

2017 MWDOC-Wyland Foundation Water-Wise Pocket Park Project

By Tiffany Baca



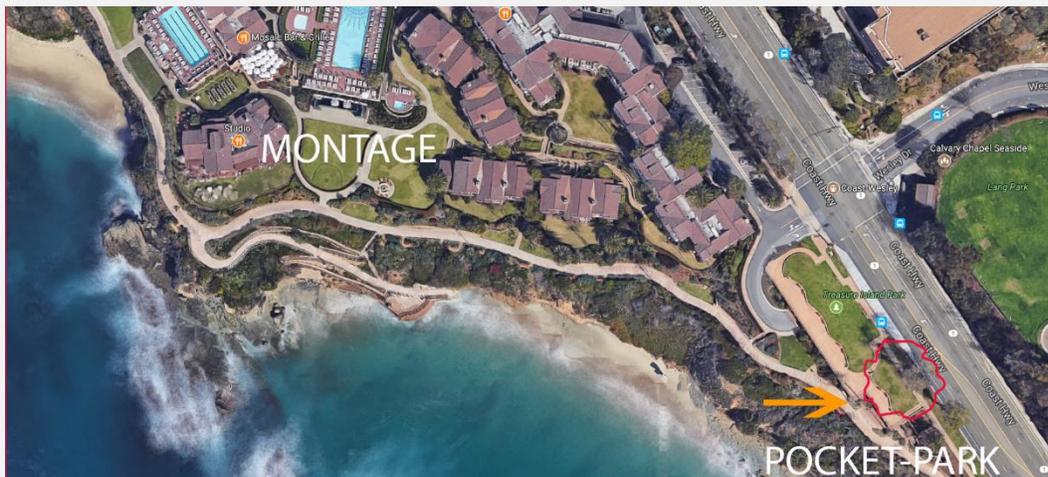
Two years ago, the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) and the Wyland Foundation formed a partnership to implement an Orange County breakaway contest running in concurrence with the annual Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation competition. The Orange County breakaway contest, sponsored by MWDOC and the Wyland Foundation, awards a water-wise demonstration garden, or "pocket park," to the highest participating city within the MWDOC service area. Each park developed will use a variety of landscaping techniques and strategies that promote sustainable water use. Components will include native trees, plants and grasses, water efficient irrigation, and energy efficient lighting and signage to promote water

smart landscaping at home.

The winner of the 2017 contest was the City of Laguna Beach. A team of water industry, city, and business professionals were brought together to form a committee made up of staff members representing MWDOC, Wyland Foundation, City of Laguna Beach, Saddleback College, Laguna Beach County Water District, South Coast Water District, Montage Resort, and a variety of technical project contributors including Toro and Native West. After nearly a year of review and in depth discussions regarding the intended pocket park location and landscape design concepts, committee participants selected a location for the park and completed what is now the third landscape design rendition to address the community concerns submitted thus far.

The location, Treasure Island Park, off of Pacific Coast Highway and Wesley Drive, is offered, owned and maintained by the Montage Resort Laguna Beach. While Treasure Island is a public space, the Montage Resort owns the property and will be maintaining the landscape to Resort standards, taking the burden off the project partners as well as the City. The Montage Resort has been a tremendous partner, and asset, to the success of this first pocket park project.

Location satellite view:

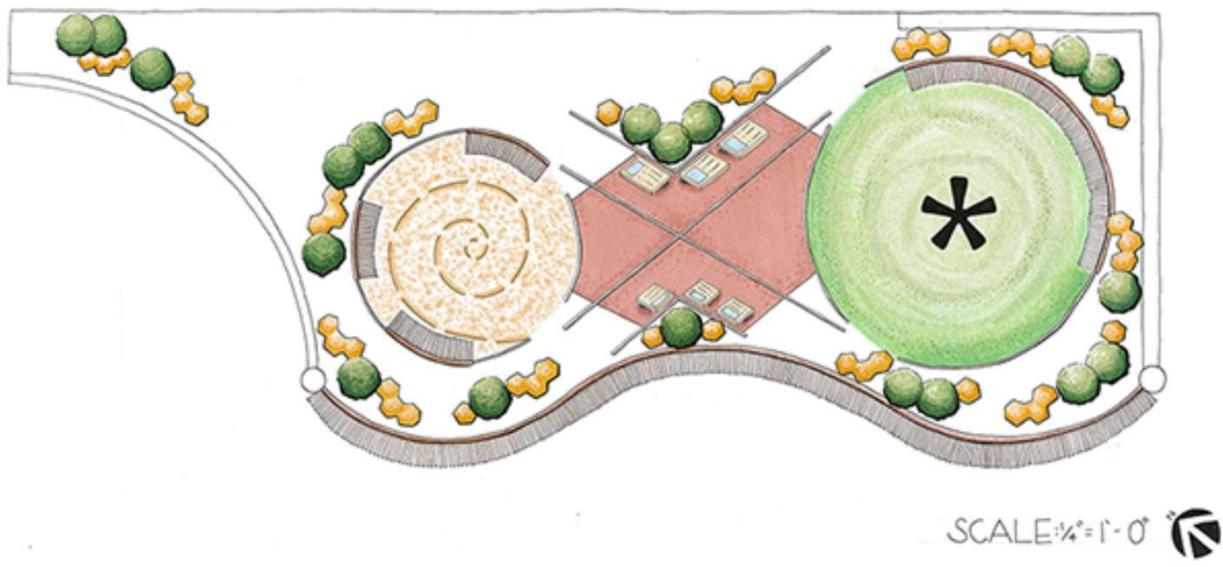


In January 2018, committee members assembled to receive a presentation from park design volunteers, students and Professor Robert Farnsworth from Saddleback College. The students presented an overview of the first draft design which included their initial idea for using a dew and fog catchment system. This system would collect water from dew and fog using pieces of vertical canvas. The water collected from this system would provide most, if not all of the water needed to maintain the park. This initial design earned the design team from Saddleback both a \$10,000 scholarship, and the Irving Sarnoff Award from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Unfortunately, the concept would have blocked some of the ocean views which concerned Laguna Beach community members. The design team went back to the drawing board and redrafted an equally impressive concept using solar technology. Once again, concerns regarding the views, as well as glare from solar panels and possible vandalism, sent the design team back to the think tank to come up with a solution.

Today, the dew and fog technology proposed by the design team will include coating a number of benches with a special paint that enhances infrared cooling to collect more dew and fog in the first morning hours. The moisture will run off the benches into a catchment basin underneath the two primary mounds (circles) in the diagram below. Each bench section will capture approximately 57 gallons of water each year for a total of over 1000 gallons. The water needs of the approved plant palette will be met sufficiently with the amount of water captured through this process.

Additionally, concerns regarding the potential for blocking ocean views have been addressed by keeping all of the elements in the park under 3 feet high, the same height as an existing block wall. The artwork sculpture proposed in the original design – initially 10 feet high – will be brought down to ground level, potentially spiraling around the green

mound notated by the * in the design below.





On Tuesday, June 12, MWDOC, Wyland Foundation, and City staff, as well as Professor Farnsworth and his students, presented their design concept to the Laguna Beach City Council. The team received overwhelmingly positive support for the project from the Council as well as from community members who provided public comment. Next steps include preparing an application and submitting the final, detailed designs to the City Design Review Board for consideration. Continuing this momentum, the team hopes to break ground by fall, 2018.