INITIATIVES 2003 -2008 & 2015-16

- As Head of SCPA Fund Raising, organized, worked hands-on & completed a 3 year project (2003-2006) *on the SCPA site to include: eradication of invasive, non-native species, planting 160 native seedlings California Live Oaks & Western Sycamores.* Grading for walking paths, horse paths and the arenas on the site were raised using native soil.
- Spearheaded various smaller fundraising campaigns to buy equipment, and make repairs and improvements
- "*Footing the Bill*" – Conceived & launched largest fund raising project since acquisition of site, a four week 2016 initiative to successfully raise \$125k to refurbish all arenas for horse & rider safety

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CO-CREATOR & LEAD -LAUSD/SULLIVAN CANYON YOUTH EDUCATION INITIATIVE 2000-19

- Established and ran SCPA sponsored field trips for LAUSD second graders with the goal of bringing underserved youth onto the SCPA site and exposing them to equine-related education programs.
- Ahead with Horses – I have supported this worthwhile nonprofit program by donating a pony named Zuni on a weekly basis for use by AWH instructors for their special needs clients.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

- Meals on Wheels
- California Women's Law Center
- Susan G Komen Foundation
- Aids for Aids
- Green Bean Venture for Autism
- Autism Speaks
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

REAL ESTATE

- Founder and CEO of Vanguard Prop. - residential & comm. property mgmt.
- California Realtor License – 1980

RESTAURANTS OWNED & OPERATED

- The Croissant Place 1981
- Marix Tex Mex – W. Hollywood 1984
- Marix Tex Mex - Santa Monica 1985
- Marix Tex Mex - Encino 1988
- Basix Food & Bar W. Hollywood 1992
- Wraps – W. Hollywood 1994

EDUCATION – QUEENS COLLEGE - NY, NY

- Political Science and Spanish
- Captain of Tennis & Basketball Teams

Mary Sweeney
1671 Old Oak Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

January 17, 2023

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Attention: George Lange, Chairman
Jim Hasenauer, Vice-Chairperson
Irma R. Muñoz
Dan Paranick

Re: MRCA Designated Director to the SCPA

Dear MRCA Governing Board,

My story with Sullivan Canyon is a long and diverse one. However, to bring you up to speed on who I am - forty-five years ago I drove out from my hometown of Orange, New Jersey with a few hundred bucks in my pocket and the belongings that would fit in the back of my 1970 Mercury Capri. I arrived in Los Angeles and "found myself". Turns out, I could create something from nothing. I bought and sold vintage watches, designed silk screen T-shirts, taught tennis, all trying to establish a new life in this amazing spawning ground! After opening my first retail food business in 1981, I met Victoria, my life partner, and she introduced me to her family and her incredible Latino community - the beautiful language (which I promptly learned); the music; the incredible food (!!)

I instantly fell in love with everything LA, and there was no looking back.

Years later, Victoria and I found Sullivan Canyon. Back then it was a simple equestrian community, surrounded by old Cliff May ranch homes where everyone had access to the very mountains the MRCA works so hard to protect. People could ride for hours and hours.

Among the proudest accomplishments (in my entire life, quite frankly) was successfully helping to preserve this LA treasure as open space for the public to enjoy, equestrian activities and outreach programs. For those who don't know, the 7 acres of land that comprise the SCPA site today, might have been something quite different, a real estate developer's dream. Thankfully it was protected from this fate due to the work of a very small group of dedicated neighbors who formed the SCPA and joined forces with the MRCA. I am proud to say that I was an integral part of this group and in fact, a driving force. I worked day and night to raise the funds, acquire the land, navigate the government agencies, learn the ins and outs of local ordinances, land variances, etc, etc. Today, the SCPA is one of the last remaining neighborhood horse facilities in LA, and by agreeing to be our partner, the MRCA was integral in the acquisition and conservation of the land. No matter what else I do in life, knowing that the land at the base of Sullivan Canyon is forever conserved is something that has profound meaning to me.

Which brings me to the present. Why am I so deeply interested in the MRCA appointed seat? Because the person who sits in this seat is crucial to the future direction of the SCPA. I am uniquely suited for this position: I have a full understanding of the nuances of the organization, why certain decisions were made when the SCPA was first created, how the SCPA would meet the needs of its riders, the surrounding community as well as the larger public and underserved communities beyond.

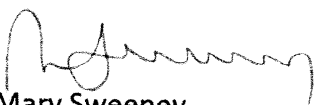
Why do I think I am the right person for the MRCA board seat? First and foremost, My values are aligned with those of the MRCA. I support and applaud the MRCA's mission of conserving and protecting open space. I am a proven advocate with a monumental conservationist project under my own belt. I know we will complement and enhance one another's efforts going forward.

Equally important, I know community outreach programs are an important component of the SCPA mission, and I am aware that the MRCA strongly advocates this as well. My history as a founding SCPA board member was focused on these efforts and I always worked hard to make community programs a part of the Sullivan Canyon ethos. Since our inception, the SCPA has partnered with elementary schools in underserved communities with a mission to expose kids to nature, and these visits have been a highlight for me personally. We hire the buses to bring the kids to the site, and upon arrival I greet the kids and provide an orientation in both Spanish and English. We have activities with the horses, arts & crafts, Mounted Police and Animal Control Officers who bring snakes (which elicits huge squeals and laughter) and many other various creatures we know they'll love. They hike on the wooded hill, see roping exhibitions, people jumping, and more. We make them lunches, and swag bags, and send them home tired!! I promise you, these events are very special for all involved. Covid paused these programs and I have been actively looking to reinstate them. If selected, I would be 100% committed to re-focusing board energy on this and other programs and making this the priority that it should be.

Finally, I believe it is important to have someone in place that will enhance SCPA's partnership with the MRCA and the organizations' missions, be mindful of the supporting stakeholders' interests, and know when to raise a hand and stand a little taller for the benefit of underserved communities.

Twenty years ago, a few others and I, sat down to write the SCPA mission statement: "To maintain open space in the Sullivan Canyon area of Los Angeles, with an equestrian use, education and community outreach". It would be my honor to work to protect the original intent of the preservation and further the goals of the MRCA.

Sincerely,



Mary Sweeney

MS:mm

Attachment: Resume – Mary Sweeney



LAUREN ROJANY

226 N Salfair Ave Los Angeles, CA 90049 | 310-892-6092 | laurenrojany@mac.com

January 17, 2023

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065

james.yeramian@mrca.ca.gov

Dear MRCA,

I am a 20+ year member of the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association and I am writing to offer my support of Mary Sweeney for the vacancy on the board.

I sincerely feel that my daughter Natasha who started riding when she was six years old and continued through college and I have been nurtured and guided for all these years by Mary. She has not only looked after me and my family but countless families with the same dedication and enthusiasm that she continues to nurture that site.

I have also volunteered in every capacity over the 20 years and Mary Sweeney has been right there eagerly lending a hand for whatever was required.

I am considered an independent rider which means that I am not associated with a big, costly show barn – I am there to enjoy the simplicity of my horse and the nature that surrounds us in Sullivan Canyon I often don't even ride I just hang out with my horse in his barn or take him for a walk. If the current conditions guiding the Board continue, I will soon not be able to afford this time I enjoy there. If not for Mary, I could not participate in this process which feeds my soul and continues to keep me healthy during times of actual health challenges throughout the years.

Mary has been there to support the SCPA at every turn. Over the years I have seen her come out and oversee rebuilding of crumbling infrastructure sometimes out of her own pocket. I have seen her send out her own work crews to do work no one else would, help with rainy day emergencies, deal with broken sprinklers when no one's around to shut off the water, and literally pick up fallen riders (and help them get back on, myself include). Mary is the fabric of this canyon she embodies who we want as members, she is a role model for all the kids. I have asked her to mentor my own daughter because of these qualities. She does what she does for the good of others and for the welfare of our beloved CANYON. Mary is incredibly knowledgeable and has dedicated herself to the study of best practices unlike others who have the desire to help but not the experience or knowledge of how to carry out the important tasks at hand.

Mary is literally the only person left who honestly works to uphold the values and original intent of the SCPA and I know that the new guard does not understand what she represents. I have seen too many changes occur that are not for the good of the "preservation" of our site. I truly believe with Mary on the board she will continue to champion all that is for the good of the SCPA.

Please do not miss this opportunity to place a proven environmentalist and supporter of the "little guy" in this position.

Sincerely,

Lauren Rojany



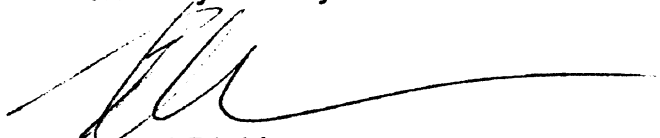
1/26/23

call a “play day.” Mary was enthusiastically involved every year. It was important for her to serve other communities and give back. For most of the students, this was their first interaction with a horse. SCPA provided a day of fun filled activities including lunch and transportation. As the bus would pull in, Mary was the first person to greet them. Additionally, SCPA would also do neighborhood community events; every year SCPA hosted a halloween parade for all the young members of the community. Mary was always the MC for our costume parade. Mary always goes out of her way to include new neighbors and was an ambassador for the community.

Mary really set the bar high when I became the site manager. She knew Sullivan Canyon like the back of her hand and was so helpful in showing me everything on the site. Mary became my go-to-person. She acted more like my co-worker than a volunteer. In all my years of working for non-profits, I have never worked with someone as dedicated and tireless as Mary. Once a pipe broke in the middle of the night, and I called Mary at 6am—she was already working on it. Mary’s home is located directly across from the site, and so during my time as site manager, Mary was constantly checking to make sure there were not any leaking sprinklers, fallen tree branches, etc. Mary showed tremendous leadership in dealing with the recent wildfires and was indispensable in putting an evacuation plan in place so that all the horses got out of the neighborhood safely.

Mary cares a lot about Sullivan Canyon and its future. She cares about the community and the neighbors. She cares about the horses and where they live. She cares about the beautification of the site and its employees. She would like to continue to preserve this site so everyone can continue to enjoy the site. Mary deserves the seat on the MCRA board, and she will serve and put forth the same magnitude of work as she always does.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marci Dinkin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marci Dinkin
(Member since 1994)

1/26/23

To whom this may concern,

My name is Marci Dinkin, and I am a former Board director and president of the SPCA organization. After leaving my position on the board, SCPA hired me as their site manager. I managed the site from 2018 to 2022 and resigned a year ago to focus on a family health crisis. While I do not reside in Sullivan Canyon, it has been my second home for years. I care very much about the community and have concerns for the future of Sullivan Canyon. It is very important that the MRCA board replaces Anne Dobkin's seat to the right person. I believe this person is Mary Sweeney. Like Anne, Mary has a long history as a member and neighbor of the Sullivan Canyon community and would be an excellent replacement for the open seat on the MRCA board. Mary also shares the same passion, values and philosophy as Anne. In addition, Mary is deserving of the position after decades of hard work and dedication for the good of the Sullivan Canyon community. Mary was instrumental in orchestrating and raising funds in 2001 to help build what the SCPA is today. She is an outstanding community member and is extremely passionate regarding the preservation of one of the last equestrian neighborhoods on the westside of Los Angeles.

I feel that my voice is unique in this decision process because I have experience with both participating on the board and working as a site manager. They are very different positions, and it is interesting to have the perspective from both areas. During my time in each position, I worked very closely with Mary. I would describe Mary as an extremely hard worker and volunteer. She is an excellent problem solver and is willing to lend a hand in any situation. She is generous with her time and will even utilize her own employees to help when needed. Mary is also fluent in Spanish, which is crucial for communicating with SCPA's senior employee Antonio, who has worked on site for 35 years.

The following are a few examples of what Mary and I accomplished in our time working together at the site. In 2015, Mary and I started a fundraising campaign to replace the footing in all 3 arenas. The site was desperate for new footing; several horses fell as a result of the old footing. Together we raised 125K; while significant, it was not enough to cover the job. Mary, however, was able to broker a deal with Tractor Dean, and we successfully replaced the footing. We also continued our annually elementary school visits. SCPA invited 60 inner city, second graders to the site for what we

January 19, 2023

To the MRCA Board,

I am pleased to recommend Mary Sweeney for a position on the MRCA Board of Directors.

My partner is an active member of the SCPA, and through my frequent visits to the facilities to watch her ride I have had the opportunity to witness Mary's exceptional dedication and commitment to the preservation and continuation of the facility's mission and values. As a founding member of the SCPA, Mary has consistently gone above and beyond to maintain and improve the facilities, always with the goal of making the sport of horseback riding and access to nature accessible to all.

Her knowledge and expertise in horsemanship is incomparable, and her passion for people and animals is clearly evident in her interactions with riders, trainers and horses alike. Frankly, I am not aware of another person at the SCPA who has anywhere close to such a comprehensive knowledge base in horsemanship and better character than Mary. And her patience and demeanor are truly remarkable, making her an excellent leader and mentor.


Her vision for continuing and expanding the SCPA's public programs is likewise impressive, and her work to get the site back on track post-covid is admirable. She wants the facilities to serve as a platform for education, hosting LA school children to connect with animals and nature, a hugely important endeavor for the local community.

I cannot recommend Mary highly enough for a position on the MRCA board of directors. She is a true asset to any organization and I know that she will excel in this role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon M. Overmyer". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brandon M. Overmyer



ANDIE B. SIMON

820 Broadway, Santa Monica CA 90401 | 917-538-6333 | andiebsimon1@gmail.com

January 18, 2023

James Yeramian
Mountains Recreation & Conservation
570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA
90065


Dear James Yeramian,


It is my true delight to recommend Mary Sweeney for a board seat at MCRA. You would be getting a delightful and incredibly committed woman to your board.

I met Mary a little over a year ago when I was looking at joining SCPA. It was an early winter morning, and I was aimlessly driving around trying to figure out where to park. Mary was in the middle of the road, directing heavy trucks on the street, making sure they were able to set up for tree trimming without obstructing traffic. I rolled down my window and asked her if I was okay to park by her house. Her response was Classic Mary, I have now learned. "Of course!" She replied. "And thank you for asking!" (I admit I was pleased with myself.) "Hold on one minute and I'll help you out!"

In a matter of minutes, Mary walked me to main office, introduced me to Marie the manager, then introduced me two or three riders and trainers all while asking who I was, why was I there, what kind of riding did I do, etc. As we walked and talked, she addressed everyone she met with a wave and a smile.

In the months following that fateful day, I have had the pleasure to get to know Mary and the SCPA community better. As one of the founders of SCPA she is truly the heart and soul of the place. Mary clearly understands the value of preserving land and keeping open spaces for communities. Only through her commitment, attention to detail and drive that she showed me that first day directing trucks and traffic on the streets flipping easily from English to





Spanish, was she able to work out a way to keep the riding facility and its land from being developed.

In short, Mary does not "phone it in" as they say. When she does something, it's with a full heart, mind, and spirit. Her friendliness and passion is an inspiration to me every time I have the pleasure of her company.

Sincerely,

Andie B. Simon

January 18, 2023

Dear Mountains Restoration Conservation Authority Governing Board,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mary Sweeney for almost four years. I came to Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association in search of finding a place to ride but was unable to secure a position with any of the trainers who teach fulltime onsite. They either had no availability or were priced well outside my means.

By the Grace of God, I was referred to Mary, who immediately took me under her wing as a fellow Independent SCPA Rider. Simply by knowing Mary, I now ride with a few SCPA trainers. Although I have been riding, training, competing, and caring for horses since the age of 10, the most I have learnt from any single person is Mary. Her willingness to share her wealth of knowledge is a combination from her dedication and selflessness: Everything from horse care to the proper management of footing, to her extensive intelligence on nature and the proper upkeep of various types of trees, foliage, and more.

You see, Mary is not your average horsewoman, horse owner, SCPA member, or woman. In truth, she isn't average by any means or in any category. Mary is extraordinary.

Mary is the first one anyone calls in an emergency, when there is uncertainty in how to move forward with the site's maintenance, and she donates uncountable hours of her time to keeping the site safe, visitor-friendly, and upkeeps the true integrity upon which SCPA was created.

Before the covid pandemic shut down many of the extracurricular programs at SCPA, Mary coordinated school trips for disadvantaged communities to come visit, meet the horses, and have a chance to interact with these beautiful animals in a safe and learning environment. Mary has championed starting this program up again and has asked me to help.

Mary's level of cultural respect and intelligence is astounding. She speaks Spanish fluently and while I have some conversational ability, Mary is always willing to help correct my conjugations or grow my vocabulary. I enjoy practicing Spanish around the stables to increase my fluency. Since most of the students attending the field trips speak Spanish, I know continuing my skills will enable me to make them feel as welcome as Mary does, a valuable quality in a volunteer.

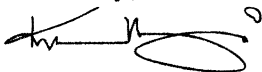
In addition to helping the site, managing community-driven programs, taking care of many horses, and helping others become more horse-aware and better horse people, Mary also cares for our resident Fell Pony named Zuni (who I help exercise) to use with the Ahead with Horses program on SCPA's site, an equine therapy for children with special needs.

Mary's unparalleled capability ranges wider than anyone I've met: Her integrity is unequivocal, she has an unwavering work ethic, and to top it off, she is warm hearted and kind with only pure intentions.

I could not fathom entrusting anyone other than Mary Sweeney to be the MRCA's SCPA Board Member and with full confidence, strongly recommend her for your consideration.

I can certainly guarantee you won't regret electing her for this position.

Sincerely,



Kimia Nozari
Director of Operations

Nozari + Nozari Architects, AIA NCARB

Ms. Marci Dinkin
SCPA Board of Directors
Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association
1640 Old Oak Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

April 9, 2020

Dear Marci Dinkin and SCPA Directors,

I understand there are some questions regarding the removal of the blue gum eucalyptus trees at the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association site. I am writing this letter to explain the Master Plan and the thoughts behind the plan.

Approximately 15 years ago, my company was brought in by the SCPA to design an environmentally sensitive landscape plan featuring native plantings for the SCPA's equestrian facility and its adjunct use as a public open space. At the time, the SCPA site had a dozen or more very large eucalyptus trees, and a smaller number of oak trees, sycamore and pepper trees randomly scattered about the flatter terrain on the property. Aside from these existing trees, most of the site was heavily populated with weeds, sand, dirt and broken-down fencing. The hillside, however, was generously populated by native oak trees along the winding switch back trails. The hillside also had an abundance of weeds, and various plants poisonous to horses such as castor bean and thistle (all of those were removed at the onset).

I designed and presented a Master Plan that was approved by the SCPA Board of Directors. The plan included all grading of the site, the location of arenas, and trails around the arenas. It included the design of entry walls and gates, fence lines, and a specific palette of native trees and plants. The plan also set forth a palette for color and building materials. Additionally, for reasons explained below, the plan called for the steady removal of the eucalyptus trees as the new native saplings grew towards maturity.

In the months following Master Plan approval, we guided the SCPA workforce in grading the site. We supervised the creation of planting rivulets as well as drainage features designed to water the plantings and return rainwater to the water table below the site. This design also served to keep horses and people from trampling the plants, and to eliminate or greatly reduce the rainwater run-off onto the street, into the Los Angeles City storm drain system and the Santa Monica Bay.

After the site was cleared and graded, the arenas and surrounding trails were built, we ordered for delivery to the site several hundred plants and over 150 trees. All plant and tree material specified was in accordance with the SCPA Master. Installation details were provided to SCPA personnel, and regular site visits were conducted for oversight

of the SCPA's installation of the plants and trees, as well as the building of all hardscape.

Over 150 native trees were planted with the clear objective of removing the blue gum eucalyptus trees. The removal of the eucalyptus trees (native to southeastern Australia) was included in the master plan for many different reasons. The Eucs are not native to the United States, and they grow very, very fast. The branches get extremely heavy, break easily, and are therefore often referred to as "widow makers". These facts necessitate regular and frequent tree trimming which is very costly. The eucalyptus trees can often consume a large portion of a tree maintenance budget. Often, this results in specimen native trees (which are much lower-maintenance trees) being neglected. Those native trees end up paying the price decades later by way of broken limbs or disease. Equally important, for this residential community, and California at large, is that the blue gum eucalyptus trees have a very high oil content (think eucalyptus oil) and can be explosive in a wildfire. The blue gum eucalyptus tree burns hot and fast, sending flying embers that contribute to the rapid spread of fire. It is for this reason many municipalities (Malibu, Santa Barbara) are codifying limitations on the new planting of eucalyptus trees. Based on solid reasoning in the Master Plan, the goal has always been to remove the eucalyptus trees as the site grew into its natural beauty with the abundance of new native trees. As the trees planted on the site are now mature and the fire seasons in California are becoming longer and more ferocious, I highly recommend the remaining blue gum eucalyptus trees be removed.

I hope this helps to create a better understanding of the Master Plan for the Sullivan Preservation Association site, and also serve to accomplish the removal of the Eucs. Please keep me informed as to when the removal is completed. Thereafter, I will make myself available pro bono to consult with the SCPA to assess its needs, whether for aesthetic or functional (shade?) reasons, and provide a plan to install trees as needed to complement the extraordinary SCPA site and riding facility.

Regards,



Jay Griffith

January 19, 2023

Dear MRCA Board,

My name is Jay Griffith, and I was asked to write a letter of recommendation for Mary Sweeney who is applying for the MRCA appointment to the SCPA Board of Directors.

I have been creating original landscapes in southern California for over 40 years. I believe in site-specific design, the recycling of site materials and responsible, yet dramatic planting palettes. In 2003, I was interviewed by Mary Sweeney for a job to transform a 7.5 acre weeded sand pit owned by the SCPA into what it is today, a beautiful place for the public to find peace and pleasure in nature; native plantings with sunny skies or rainy afternoons, a moonlit stroll, or a horse out enjoying all the very same things.

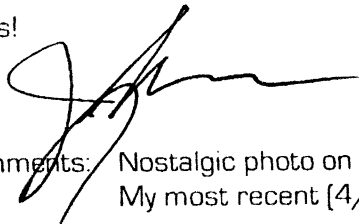
The SCPA site transformation was a very special project, and I did the job for almost no money because, well, I wanted to, and Mary Sweeney was very convincing. The unexpected booby prize turned out to be Mary herself. She is a unique and interesting person, she worked every day on the project, and I dubbed her the "heat seeking missile." She was on top of every phase of the project, completing tasks in record time, and keeping me on my toes to keep up with her pace.

Along with the workers she supervised, Mary executed my directives in an exacting manner. I placed, and she planted, over 160 native Western Sycamore and California Live Oak saplings. My philosophy of "put a \$5 plant in a \$10 hole" was consistently exceeded by Mary and her team. She always gave me a \$12.50 hole, or better. The saplings thrived and today we see an open space filled with hundreds of healthy, mature native trees. Mary was very keen on the water conservation measures and rainwater collection methods incorporated into my master plan. She easily grasped concepts and was a joy to work with, not to mention the delicious lunches and homemade cookies she served to always keep my full attention on her pet project.

Over the twenty years since we met, Mary has remained true to the landscaping mission, worked hard and even fought to maintain the palette and the plan. She has, at times, called me back to the site, or have me write a letter to help bring new board members or new site management along to stay on track, within the palette, and on the master plan. Mary has a unique brain. She asks tons of questions, does a lot of listening, and gets to the right conclusions with a "can do" mentality. Rarely have I seen a volunteer like Mary, the MRCA would be smart to snap her up.

Cheers!

JAY



Attachments: Nostalgic photo on the job, Mary working with my associate Russ
My most recent (4/9/2020) letter to SCPA restating the Master Plan

CAROLINE ROWLAND
150 MABERY ROAD SANTA MONICA 90402 CALIFORNIA USA
CAROLINE@ROWLAND.GLOBAL

January 20, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

Mary Sweeney Board Recommendation

My name is Caroline Rowland and I'm a UK citizen living part time in Los Angeles since 2014. In 2020, I started a media technology business which has me committed to endless hours at a desk and in front of a screen – not the reason I chose to spend so much time in LA. In England, I am lucky enough to be able to address my work / life balance with riding my 26-year old Irish eventer and having dressage training on a wonderful Advanced dressage horse.

However, my efforts to ride in LA went thwarted for several years and I simply could not find an affordable option to allow me to ride. After several very costly, unsuccessful and inhospitable attempts at other locations, a friend introduced me to Marci Dinkin and Mary Sweeney and there at Sullivan Canyon I found the answer to my longing to be around horses and nature.

Marci identified immediately that as a new comer who didn't own a horse (and who wasn't likely to buy a horse while continuing a Transatlantic commute) I was considered an 'independent' and Mary would be my only resource. Mary 'got it' and at our first meeting she literally wrapped her arm around me and enthusiastically told me the story of how she, together with other locals, came to preserve it. From the start she was extremely welcoming and inclusive although made it very clear that the rules of the association needed to be taken seriously and any breach would not be tolerated. Acknowledging that I took this seriously, she kindly offered to let me ride one of her horses to assess my skill level. Fortunately I am a competent rider and since then, she has allowed me to ride her beautiful horses from time to time. Last summer I signed up as a summer member as I was here for a protracted period and the joy of being able to enjoy the incredible facilities at SCPA was truly appreciated.

As a prospective Board Member, Mary Sweeney embodies everything that the original intention of SCPA sought to achieve. Any community member such as myself who can't afford or doesn't want a big commercial barn is simply not accepted anywhere else. I had hoped to find a place where I could ride a horse in nature, much like back home in the UK, without the pressure and frills of an expensive trainer. Mary provided that to me.

Without hesitation, I recommend Mary Sweeney as the MRCA Board Member of SCPA. I cannot imagine a more mission-driven, community-minded person to take on that role. I have no doubt at all that through her contribution to the Board, the story and unique experience of the SCPA will be preserved and protected long into the future.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Rowland

Mea Argentieri
321 South Beverly Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

January 18, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

I am a Founding SCPA member and served as the CFO of the 501c3 from its inception thru 2006.

I lived in Mandeville Canyon and was there when LAUSD property in Sullivan Canyon went up for sale.

I witnessed first hand how Mary Sweeney led the charge of the neighbors to save the land, and thanks to the MRCA's partnership, the SCPA was formed.

Twenty three years ago, we began working around the clock for 3 years to figure out not only how to raise the money to purchase the site, but we also took on the enormous legal challenges around preserving the open space for public use in a residential community. Yes, I was part of this team but Mary lead the charge.

She even came up with name "Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association" as she felt it was critical to have the word "Preservation" in the title as that was our mission, to keep the land alive. Once it was official, we sat down and wrote the SCPA's Mission statement: to maintain open space in Sullivan Canyon area of LA, with an equestrian Use, education and community outreach. Yes, we all had a voice in writing it, but -and this is important, the "education and community outreach" wording was all Mary! That is where her heart lies, and that is why I can't think of a better person to hold the MRCA seat on the SCPA board.

Over the years, many of the original ranch homes have been torn down and you can guess what's in their place today. Members no longer have equestrian access to the Santa Monica Mountains due to this development. Things have changed.

And yet, there's Mary, organizing school trips for kids from underserved areas. She always participates and often runs the school visits from these communities, always greeting the kids in both English and Spanish when they arrive. She gets all of the trainers involved, and works hard on the detailed planning all activities.

To this day, Mary is always ready to give people a tour of the property, making sure they feel welcome.

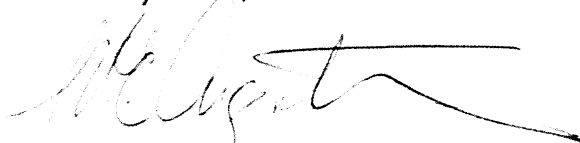
Thus upholding the promise that the SCPA's 7 acres are to benefit the public.

She has the moral compass and inner strength needed to maintain Sullivan's original mission statement, making sure everyone has access this pocket of tranquility; nature at its best.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that Mary was CEO of the SCPA. It is Mary's name on the use variance, as well as on the SCPA Conservation Easement with MRCA and the Declaration of Use agreement.

I am confident that she is the person who can seamlessly bridge MRCA's mission within the SCPA's mission.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mea Argentieri', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mea Argentieri

James Yeramian

From: Luana Romanelli <lulumanelli@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 21, 2023 9:58 AM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: SCPA Board Endorsement

Dear MRCA Board of Directors:

My name is Luana Romanelli and I was a founding board member of the SCPA. I am writing to provide my enthusiastic endorsement of Mary Sweeney for the upcoming MRCA seat on the SCPA board.

Having worked with Mary for a number of years in our efforts to secure and preserve the Sullivan Canyon equestrian site, I can assure you that Mary would be an outstanding representative for the MRCA. Mary worked tirelessly and professionally through the long and complex process of preserving the space. Her dedication to the project never wavered and she was able to form critical partnerships, encourage fundraising, raise community support and navigate through the complicated legal requirements with great diplomacy.

Mary spearheaded the overall mission statement, focusing on public access with the goal of preserving the land and creating an environment for equestrians, nature lovers, and families to enjoy and treasure.

As a founding SCPA board member, and a former neighbor, I feel Mary is uniquely qualified to fill this board position. Her years of experience, her history, her overall vision, her ability to work with and through all facets of the association... and her never ending devotion to this beautiful environment make her the perfect addition.

Sincerely,

Luana Romanelli.

Sent from my iPhone

Christy Hobart
1101 Yale Street
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Jan 21, 2023

To Whom It May Concern at the Mountains Recreations & Conservation Authority:

I would like to recommend you appoint Mary Sweeney to the vacant seat on the MRCA, which is partnered with the Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association.

It is thanks to Mary that my daughter, husband, and I started riding horses at the SCPA. Though the beautiful grounds of the SCPA are open to the public, entering them, especially if you would like to ride horses there, can feel a bit intimidating. You need a welcoming presence. For us, that was Mary, a stranger who became a friend.

Mary takes intense pleasure in introducing people to her love of horses. As she lives right across the street, she seems to always be around with an authentic smile and accurate information. I've witnessed her interact with a mother and daughter who came by to "check it all out." During the time she spent with them, she was encouraging, gracious, and generous.

Before Covid, she would host students from the inner city and treat them to jumping demonstrations, bringing in one of her professional riding friends to jump her horse ever higher. It meant so much to her to see the kids marveling at the sight, that she would share videos of the different events. On other occasions she's been a matchmaker, putting interested children of friends, neighbors, or visitors together with another friend's pony or gentle horse. And for her own pleasure as much as for theirs, Mary would take the time to walk with them, leading them around the grounds with a rope, or just help them feel comfortable in the saddle.

Mary truly takes joy in sharing her passion with others.

Friendly by nature and there from the very start of the SPCA (crucial to its formation, actually), Mary knows everyone involved with riding there—from the children of the grooms to the riding students and their instructors—and will chat with and welcome anyone who wanders by, including dog walkers, local movie stars, and simply the curious.

It is thanks to Mary that I've had the joy of leading her horse, Fidel, to the hill behind the arenas to munch on fresh, green grass after a rain. It was just the horse and me. It was a small moment, but one I'll never forget.

Having Mary on the board of the MRCA to share her her passion and expertise would be a real asset to the LA community at large.

Sincerely,
Christy Hobart

James Yeramian

From: Marcy <marcyaslo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 11:03 AM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: Mary Sweeney Letter of Recommendation

Dear MRCA Board Members,

I'm writing in support of Mary Sweeney for the MRCA seat on the SCPA Board.

I was born in 1943 in Los Angeles and my great grandmother actually arrived in a stagecoach in the early 1900's! When I was growing up, horse paths wound their way all over Los Angeles and the valley was full of orange groves. And, it was the era of Will Rogers and horses, Sullivan Canyon was a horse mecca, Paul Revere School was a polo field and you could ride for hours in the Santa Monica Mountains.

So much of Los Angeles lost that equestrian feel due to urban growth, but Sullivan somehow hung in there. In the 1980's my relatives rode in the run down field that is now the SCPA. They'd even ride their horses into town and tie them to a hitching post while they ran in to get an ice cream.

When I think of Mary Sweeney, I think of those times. She's one of the few people who holds the value of that era, when neighbors didn't build massive fences around their property and everyone easily had access to nature. I'm immensely proud of how hard Mary worked twenty years ago (along with MRCA) to preserve the land at Sullivan Canyon. And, ever since, she has put her heart and soul into continuing to fight to make the site accessible to anyone, from new riders to people just walking their dog, to creating many, many LAUSD school field trips. Mary understands how special the SCPA is- and she has an immense desire to care for the land as well as share it with everyone. This is a rare trait.

Today my daughter rides at Sullivan and she gets the same joy from those special 7 acres that our family did in the 80's. And that is in thanks to Mary who has safe-guarded the SCPA with everything she has.

I can't think of a more appropriate person to carry the torch and represent your impressive organization.

Best,

Marcy Adams

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS LETTER

Recommendation for Mary Sweeney for the appointed SCPA Board Member position.

My name is Susan Zolla, 1617 Old Oak Road, and am 45-year resident of Brentwood. I live across the street from the riding facility. All three of my daughters learn to ride in Sullivan Canyon.

I am recommending Mary Sweeney for the current appointed open board position.

She has been a guardian and caretaker of the equestrian center for many years. And living across the street from the rings, she literally does live and breathe the facility.

Her horsemanship is well known. Her care of the horses under her care is diligent and affectionate. She not only taught my granddaughters how to ride, but also taught them how to care for horses.

She has also worked with Ahead with Horses, a nonprofit riding experience for children with special needs. She procured my pony Zuni, for them to use.

Her contractor knowledge and experience is crucial to the maintenance of the grounds. She has vast knowledge of the best way to build and keep an environmentally sound outdoor ring. Footing affects both the rider and the horse so consistent management in dust control and safety is crucial. Mary keeps baggies of the stuff in her pockets.

Many of the innovations at the ring such as some of rider entrances are hers.

She watches related occurrences affecting riding outside of the rings. She stopped the plantings of oleander (poisonous to horses) along a newly constructed property on Old Oak Road. Her familiarity with a riding accident occurring on the road helps her warn riders to walk the horses on the street.

Her years as a restaurant owner/manager translates into the ability to oversee the various employees and trainers utilizing the equestrian center. She is quick to praise and work with issues.

These are the experiences and skills that make Mary an ideal candidate for the appointment to the SCPA board.

She knows the riders, the horses, the facilities, the maintenance of the ring, the grooms, the trainers, and the safety procedures to ensure an enjoyable safe riding experience for all.

Above all else, Mary cares.

Dear MRCA Governors Board,

I'm writing in from London to endorse Mary Sweeney!

Although I live in the UK, I come to LA every so often for work and stay with friends who live near Sullivan Canyon. Often jet lagged and up early, I take early morning walks. A few years ago I came upon the beautiful SCPA, as well as Mary Sweeney. She immediately made sure that I knew I was welcome to walk on the site, showed me around, and told me a bit of the history. And, within moments I found magic in the middle of Los Angeles.

Ever since that morning, I make it a ritual to walk on the SCPA's land upon my arrival into LA. And, I often see Mary, who continues to be gracious, and I've gotten to know her. I've observed her showing others around just as she did for me, she helps the maintenance man during these early hours and all in all, doing what Mary does, which seems to be a steward of the land.

My friends who's house I stay at mentioned that Mary is hoping for the upcoming MRCA seat on the SCPA's board and after looking into your organization's important work and mission, I insisted that I write in. In my opinion, Mary is the ideal representation for your organization, she absolutely supports the site as a place for public use and most importantly, she's a high integrity person who's heart is aligned with your organization.

Warmly-

Sarah Kerruish

January 23, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

This letter is from my wife, Anne Archer, and me, Terry Jastrow, longtime residents of the Sullivan Canyon community, living at 13201 Old Oak Lane since 1989, and is regarding Mary Sweeney's interest in being appointed to the Board of the SCPA.

When in 2000 the Sullivan Canyon open space site was for sale by LAUSD to developers, Mary approached us about raising money to form a nonprofit organization, Sullivan Canyon Preservation Assn. ("SCPA") to save the open space property from development. Over her many years of service to the SCPA we have found her to be smart, reliable, fair and community minded, focusing on outreach and accessibility.

Thus, we submit that Mary would be an honorable and productive representative of the MRCA, and effectively connect the missions of the MRCA and the SCPA to benefit the public.

Respectfully,

Anne Archer & Terry Jastrow

James Yeramian

From: Anonymousemail <noreply@anonymousemail.me>
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 6:28 PM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: Re: MRCA appointee to SCPA Board

Powered by [Anonymousemail](#) → [Join Us!](#)

January 25th, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

It has been brought to my attention that there will be a new SCPA board member as Anne Dobkin is stepping down as the appointee from the MRCA (Mountains Recreation & Conservancy Authority).

It is my understanding that Mary Sweeney is applying for this position. I would like to strongly object to Mary Sweeney being considered for this position.

I have never written a letter similar to this in my life but I feel a real responsibility to do so. I have personally observed Mary Sweeney over the last 20 years exhibit extremely destructive and bad behavior on really high levels.

This behavior compels me to be very vocal in saying that she is one of the most unhappy, destructive, litigious and self serving individuals I have ever observed. I realize these are strong words and I do not write them without careful consideration, but Mary Sweeney has the ability to cause great harm and irreversible trouble for our SCPA community.

She constantly throws around the “ I will sue you ” dialogue and I know personally that she will indeed lodge frivolous law suits at any moment in time, having already sued several individuals in the canyon.

I know Mary Sweeney was previously removed from the SCPA board for very good reasons and I know she was very upset and has always tried to get back on the board. I believe this is just her back door way of insinuating herself into the day to day decisions of the SCPA board.

Living right beside the ring has led Mary to believe that SCPA is her own private facility and this simply is not the case. MRCA and SCPA need to be protected from this individual

To my knowledge Mary has never once done anything ever with an altruistic approach but always expects special treatment for her “volunteer services”.

My family has been a member of SCPA for 30 years and cherish every minute there. We would so hate to see SCPA or MRCA misused in anyway.

Sorry but knowing Mary Sweeney's extremely vindictive personality I must submit this letter anonymously

Best Regards

A Concerned SCPA member

January 25th, 2023

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Best Regards
A Concerned SCPA member

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you because it has recently come to my attention that Mary Sweeney has applied to be a representative on your board. I wanted to provide you some background about her history. Ms. Sweeney is a bully and an opportunist. Mary Sweeney on many occasions has verbally accosted adults and children on the SCPA site and in the neighborhood. She is litigious and power-hungry, and will use any position granted to her to advance her own personal agenda. Frequently, she has taken to going door-to-door in her own neighborhood to try to get residents on her bandwagon, giving them information that isn't true to get them to do what she wants. She has initiated a number of lawsuits against her neighbors, as well as threatening the SCPA on numerous occasions. I believe that she was previously excused from the SCPA board, and since then has tried to get back on it in any way she can. Most recently her wife was a board member, most likely to bring information directly back to Ms. Sweeney and to forward her agenda. Furthermore, Ms. Sweeney runs a horse boarding business in the community which seems an obvious conflict, since she is profiting off of the community. I hope that you can see through whatever platform she provides, as it would be disastrous and disappointing for all to have her in any position of power or management.

To the MRCA Board,

One of your applicants for the SCPA Board position is someone I know quite well for a number of years, and while I don't think her character is suitable for this position, I want to focus on a major conflict she represents. She leases stall space from a number of residents in Sullivan Canyon, probably 5 or more different residents. She then marks up the cost and rents those stalls to clients who also pay her to manage the feeding, cleaning, care, and grooming of their horses. She brings in upwards of \$10,000 per month doing this. Maybe it's more. This is allowed, and trainers do it too, but someone who makes this much money off of the SCPA does not belong on its board, let alone as the designated representative of the MRCA. She has no conservation interest but purely a self interest. She would likely try to get rid of other trainers to create more business for herself. Her wife, Victoria Shemaria, is no better. I would love to bring this all to you straightforwardly, but Ms. Sweeney is highly volatile and has sued numerous members of the community including the SCPA. Therefore, I can't risk her seeking revenge on me. Hence, I remain anonymous. But, this is all easily verifiable, and I hope you take it seriously.

To Whom It May Concern:

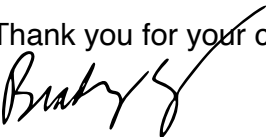
My name is Bradley Avery and I'm reaching out to provide a statement of support in favor of Mary Sweeney in her nomination for the SCPA seat on behalf of the MCRA.

I have personally known Mary for many years. She has generously allowed me to ride her wonderful horses and we have spent many hours talking about all things equine. She has taught me so much about the SCPA as she has ridden alongside me and regaled me with countless stories from the inception of the property up to these recent years when the big show barns are driving the independent riders such as myself out of the canyon.

I have personally witnessed Mary escort visitors around the property whether they were there to inquire about the riding facility or simply to walk their dogs or children up the hillside. Mary is known as the SCPA docent and rightfully so, since she authored the original Mission Statement.

I would impress upon you that Mary Sweeney is an unrivaled candidate for this position and I know that she will fully uphold the integrity with which the SCPA was founded on.

Thank you for your consideration.



Bradley Avery

To Whom It May Concern:

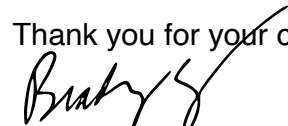
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Bradley Avery

James Yeramian

From: Demetra Chazanas <demetra.chazanas@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 4:56 PM
To: James Yeramian
Cc: Ari Chazanas
Subject: SCPA Board Seat, Mary Sweeney

Dear MRCA Board,

We are writing to you to offer our full endorsement and support of Mary Sweeney for your available seat on the SCPA Board.

Mary has been instrumental to our family since we moved into Sullivan Canyon in 2020. She has skillfully assessed our riding capabilities and has introduced us to the appropriate trainers for the adult as well as youth riders in our household. She has even assisted with guidance on proper care of the stalls on our property which allowed us to temporarily house the grand prix horse owned by Tanya Stivers, the SCPA Board President.

In short, there is nothing Sullivan Canyon related in any capacity, historically or to the present day that Mary Sweeney does not have a handle on.

Having invested in this community to raise our family we would be indebted to the MRCA to appoint Mary Sweeney as your custodian of the Sullivan Canyon property.

Respectfully,

Demetra and Ari Chazanas
1835 Old Ranch Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

James Yeramian

From: georges bittar <georgesfbittar@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 29, 2023 2:00 PM
To: James Yeramian; Barbara Collins
Subject: Fwd: Mary Sweeney for MRCA

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: georges bittar <georgesfbittar@gmail.com>
Date: January 22, 2023 at 12:08:02 PST
To: james.yeramian@mrca.ca.gov
Subject: Mary Sweeney for MRCA

Hello,

I am Georges Blttar and I have been a horse trainer for many years. I teach riding lessons and train the horses for a few people that ride in Sullivan Canyon. I am not there every day, more like a few times per month. I have known Mary Sweeney for 25 years from this place, and have always seen her very involved, very active and very caring for the facility and the people who visit. She told me she is looking for a position on your board, and I can tell you she is pretty good at whatever she commits to.

Mary also does some field trips for young kids from other areas of the city, and every time she is doing this she always ropes me in to coming to give a horse jumping display. The last time I was there was not long before the start of the pandemic. When Mary first called to try to schedule me that time, I told her I could not do it that afternoon because I was hauling horses to a show a couple of hours away.

Somehow, Mary did not hear the word, "NO" and Instead asked "Well what time are you planning on leaving?" When I told her the time, she said: "Can't you leave a half hour later, and I'll try to move you up in the schedule of activities? You know how the kids LOVE the jumping, and you do it so well." She wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

I looked through my videos from the Sullivan location, and found the last jump for you to see and enjoy. Yes, she got me to do it! The exhibition that we do is longer than what you'll see, as we build the jump higher and higher each time, with the kids helping, for them to see just how high it is, MUCH taller than they are.

Anyway, we got it all to work out that day, and in the end I was really happy I did. The kids were terrific and had a great time. Mary is a pretty good rider, but an even better field trip operator, and the woman is persistent.

I wish her the best of luck to join your board, and can highly recommend her.

Thank you,
Georges

<https://youtu.be/qQW8ITgJE0g>

Sent from my iPhone

Brenda H. Miller
13243 Old Oak Lane
Los Angeles, CA 90049

January 26, 2023

Dear MRCA Board of Directors,

My name is Brenda Miller and I am writing to add my voice to the large number of people who believe that Mary Sweeney is the perfect, unrivaled candidate to fill the seat recently vacated by Anne Dobkin on your wonderful MRCA board.

While I am currently on the board of directors for the SCPA, I am writing only as a long-time resident of Sullivan Canyon and also as a member of the SCPA riding community. I feel I have a front row seat to both the history of the Canyon – it's current challenges and what Mary Sweeney can bring to the table – both for the SCPA and MRCA alike.

First of all, Mary is a true leader. She is dedicated, tenacious and loyal and we in the Sullivan Canyon community have benefited tremendously from these qualities. She worked tirelessly to save the Canyon when it was at risk for being sold to developers in 2000.. I am one of the few who still remember Mary's tireless campaign to "save the Canyon" – working hand in hand alongside a few other dedicated individuals for 3 years. Not only did Mary lead the crusade to raise the 12 million needed to purchase the property (an almost insurmountable goal for most), she had a further vision on what would be needed to preserve this open space in perpetuity. That meant negotiating with neighbors & government agencies, creating a mission statement, establishing bylaws, applying for tax exemption status...the list goes on and on. The task was daunting – most would have given up. But Mary and her team of dedicated warriors (including the MRCA!) were persistent and determined and now, everyone in this community and beyond is so very grateful. Many of us truly believe we have Mary to thank for that.

Secondly – Mary is a committed conservationist and preservationist. She is fiercely devoted to maintaining the open nature of this space and she genuinely wants the public to enjoy it too. She proudly welcomes strangers who curiously stumble upon the SCPA site (she lives across the street). She informally gives them tours. She encourages people of all walks of life to sign up for membership. She is a supporter of independent riders who simply love horses and want to ride but do not wish to train with the large commercial barns that are now part of the community. She is an advocate for community programs that will expose youths from disadvantaged backgrounds to the world of horses. She is an endless resource

for those who wish to join the community but simply don't know how or where to begin. She is, in essence, what this community was originally intended to be.

Finally – Mary is just a good and compassionate person. She is always willing to help no matter what the situation or whom it involves. If a horse is ailing or has a life-threatening injury on-site - Mary is there to make it comfortable or transport it to the hospital. Water pipe burst and is flooding the SCPA site in the middle of the night? Mary is out there with a flashlight at 2am. Fallen rider with a broken bone? Mary will turn her car around to get back to the site and accompany that person to the hospital. She does all of this simply as a caring resident and member of the equestrian community.

It has been my honor to know Mary all of these years and I encourage you to get to know her too. She is a very special asset to this community and I'm sure you would quickly see what a remarkable partner she would be to further the work of the MRCA. Both the MRCA and SCPA would be lucky to have such a dedicated, engaged, and fearless advocate in this seat.

I hope you will give her candidacy serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Brenda H. Miller

Jan 24, 2023

Dear MRCA Governing Board,

I am an education professional. I attended Dartmouth College for my undergraduate degree, and Stanford University for my Master's in education. I have taught in the LAUSD system, and that is where I first got to see Mary Sweeney in action when she was hosting a Selma Elementary School field trip at the Sullivan Canyon horse park. Selma Avenue Elementary School, now recently closed, was a Title 1 school in the heart of Hollywood.

I really care about my students and going to Sullivan Canyon for an action-packed day of carefully planned events was always a favorite for my students, and for the teachers and volunteer parents! It was beautiful to observe the enthusiasm from the children and all the field trip volunteers flowing freely. On one occasion, a first grader who was consistently very shy and withdrawn literally blossomed in front of me as she interacted with the pony she was grooming with a volunteer. It was deeply moving to watch and revealed how therapeutic time in nature and with animals can be for our children.

As a qualified and credentialed teaching professional, I can highly recommend the programs that the Sullivan Canyon people put on for elementary students. Mary Sweeney, reached out to me at the beginning of 2022 to inquire if the schools were once again looking at field trips since the Covid shut down. I let her know I was no longer teaching, or in the LAUSD system. My professional career has gone in a different path, and in 2018 I retired from teaching elementary school. Before leaving the public school system, I got my doctorate in education at UCLA, and I now work as an independent consultant for educational technology startups. Mary contacted me again last week to ask if I would write a letter of reference for her application to serve on the SCPA Board of Directors. Based on my personal experience and observations, she is a worthy candidate, and really goes the extra mile for the children and the SCPA organization in Sullivan Canyon.

Sincerely,

Nina R Neulight

Nina Neulight

ninaneulight@gmail.com

James Yeramian

From: Anonymousemail <noreply@anonymousemail.me>
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 9:14 PM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: to be added to Ms. Sweeney's file

Powered by [Anonymousemail](#) → [Join Us!](#)

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you because it has recently come to my attention that Mary Sweeney has applied to be a representative on your board. I wanted to provide you some background about her history. Ms. Sweeney is a bully and an opportunist. Mary Sweeney on many occasions has verbally accosted adults and children on the SCPA site and in the neighborhood. She is litigious and power-hungry, and will use any position granted to her to advance her own personal agenda. Frequently, she has taken to going door-to-door in her own neighborhood to try to get residents on her bandwagon, giving them information that isn't true to get them to do what she wants. She has initiated a number of lawsuits against her neighbors, as well as threatening the SCPA on numerous occasions. I believe that she was previously excused from the SCPA board, and since then has tried to get back on it in any way she can. Most recently her wife was a board member, most likely to bring information directly back to Ms. Sweeney and to forward her agenda. Furthermore, Ms. Sweeney runs a horse boarding business in the community which seems an obvious conflict, since she is profiting off of the community. I hope that you can see through whatever platform she provides, as it would be disastrous and disappointing for all to have her in any position of power or management.

James Yeramian

From: Anonymousemail <noreply@anonymousemail.me>
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 9:22 PM
To: James Yeramian
Subject: a horrible choice for the scpa board

Powered by [Anonymousemail](#) → [Join Us!](#)

A friend at SCPA told me that I could send a letter anonymously with this service, so here is my letter:

To the MRCA Board,

One of your applicants for the SCPA Board position is someone I know quite well for a number of years, and while I don't think her character is suitable for this position, I want to focus on a major conflict she represents. She leases stall space from a number of residents in Sullivan Canyon, probably 5 or more different residents. She then marks up the cost and rents those stalls to clients who also pay her to manage the feeding, cleaning, care, and grooming of their horses. She brings in upwards of \$10,000 per month doing this. She conveniently left this major business off of her resume so she knew it would be problematic. While her business is allowed, and trainers do it too, someone who makes this much money off of the SCPA does not belong on its board, let alone as the designated representative of the MRCA. Indeed, no other applicant earns money from the SCPA. Mary has no genuine conservation interest but purely a monetary self interest. She would likely try to get rid of other trainers to create more business for herself. Ms. Sweeney is highly volatile and has sued numerous members of the community including the SCPA. Therefore, I can't risk her seeking revenge on me. Hence, I remain anonymous. The number of positive letters attests to the fact that she is pushing so very hard to get this position, but no one pushes that hard for a position like this unless there's a motive, and there is: power and money. I hope you take this seriously. Remember that if another group were choosing your next board member, you probably wouldn't want a deeply unethical person either.