

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
Minutes March 28, 2000

The meeting was chaired by Rosemarie White. In attendance were Gene Greene, Steve Hartman, Muriel Kotin, Eric Lesser, James Ward, Melanie Winter, and Sandy Wohlgemuth. Also Rangers Senior Park Ranger Kelly Byrne (as a supervisor) and Joe Tafoya (representing Union 347's position).

Minutes of the meeting February 22, 2000 were approved without change.

Park Ranger Presentation: Rec & Parks Dept's new general manager, Ellen Oppenheim, has proposed removing the park rangers from their law enforcement duties and having the police department handle the law enforcement. The rangers would act as naturalists and develop youth programs. Joe Tafoya said the rangers feel they should continue to perform law enforcement duties. There are too few police officers for the police to respond to calls promptly. The rangers want to continue doing what they are now doing. They would like to expand their interpretative role, however, to create positive learning environments of all ages, continuing to perform the full range of park ranger duties.

Rosemarie commented that the rangers have rarely responded to her phone calls for help in the Wildlife Area. Perhaps the police could respond more frequently. Joe indicated that yes, the rangers do respond, but that the Valley has been way understaffed the last year and a half. The Public Safety Committee of city council meets April 17 on this issue. Members of this committee should attend.

Melanie inquired if Proposition 12 provided any funds for park rangers. Apparently not. More rangers are being hired, but it will take quite a while for them to go on line. Kelly Byrne said that state mandates that park rangers be public safety officers. There was extensive discussion. The committee all indicated they would like to see greater ranger presence in the Wildlife Area, whether on bike, horse or car. A letter requesting same to Kelly Byrne would help. How much impact does filming in the basin have on the ranger presence? None. The rangers work on their day off, on overtime, paid by the movie company.

James referred the committee to R & P's Jane Cobb of PR section 213/4730-7070. The department will issue an official statement next Tuesday.

MSP that a representative of the committee attend the Public Safety Committee meeting to support the rangers continuing to perform the main law enforcement role in the parks and to write a letter to this effect.

Japanese Gardens: Gene Greene says Sanitation is moving forward with the Kawana Pavilion / Center for Education. Would like a letter of support.

A DWP Project to repair the berm where damaged by pumping project construction is underway. The Tillman staff is being trained on how to maintain the plantings of native plants on the berm. The quality of TWRP's effluent is being improved. There is a pair of Canada Geese nesting at the Japanese Garden. Gene will coordinate with Rosemarie. They are producing a brochure on the Garden and the Basin, including the Wildlife Area. Melanie suggested also including the most natural section of the LA River.

Steve H asked about street signs to be hung below the Japanese Garden street signs. Gene has been waiting for Steve. Steve presented designs, with a version preferred. The color should perhaps be a light beige to match the TWRP sign above the garden one. Funding source is unclear. Muriel commented that if the City will not pay the Consortium has long discussed using some its funds for signs. Gene will get a bid and contact Rosemarie. Muriel will email the logo to Gene and to Steve H. If the logo is a big problem, Gene should go ahead with the sign without a logo!

Steve H asked who is responsible for the field full of Russian thistle (tumbleweeds) above the new cricket fields: Sanitation. The road to the septage dumping site has allowed inappropriate access to the park after hours. So the road has been blocked off with boulders until a T-gate can be put in. Steve H will write to Ellen Stein, president of the Board of Public Works to request something be done, with CC to James W and Gene.

R & P Report: James reported that R & P has provided recommendation to allow the planned pest control project. The restrooms in Woodley Park have not been locked yet. If it happens, it will last only a few months. The W.A. restrooms would be the only ones left open. James will be taking the civilian upper echelons of the ACOE from Washington on a tour of the Basin, including the WA and Beilenson Park. A police and firefighter memorial is being proposed for Lake Balboa. Construction will begin in 2 days to change the street access for Encino golf course. A few of the new oak trees planted in the median of Burbank Blvd. will be temporarily removed. Recirculating the water in Lake Balboa is likely to happen in 3 years. "Wildlife Way" has been suggested to the street department, along with names for other park roads in the basin. When they get an approval, R & P will put up street signs.

Corn maze is moving forward for June - August. Planting early May. Steve H was concerned that if the field is disced after August, we will have a new tumbleweed problem. Parking will be in the lot south of Victory Blvd west of Woodley. We will have a debriefing with James after the first year of operation.

Steve H suggested a meeting to review our expansion project with R & P and the ACOE. James agreed. The new donation pole has received almost \$60. The funds will go into the MRP account for the WA. We have new staffing in the W.A. This morning, police arrested a man with a rifle in the W.A. It turned out to be a BB gun. The man got a misdemeanor citation. A patron saw it, told a R & P employee who contacted the police. R & P is still waiting for the utility vehicle to be delivered, which should be soon.

Muriel asked about a recycling bin to set a good example. James said recycling is something R & P does internally, but that there are a lot of problems dealing with public-generated materials. James will see what he can do for cans and bottle disposal, but he expects it will not be a fund-raising venture.

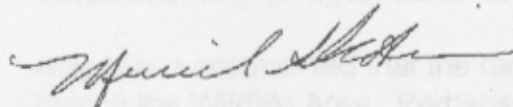
LA Audubon: Sandy complained that signs do not adequately address the problems of bikes and dogs. The icons aren't clear and bikes are not included. James can put up a standard sign for no dogs or bikes.

SFV Audubon: Muriel reported that SFVAS will lead a nature walk for the public in the W.A. on April 8. Audubon's 30 field trips led by the RCD/SMM for LAUSD students will conclude later in April for this school year. SFVAS also leads other walks for schools, youth groups and adult groups. In July they will lead walks for 2 scout day camps in Woodley Park and help with conservation projects. Last year, Cub Scouts attending the day camp saved many of the trees planted by the contractor in the expansion project by hand watering them.

Canada Goose Project: Rosemarie is concerned about imminent problem of breeding geese. Chumash Tribe, C. Goose Project and SW Herpetologists are celebrating EarthDay April 1 at Chatsworth Reservoir. An invitation only event: various environmental groups and a few leaders, school children and teachers.

FoLAR: Melanie reported that the new River Center at the old Lawry's Center opened recently. A whole stack of W.A. brochures was taken on the first day.

Submitted by



Muriel S. Kotin, Steering Committee Member