

Minutes of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee  
July 25, 1995

Signed in: Muriel Kotin, Sandy Wohlgemuth, Melanie Ingalls, Glenn Bailey, Ron Strong, James Ward, Ted Carr, Rosemarie White, Lori Willis, and Steve Hartman.

In the absence of Peter Ireland, Muriel Kotin brought the meeting to order at 7:00. A minor correction to the minutes was made and minutes were approved.

Melanie Ingalls, representing National Audubon Society and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, presented a slide show describing the educational program that has been active for the last three years in the Wildlife Area, in conjunction with San Fernando Audubon Society. Melanie explained that 2,000 kids each year have been provided with educational information about the environment through the "Audubon Adventures" program. In particular, Audubon wants to provide inner city kids with outdoor environmental education.

She explained that the program which has been financially supported in the past by funds controlled by this Steering Committee and by the Consortium have provided:

Teacher Training which includes two day workshops in fall & spring for 30 teachers each, including a field trip to the Sepulveda Basin.

In-Class Curriculum throughout the school year (each class receiving a student subscriptions to "Audubon Adventures" plus one free educational poster).

Field Trip to the Wildlife Area in the Sepulveda Basin. Each child receives a copy of "Birds of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area."

Melanie pointed out that equipment such as microscopes, binoculars, and spotting scopes are not available in classrooms, but are available for use during the field trips. For some kids, the binocular they get to use during the field trip is the first one they have ever looked through.

It was noted that the bus trip costs are being subsidized by other sources (such as the school and/or the county).

In addition, the City of Los Angeles' CLEAN WATER PROGRAM provides a staff person that co-leads the teacher workshop and provides curriculum materials and sends a representative to each classroom participating in this program.

Rosemarie brought up the question of how to assess the effectiveness of the program: repeat visits, other gauges? Revisit opportunities? Glenn wants to know the cost-sharing from other sources, i.e. "the multiplier effect."

Melanie provided a printed budget (based on last year's program), but it was unclear what the Resource Conservation District's costs actually cover. It was noted that last year, the cost of teacher training was donated by National Audubon Society.

Muriel (per Peter Ireland) noted that concession funds must be spent in basin, and asked if there are any City funds available for the Education program. James Ward explained that all the money goes back into maintenance or the general fund. James will ask if another division, RAPID, could support this (i.e. recreation programs). [Ann Kerman, downtown office, is in charge of outreach into corporate community] For example, on Sept. 30, 1995, a \$10,000 grant from Times-Mirror for "Public Lands Appreciation Day" will fund a one-day clean-up project. James suggested that our programs should be marketed as Sepulveda Basin Projects (rather than Audubon), so that local groups can get grants to support the community.

It was asked if volunteers could replace paid staff, but it was explained that this is not a viable alternative because of needs for consistency and quality, and it would cost as much to hire a volunteer coordinator.

One idea that everyone felt was good is to promote a "Family Day" whereby all students (along with their parents and friends) would be invited to attend one weekend day to visit the Basin. This could be coordinated by volunteers from local organizations. (In essence, a one-day event is easier to coordinate with volunteers).

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Regarding Hummingbird Hill, the Army Corps has not finished approving the plans; James has not received the legal OK in writing which would allow the L.A. Audubon Society to "manage" the job yet be excluded from all liability.

Regarding the planting on the Tillman Berm, James said that the City rejected the original shipment of plant material, but took the plants as a donation.

Regarding Bull Creek, the Army Corp so far has no record of transferring the property to any other agency, and wrote a letter to the City. It was noted that the Army Corp has not maintained the L.A. River in the Basin (up to the concrete section) since 1983.

minutes prepared by Steve Hartman