

aAngels Gate Park visions vary

Saturday will be last in a series of presentations on cultural, other uses.

By Donna Littlejohn, Staff writer

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An American Indian cultural art museum and martial arts classes will be among ideas advanced Saturday at the third - and final - meeting to hear suggestions for future uses of Angels Gate Park in San Pedro.

The forum is part of an ongoing process to create a master plan for the 64-acre hillside park overlooking the ocean at Gaffey Street and Paseo del Mar.

A local steering committee overseeing the effort hopes to have a draft master plan to present to the community by mid-November, with a final version to be submitted to the City of Los Angeles by the end of December.

Two previous forums have included advocates for sports fields; a swimming pool; horseshoe pits and shuffleboard courts; an off-leash dog park; a public middle school specializing in ecology, art, music and history; a skateboard facility; Asian-themed gardens with a restaurant; Korean- American cultural exhibit; military history landmarks; and an American Indian cultural and environmental education center with workshops.

Saturday's meeting featuring the last set of presenters will be held from 10 a.m. to noon at the Angels Gate Cultural Center in the park and will feature 10-minute talks from seven groups.

In one of two presentations advocating American Indian interests, a "Gathering-Friendship Circle" will be proposed for the space just below the Korean Friendship Bell.

The spot would serve as a memorial for "all those that departed this life to the next," presenters said in a written summary of their proposal. "Some of our elders have stated this was a location of a massacre of our people when our people were pushed to their death off these beautiful cliffs."

It also would provide a spot for meditation, according to Jacob Gutierrez of the Tongva/Pipiimar Dolphin Nation.

John Funmaker of the Iron Circle Nation, meanwhile, wants to establish a American Indian cultural art museum while also supporting existing open views and planning for more trees, native plants, birds and animals on the land.

The Iron Circle Nation already uses Angels Gate Park for its annual Many Winters Gathering of the Elders. In addition, the group would like to hold regular sweat-lodge ceremonies, an annual "Sobriety Red Road Retreat," an American Indian spiritual/cultural retreat and possibly sponsor camp grounds on the park.

The Kaizan Foundation wants to establish the Ikkyu Dojo at Angels Gate, a program in conjunction with the Angels Gate Cultural Center that would extend the center's existing martial arts program, showcase the Japanese influences in the port area and incorporate a Zen garden with indigenous vegetation.

Barbara Dye of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy will give a presentation on habitat restoration for some of the park's slopes where no other uses are planned.

Stephanie Rizzi of Hostel International will talk about the importance of keeping and cultivating the existing youth hostel in Angels Gate Park. The hostel provides affordable accommodations and cultural exchange opportunities for visitors of all ages coming to Los Angeles from throughout the world.

Nathan Birnbaum, executive director of the Angels Gate Cultural Center, will talk about expanding the center's educational programming to provide weekday classes for school children and weekend family events centered around exhibits, performances and park exploration activities. Included are proposals for an eatery inside the park so visitors can have lunch, dinner, or just snacks and coffee during their excursions.

"Community reflections" will be presented by San Pedro community leaders Doug Epperhart and June Burlingame Smith, who want to make sure that any ideas ultimately approved for Angels Gate Park will take in a broad and practical spectrum of park uses.

"This really is an opportunity to work together to do something good," Epperhart said. "The criteria is getting the greatest good for the greatest number, for maximum public use. ... This is a public facility, it does not belong to any particular group. I'm much more interested in seeing as much access and use by as many people as possible as opposed to carving it up into 10 different kingdoms.

"I don't mind leaving a lot of the park as a blank slate for now."